Policy Title: Failure to Withdraw (FW)

Purpose:
The purpose of this policy is to comply with federal regulations regarding Title IV Financial Aid disbursement ensuring student attendance. The FW grade serves to ensure appropriate adjustments to student financial aid award by verifying enrollment status and allowing recalculation should a student stop attending. The FW grade also serves as notification to Student Services that the student’s academic success is at risk; intervention is warranted.

The College is required to return funds disbursed to students who fail to attend as soon as possible but no later than 45 days after the date that the school becomes aware that a student has ceased attending. Once payment is made to a student, who is found not to be in attendance it must be recalculated and funds may be pulled back. The college is liable for that payment and returning those funds.

Definitions:
FW/Failure to Withdraw: When the student has ceased active participation for 14 consecutive calendar days (including holidays) prior to the end of the term.

14 Consecutive Calendar Days: 14 consecutive calendar days includes scheduled holidays and breaks less than 5 consecutive days in length as per FSA guidelines.

Active Participation: In reference to online courses, active participation is completing academically related activities or assignments from your instructor. Examples include but are not limited to posting a discussion, uploading an assignment, taking a quiz, or completing a survey. The assignment may vary by course and instructor. Logging into the online classroom or Learning Management System is not evidence of active participation.

Academic Attendance and Academically Related Activities:
The Federal Financial Aid Handbook identifies the following perimeters regarding academic attendance and academically related activities at it relates to Title IV funding (V.5 Ch.1).

Academically related activities include but are not limited to:
- Physically attending class where there is an opportunity for direct interaction between the instructor and students
- Submitting an academic assignment
- Taking an exam, completing and interactive tutorial, or participating in a computer-assisted instruction
- Attending a study group that is assigned by the college
- Participating in an online discussion about academic matters
- Initiating contact with a faculty member to ask a question about that academic subject studied in the course.
Examples that are NOT considered evidence or proof of academic activities or academic engagement with the college:

- Living in institutional housing
- Participating in the school's meal plan
- Logging in to an online class without active participation
- Participating in counseling or advising

The Federal Student Aid Handbook specifically identifies that documenting that a student logged into an online class is not sufficient to demonstrate academic attendance. The college must demonstrate student participation in class or via other academic activities. Examples of online academically related activities may include:

- Participation in an academically relevant online discussion
- Contact (to include email) with the faculty member to ask a course-related question
- Student submission of an academic assignment
- Student submission of an exam
- Documented student interaction in an interactive tutorial or computer-assisted instruction (third-party software)
- Posting in an online study group assigned by the instructor/institution

**Policy:**

A grade of FW grade is posted for any student who has ceased to attend or actively participate in a course for 14 consecutive calendar days (including holidays) prior to the end of the term.

Students are responsible to attend and actively participate in each course for which the student is enrolled. Attendance or participation in one course does not qualify as proof of attendance or participation in any other course.

A grade of FW removes the student from the course. The student may no longer attend the course or access any course content. Electronic access via any means to include the Learning Management System (LMS), will be revoked.

The FW grade is a final grade. The FW designation does not affect grade point average and may force a recalculation of financial aid if the FW is applied prior to the 60th percentile of the term or represents a total withdrawal from all coursework.

The removal of a FW grade, and subsequent re-entry into the course, is at the discretion of the instructor. Faculty have the authority and right to uphold a grade of FW and are under no obligation to reinstate a student if the student has met the conditions for a grade of FW. If a student does not agree with the issued grade, the student may appeal the FW grade using the criteria outlined in the College Grade Appeal Policy.

**Associated Policies:**

Minnesota State Community and Technical College Grade Policy
Minnesota State Community and Technical College Grade Appeal Policy

**Associated Procedures:**

Minnesota State Community and Technical College Failure to Withdraw (FW) Procedure
Policy History:

Policy Owner: Chief Academic Officer
Policy Author: M. J. Borcherding & H.J. Doyle
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Policy Group Assignment: Educational

Procedure Written: New/Draft