WITHDRAWAL AND OMBUDSMAN UPDATE

Lisa Jerald, Undergraduate Ombudsman and Interim Withdrawal Coordinator
Mandy Bidinger, Executive Assistant for the Dean of Students and Deputy Title IX Coordinator
## WITHDRAWAL VS HARDSHIP WITHDRAWAL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Withdrawal</th>
<th>Hardship Withdrawal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Occurs during the add/drop and W period</td>
<td>Only occurs during the withdraw fail period of a semester or retroactively for a previous semester</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students are encouraged to complete the withdrawal inquiry form to ensure all financial and academic obligations are taken care of before dropping classes</td>
<td>Students participate in the petition process. Decisions are made by the committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classes can be dropped online in Self-Service Carolina</td>
<td>Classes are administratively changed after a petition is approved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can be for any reason (transferring, taking time away, medical, mental health, extenuating circumstances)</td>
<td>Reason for withdrawal needs to meet the criteria on our website</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
WITHDRAWAL INQUIRY FORM

The form is only used during the add/drop and W period and is located on the withdrawal website sc.edu/withdrawal

Resource Letter and Consultations:
- Financial aid and scholarships
- Tuition payments and reimbursements
- Other financial obligations such as housing, meal plans, parking etc
- Reaplication to the university if a major semester is missed
- Alternatives to withdrawing (part-time student status, registering with SDRC)
- Resources

Note that the form is not mandatory to withdraw

*Note that COVID-19 circumstances can include a variety of situations such as a COVID-19 diagnosis for the student or family member, financial situation, or unavailability of in-person courses.
HARDSHIP WITHDRAWAL PROCESS

Does the student meet our criteria?

**Medical/Mental Health**
- Unforeseeable, acute, severe illnesses or injuries that incapacitate the student
- Illness severe enough so as to warrant hospitalization and/or treatment and multiple sessions of counseling, psychotherapy, or psychiatric consultations.
- Chronic conditions generally do not qualify unless the student has been stable for a sustained length of time and the condition is complicated by a sudden unexpected change in status
- Preventable health care conditions or failure to comply with medical advice may also not qualify

**Extenuating Circumstances**

**Personal Crises which include:**
- Personal trauma
- Death of a parent, child, sibling, or caregiver
- Caregiver for ill parent (Documentation from parent’s physician must indicate the necessity for their care of their parent)
- New diagnosis of documented learning disability
- Natural disaster recovery
- Extreme, acute financial hardship (i.e. loss of job)
PARTIAL WITHDRAWALS

• Partial withdrawals must (1) meet the definition of a hardship as defined by our criteria and (2) be specific to the course they are petitioning for.

• Reasoning and supporting documentation needs to be outside of academic rigor (attendance requirements, availability of documents online, difficulty of the course)

• If a student applies for a partial withdrawal and they cannot meet the second criteria, our office will suggest they consider applying for a full withdrawal or using grade forgiveness

• Ex: student is taking yoga course and breaks her collarbone after the WF date
APPLICATION AND PETITION PROCESS

• Step 1: Submit the Online Petition
• Step 2: Provide Supporting Documentation
• Step 3: Attend a Hardship Withdrawal Coaching Appointment
• Step 4: Receive Petition Decision

![Pie chart showing petition reasons]

- **16%** Petition Reasons
- Extenuating Circumstance
- Mental Health
- Medical

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year in Review</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>261</td>
<td>cases created</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>148</td>
<td>petitions reviewed by committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>127</td>
<td>petitions for full withdrawal*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>petitions for partial withdrawal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>78%</td>
<td>approved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>87% full</td>
<td>13% partial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22%</td>
<td>denied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>81% full</td>
<td>19% partial</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*8 petitions were submitted as partial withdrawals but changed to full because they did not meet the criteria.
TUITION REFUNDS

• Hardship withdrawal process is to minimize academic penalties
• Separate petition and process for a tuition refund
• Student must be withdrawn from all courses to be eligible to request a refund
• Requests for refunds must be completed within the same academic year (fall-spring-summer)
• Petitions reviewed by a committee on an as-needed basis
• View Parts of Term Dates and Deadlines in the Academics section of my.sc.edu.
IMPORTANT DATES AND REMINDERS

• Different dates for withdrawal based on course
• Always check parts of term at my.sc.edu
• Last day to withdraw without a WF for full term courses is Nov. 4
• Withdrawals
  ➢ sc.edu/withdrawal
  ➢ withdrawal@sc.edu
  ➢ 803-576-7760
WHAT IS A STUDENT OMBUDSMAN?

• om-buhdz-muhn
• Resource for students and faculty
• Assist in resolving university-related problems and concerns in an informal manner
• An ombudsman is **not** an advocate
WHAT DOES AN OMBUDS DO?

- Listen impartially, discuss options and answer questions
- Refer students to the appropriate offices or resources
- Explain university policy and procedure
- Empower students to find their own solutions to problems and concerns
- Notify faculty members of a student’s absence due to a medical or personal issue when the student is unable (appropriate documentation required)
- Recommend changes and improvements to university policies and procedures that are outdated, unclear or ineffective
WHAT AN OMBUDSMAN DOESN’T DO

• Provide legal advice
• Hear formal complaints
• Share information with others without student’s permission
• Keep confidential any risk of danger to students or others
• Facilitate grade changes
WHEN STUDENTS SHOULD CONTACT THE OMBUDSMAN

• Don’t know where to go or whom to ask
• Feel they have been treated unfairly by faculty or staff members
• Are unsure about university policy or procedure

bit.ly/UofSCstudentombuds
Ombuds Year in Review Fall 2019-Summer 2020

- COVID-19 Academic Concerns: 9%
- Letter Request - Family/Friend Death: 7%
- General Concerns: 11%
- Letter Request - Student Absence: 1%
- Letter Request - COVID-19 Isolation/Quarantine: 20%
- Student Concern - Academic Affairs: 12%
- Student Concern - Facilities: 3%
- Student Concern - Faculty/Staff Conflict: 23%
- Student Concern - Financial: 8%
- Student Concern - Policy: 0%
- Student Concern - Student Affairs: 16%

Top referrals:
1. Ombuds Website
2. Advising
3. Dean of Students
4. SAVIP
5. Parent/Guardian

Total Cases: 909
Resolved: 50%
Unresolved: 10%
Referred: 14%
FYI: 26%
CAMPUS PARTNERSHIPS

• University Advising Center – Faculty Referrals for Disengaged Students
• Student Success Center – Class Absence Referral
• New Attendance Policy
• COVID-19 Student Report Forms
COVID-19 STUDENT REPORT FORM

• The COVID-19 Student Report Form is used to facilitate communication from Student Ombudsman Services to faculty when a student tests positive for COVID-19 or needs to self-quarantine due to contact tracing, COVID-19 symptoms, or international travel.

• Located on the ombudsman website and sent to students in their quarantine/isolation orders from Student Health Services.

go.sc.edu/covidstudentreport
COVID-19 STUDENT REPORT FORM DATA

1,446 forms received since August 1

49% off campus
51% on campus
QUESTIONS?

Lisa Jerald: lbj@mailbox.sc.edu / 803-777-5116
Mandy Bidinger: bidingea@mailbox.sc.edu / 803-576-8326
Withdrawal: withdrawal@sc.edu / 803-576-7760