

The Department of Biology, Chemistry and Environmental Science and the Department of Physics, Computer Science and Engineering request the following change to the withdrawal from courses policy:

Students may withdraw from courses totaling no more than seventeen (17) credit hours during their academic careers at CNU.

One reason for this request is that there is a discrepancy among lecture courses with required labs in terms of how withdrawals are handled. Currently, if the lecture/lab course is a 4-0 course, meaning there is one grade for the combined class and usually the same instructor is responsible for both lecture (4 credits) and lab (0 credits), dropping this course counts as one withdrawal. When a course is a 3-1 course, meaning the lecture (3 credits) and lab (1 credit) components of the course are separate and each receives a separate grade due to a large number of enrolled students and, therefore, a large number of sections of labs with different instructors, dropping this course counts as two withdrawals. The result is that students who drop one chemistry course and one physics course with their corequisite labs would have used four of the allowed five withdrawals. This means a freshman could potentially take two courses in trying to decide his or her major and incur four withdrawals by the end of his or her freshman year. When students withdraw from a lecture with a corequisite lab, they are usually forced to withdraw from the lab though they may be passing the lab. They do not have the choice of staying in the lab as many would like to do because the lab material is often directly related to lecture material. If they drop early in the semester, they will not have the knowledge to do the subsequent labs.

A second reason for this request is that there is currently no difference between dropping a 1 credit course and a 4 credit course. A student taking a 1 credit music or applied music course, a student taking a 1 or 2 credit lab course in conjunction with a lecture course, and a student taking a 4 credit biology course with combined lecture/lab are “charged” the same when these course are dropped, 20% of the allowable withdrawals.

Data from the last five years from CHEM 121 and CHEM 121L showed that 8% of the students enrolled withdrew from lecture (D. Varner). Of these students 80% also withdrew from lab. The result was these students, many of whom are still here, wound up using two withdrawals during their first semester here.

We believe that it was not the intention of the withdrawal policy to penalize students who are taking lecture/lab courses or to penalize students taking 1 or 2 credit courses and courses for audit. We request the above change in the withdrawal policy and for this to be retroactive to all current students so as to eliminate the inequality of the present policy.