

## **N GRADES**

### **PROBLEM:**

Every term students register for classes but never attend and never officially drop the courses. This impacts the availability of open seats for each section but for those students receiving financial aid, there is a bigger impact, both to the student and to the school. Additionally students with an F1 international status, those receiving Federal Veteran's benefits and student receiving other sponsorships or aid are also impacted.

At the end of each semester when the instructor is issuing grades, any student that did not attend the course during the semester is given an 'N'- no show grade. Once all grades are turned in, any student with financial aid has to be analyzed to determine the impact on their financial aid awards (Pell, loans, scholarships, etc). Per federal guidelines, students that did not attend are not entitled to aid and therefore the student's awards and disbursements must be removed from their account. Many times the students were 'no-shows' in *all* their courses resulting in all aid being removed and a balance remaining on the students account. Students attending less than half time also have their aid removed. In addition, those that received refunds end up owing the federal government and OCC for their aid.

The impact of the N grade is as follows:

- Students owe OCC money
- Students have increased debt/are sent to collections
- Student not intending to get an education are taking seats from other students
- Students risk not meeting the satisfactory academic progress standards
- Students default on their loans
- Students not attending will no longer be eligible to defer their payments on previous federal loans
- Increased loan default rate could result in reduction and/or loss of federal financial aid for OCC.
- OCC owes funds back to federal government
- Increased workload to process N adjustments at the same time the new semester is beginning for financial aid dept
- Delay in year end financial audit because summer N grades delays final financial statements
- International students risk violating immigration policies
- Veterans and students receiving other forms of sponsorship/aid risk owing OCC money
- Delays student refund processing

### **PROPOSED SOLUTION:**

While the entire problem cannot be eliminated, we have looked at ways to minimize the impact of the 'no show' students on the school, the student and the financial aid department. The most

important factor in being able to handle the N grades is the timeliness of knowing which students are impacted. If the N grades could be issued near the beginning of the semester rather than at the very end then steps could be taken to adjust or remove aid sooner.

Recognizing that although taking attendance by the instructors is not required; most instructors do take attendance in their sections at least at the beginning of each semester. If this attendance information or at least the 'NO SHOW' students could be documented at pre-determined times at the beginning of the semester this would help eliminate the problem.

Using WebAdvisor we would like to capture 'NO SHOW' information by each instructor for each section. The format would be similar to the grading already done by the instructor but captured at the beginning of each semester. This information could then be retrieved using queries by Enrollment Services and Student Financial Resources & Scholarships to find all N grades and begin the financial aid recalculations.

Additionally, timely notification of 'no show' students would enable Enrollment Services to act appropriately regarding F1 International Students and would also allow Financial Services to notify other sponsorship or aid programs (i.e. Veterans, Michigan Works, etc).

Currently the N grade exists and is listed in the Catalog and Student Handbook – see Appendix 1. However, the policy has always been to turn in this 'N' grade information at the end of the semester with other grades. The proposal is to turn in these 'N grades' earlier in the semester. See OCC PROPOSED grading policy in Appendix 1 for changes.

The N grade, while academically a non-punitive grade, adversely affects the student and their ability to make Satisfactory Academic Progress (see SAP policy attached).

Issuing grades to the student is a required responsibility of the full time faculty member and is also listed in the adjunct handbook – see Appendix 2. The change to the existing practice would be to issue N grades to all students that did not show up for the semester for the first three weeks of the course rather than at the end.

## **TIMING:**

In order to alleviate the N grade problem, Enrollment Services, Student Financial Resources & Scholarships and Financial Services are proposing the N grades be submitted via WebAdvisor during the first three section meetings of each course.

## **COMMUNICATION:**

Once implemented, the changes to this policy would be communicated to the OCC staff, faculty and adjuncts via emails, in the adjunct faculty college-wide handbook, at Department/Chair meetings and at the Academic Senate.

The OCC website, catalog, student handbook and financial aid award letter would be updated to reflect this new policy and the new procedures.

**PROPOSED Website/Catalog/Handbook update:**

**Failure to Attend Class**

Students who do not attend class by the end of the third class meeting are considered no show and will receive an 'N' symbol on their transcript. This will immediately impact students receiving the following funds/benefits:

**Financial Aid**

Students receiving an N symbol will be required to repay the portion of financial aid applicable to the class(es) not attended. The student will receive an invoice for repayment. If the student fails to repay any Federal financial aid debt in 45 days, the student's debt will be referred to the U.S. Department of Education for collection. Failure to repay any State/Institutional debt will result in referral of the student's debt to the College's collection agency.

**F1 International Status**

Students receiving an N symbol will be reported to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security for violation of immigration policies. The student may be contacted by this office regarding possible sanctions for non-attendance.

**Federal Veteran's Benefits/Other Sponsorships and Aid**

Students receiving an N symbol will be reported to the Veteran's Administration (VA) Office or other sponsoring agency. The VA Office or other sponsoring agency will contact the student regarding possible repayment of funds for which the student was not entitled.

## APPENDIX 1.

# OCC CURRENT GRADING SYSTEM

## GRADES

Students will be awarded letter grades for all coursework as follows:

### GRADE DESCRIPTION POINTS

A Excellent.....	4.0
A- .....	3.7
B+ .....	3.3
B Good.....	3.0
B- .....	2.7
C+ .....	2.3
C Average.....	2.0
C- .....	1.7
D+ .....	1.3
D .....	1.0
F Failure.....	0.0

## Marks

**AU – Audit** - A student may register for a course without credit. This election must be made at the time of registration or schedule adjustment.

**CP – Continuing Progress** - A mark designated for selective use for students enrolled in designated courses who have attended class regularly and made reasonable effort toward progress but have not demonstrated a passing level of proficiency. This mark cannot be awarded more than once for the same course. The “CP” may remain on the transcript indefinitely. Upon reenrollment and completion, the letter grade issued will be used for purposes of figuring the grade point average. The instructor of record will submit a written summation of the student’s progress to the student, the next instructor and the department chair. This is to ensure that the student understands and accepts the responsibilities outlined by the instructor.

**I – Incomplete** - This mark will be used sparingly and only when an emergency prevents a student from completing course work during the regular college session. The student is responsible for completing a written agreement with the instructor detailing the requirements to be met for the completion of the “I” before it is assigned. The student is not to register for a course in which he or she has a current mark of “I”. Without prior faculty-initiated action to change the “I”, this mark will become a “WP” one year subsequent to its original issue.

**N – Non-Attendant** – This non-punitive mark is awarded to students who, though registered, never attended class, did not officially drop, and no gradable work exists.

**NR – Not-Reported** - Grade was not reported or submitted.

**W – Student-Initiated Withdrawal** - This mark is awarded to students

who initiate the process to officially drop the course during the time specified for the academic period.

**WF – Faculty-Initiated Withdrawal/Failing** - This non-punitive mark is awarded to indicate insufficient class participation to merit a passing grade.

**WP – Faculty-Initiated Withdrawal/Passing** - This non-punitive mark is awarded to indicate insufficient class participation to merit a permanent grade

## OCC **PROPOSED** GRADING SYSTEM – changes in **RED**

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## **APPENDIX 2.**

### **Adjunct faculty responsibilities**

5. Each adjunct faculty member is responsible for communicating to his or her department chairperson or academic administrator the instructional need(s) of the individual class to assure the proper quality of instruction. Each adjunct faculty member shall be responsible for such activities that include, but are not limited to, **submitting accurate grade reports (on a timely basis)**, book orders, and equipment orders with the department chairperson or the academic supervisor.