

## Considerations regarding the FW grade and proposal of next steps

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### Current Context

#### The current policy, and rationale for the policy:

- Per [BP 4230 Grading](#) Foothill-De Anza has implemented an “FW” grading policy. State regulations allow for Districts to optionally implement an FW grading policy to indicate an unofficial withdrawal, and to differentiate from an earned “F” grade.
- Per [AP 4230 Grading and Academic Record Symbols](#) an FW is to be used “to indicate that a student has both ceased participating in a course sometime after the last day to officially withdraw from the course without having achieved a final passing grade, and that the student has not received district authorization to withdraw from the course under extenuating circumstances.” Additionally, the procedure specifies that the “FW” symbol may not be used if a student has qualified for and been granted military withdrawal.
- When this policy is in place, and being implemented correctly and consistently, the district should be able to assume that a student who receives an “F” grade has attended/participated through to the end of the course and has earned the “F,” whereas a student who is assigned an “FW” may or may not have attended past the 50% mark (the required deadline to be eligible for their financial aid that quarter).
- When a faculty member assigns an “FW” grade, Banner prompts the faculty member to enter a “Last Attend Date MM/DD/YYYY” which is then reported to Financial Aid to determine the need to include them or not in the Return to Title IV calculation.
- When a faculty member assigns an “F” grade, Banner does **not** prompt the faculty member to enter a “Last Attend Date MM/DD/YYYY.”

#### Noted concerns and issues with the status of the current policy & practice:

- Many faculty at both colleges are not aware of when to assign an “FW” grade, or even of its existence, and are therefore assigning an “F” grade even in the instance when the student has stopped participating in a course as opposed to earning the “F,” yet financial aid is NOT considering the latter in their Return to Title 4 calculation. **This may be placing the district in a situation of being out of**

**compliance with both Title 5 and Title 4, which could result in significant loss of revenue for students and the district.**

- There is no BP or AP related to attendance or participation tracking, nor a policy/procedure related to withdrawal policies, so there is no clarity as to what a faculty is required to do if a student stops attending/participating after census but prior to the official withdrawal period has ended.
  - This lack of clarity could result in a faculty member being required by our current AP to assign an “F” grade to a student who stopped participating in Week 4 but an “FW” grade to a student who stopped participating in Week 10. This seems contradictory and unintended by the regulations allowing for an FW grading policy.
- The De Anza Academic Senate has voted to remove the FW grade (revert to only having an “F” grade) but acknowledges that this change must be made districtwide, so will need Foothill Academic Senate approval as well (this item has not yet been brought to the Foothill senate).
- If we remove the FW grade, Financial Aid has indicated that it will be necessary to collect the “Last Attend Date MM/DD/YYYY” from faculty for every student assigned an “F” grade.

**Proposed Next Steps**

- A revised BP/AP 4230 removing the FW grade will be brought to the Foothill Academic Senate for discussion, and if there is agreement, the desired revisions will be brought to APM for a first read, and go back to the two senates for formal approval before coming back to APM for final approval (and the BP sent to the Board for approval).
- We suggest that all stakeholders be identified early (suggested: ETS, FA, International Student Programming, Veterans, Institutional Research) to find out any additional considerations/impacts of removing the FW grade not identified here.