

**UNIVERSITY AT ALBANY
STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK**

Introduced by: Undergraduate Academic Council

Date: November 17, 2008

REVISION OF THE S/U SELECTION DEADLINE

IT IS HEREBY PROPOSED THAT THE FOLLOWING BE ADOPTED:

1. That the following revision of the S/U selection deadline be approved by the University Senate.
2. That this proposal be forwarded to Interim President George M. Philip for approval.
3. That the revision take effect in Spring, 2009.

Proposed Revision

Current University Policy governing S/U Selection:

S/U SELECTION DEADLINE

Effective with the Fall 1979 semester, students may change their option ("A-E" or "S/U"), for courses not departmentally designated for "S/U" grading until two weeks after the last day to add courses. (Changes in grading selections cannot be authorized beyond the date specified). The grading option may be changed by filing the appropriate form with the Office of Records and Registration. (US, 4/2/79)

Revised Policy (additions in *italic* and deletions in ~~striketrough~~ font):

S/U SELECTION DEADLINE

Effective with the *Spring* 2009 semester, students may change their option ("A-E" or "S/U"), for courses not departmentally designated for "S/U" grading until ~~two weeks after the last day to add courses~~ *15 class days after the midterm point (with dates for winter, summer and 8-week sessions adjusted proportionally)*. Changes in grading selections cannot be authorized beyond the date specified. The grading option may be changed by filing the appropriate form with the *Registrar's* Office ~~of Records and Registration~~.

Rationale:

The original intent of allowing student-elected S/U grading was to “encourage students to venture into a new, unfamiliar field with less risk” (UAC 11/7/77; revised 3/22/84; and 4/25/85, see Appendix below). The UAC earlier recognized that students may have “individual apprehensions” regarding certain coursework. Much of the apprehension that students feel about unfamiliar areas of study is not a result of the subject material in that unfamiliar area but a result of the ability of students to perform well on the evaluative components (examinations, papers, laboratory assignments etc.) in that area. Extending the current deadline for students to opt for S/U course grading from two weeks after the last day to add courses to 15 class days after the midterm point better meets the spirit of the original intent of the S/U grading option. This bill echoes the rationale in Senate Bill No. 0203-11 (see Appendix below) which points out that students require time to be evaluated and to assess these evaluations with instructors and advisors before making a decision about opting for S/U grading. An extension of the deadline allows a more informed decision about the grading option.

Appendix

The following rationale is recorded in University Senate Policy documents for the adoption of the S/U Selection policy (UAC 11/7/77, revised 3/22/84, and 4/25/85)

If, in the judgment of the faculty involved, a course or section of a course should be graded S/U, then the department or school offering the course may designate it for this mode of grading. It follows that the reason for a student to be able to elect S/U grading for a course is not an intrinsic factor of the course itself, but of the student’s individual apprehensions about the content (emphasis added).

When the University decided to allow students to elect a few pass/fail courses, it was not to enable seniors or others to “lighten their load” or “bury C-level work” or “get around a significant hurdle in the major.” Rather, it was argued the policy would encourage students to venture into a new, unfamiliar field with less risk (emphasis added). If successful, the student may then choose additional work, may even choose the discipline as a major or minor, and would pursue this work on an A-E graded basis.

Therefore, in limiting the option to two courses, the rationale remains for allowing the selection (sic) an introductory work that may later become part of the major or minor. The University signifies work at this level by using 100- and 100-level (sic) course numbers. In contrast, for work numbered 300-level and above, the University specifies: “The content should go beyond the introductory or survey level and, in the judgment of the faculty, will require prior academic achievement and experience.”

The following rationale is recorded on the University Senate website pertaining to the revision of the “Last Day for Undergraduates to Drop a Course”

Senate Bill No. 0203-11

Revision to the “Last Day for Undergraduates to Drop a Course”

UAC believes that the deadline for dropping a course and receiving a W should be extended to 15 class days after the midterm point (with summer and quarter courses changed proportionally) for the following reasons:

- (1) Because every course has its own internal logic and the timing of student evaluations cannot be established by anyone other than the professor of the course, students often have not received an evaluation of their work by the current W deadline date and therefore cannot make an informed decision (emphasis added);
- (2) Because students may have only just received an evaluation at the time of the current deadline and not have had time to consult with faculty or other advisers about their potential in the course (emphasis added); and
- (3) Because students may otherwise withdraw completely from Albany to avoid failing some of their courses when they could be making academic progress in the rest of them.