

# Think before you take that “W”

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As the weather warms and we begin to see the first signs of spring, activities on campus begin to heat up. Spring break is behind us, and students have survived midterm exams and projects. By now, your student should have an understanding of his or her progress and academic standing in each course.

But now I want to draw your attention to some very important changes to UNC Charlotte’s course withdrawal policy that could impact your student. Starting this fall semester, undergraduate students will not be allowed to withdraw from more than 16 credit hours over their academic careers at UNC Charlotte. A withdrawal refers to a course students drop after the specified add/drop period. You can see those dates at [registrar.uncc.edu/calendar](http://registrar.uncc.edu/calendar). When a student withdraws from a course, a grade of “W” appears on the transcript, but the student’s GPA is unaffected. A student must make the decision to withdraw before the ninth week of classes.

Limiting withdrawals is a major change in UNC Charlotte policy. Currently, students are able to withdraw from an unlimited number of courses. The new withdrawal policy will require students to think very carefully about the academic and financial consequences of withdrawing from a course or from the semester. After a student has reached the 16 credit hour limit, he or she will be unable to withdraw from another course and must accept the grade earned at the end of the semester. That includes students who are unable to withdraw but stop attending the class anyway.

## Deciding to Withdraw

Please discuss this new policy with your student. Next semester, more than ever, a student’s decision to withdraw from one or more courses should not be taken lightly. Before withdrawing, students should consult the following people on campus for guidance:

**The instructor:** Students should speak to the faculty member teaching the course. The course instructor can have an honest conversation about a student’s progress and potential to successfully recover from a bumpy beginning based on course requirements and opportunities.

**The advisor:** All undergraduate advisors are well-trained on the university’s new policy to help your student make an informed decision about whether to withdraw from a course. Students should make an appointment to discuss the short and long term academic implications of withdrawing from a course, and they should carefully consider how this decision might affect his or her GPA, requirements for the major and progress toward graduation.

**A financial aid officer:** There are possible financial repercussions for course withdrawal. Students who withdraw from a course will be responsible for 100% of the assessed tuition and fee charges. Students who withdraw from classes before com-



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pleting over 60% of a semester may be required to repay all or a portion of the federal financial aid received for that term. If your student receives financial aid, he or she should meet with a financial aid assistant director to understand how his or her financial aid package will be affected. The Office of Student Financial Aid - [finaid@uncc.edu](mailto:finaid@uncc.edu) - is located on the first floor of the Reese Building.

**Dean of Students Office:** We recognize that in life unfortunate and unpredictable situations may arise. Only in these situations may students apply to withdraw from one or more courses with extenuating circumstances – [provost.uncc.edu/withdrawals/faqs#extenuating-circumstances](http://provost.uncc.edu/withdrawals/faqs#extenuating-circumstances). A student who believes his or her condition falls into this category should contact the Dean of Students Office – [dso.uncc.edu](http://dso.uncc.edu) – for advice and direction.

## Staying Enrolled

**Get help:** If a student with an unsatisfactory midterm grade decides to remain enrolled in the course, he or she should seek support on campus. The university wants students to develop a sense of ownership in their education, and we can provide resources to guide them along the pathway to academic success.

There are a variety of offices and services provided on campus for students who hope to turn unsatisfactory grades around. Please remind your student to seek free assistance at the University Center for Academic Excellence - [ucaee.uncc.edu](http://ucaee.uncc.edu). The Writing Resources Center - [writing.uncc.edu/writing-resources-center](http://writing.uncc.edu/writing-resources-center) – can help students develop valuable writing skills through one-to-one writing instruction. Likewise, various departments on campus offer peer tutoring programs for students who want to improve their classroom performance.

**Work hard:** Last year, I shared with you the secrets of doing awesome at UNC Charlotte on my e-newsletter “Academic Corner” – [seas.uncc.edu/helpful-hints/secrets-success](http://seas.uncc.edu/helpful-hints/secrets-success). If your student wants to dramatically improve his or her classroom performance, share secrets two, three and four with him or her. Encourage your student to go to class prepared and ready to participate in the discussions and activities of the session. Secret nine reminds us that being a student is a full-time job and for every hour spent in the classroom, students should be willing to dedicate two to three hours of study time outside of class.

Earlier this month, most first-year students received midterm grade reports. If your student receives an unsatisfactory grade report next semester, he or she will have to make some important academic decisions. I encourage you to talk with your student about this new policy and what it means for his or her career at UNC Charlotte. For more information on the new withdraw policy, please visit the Office of Academic Affairs’ webpage at [provost.uncc.edu/policies/withdrawals](http://provost.uncc.edu/policies/withdrawals).