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MEMORANDUM

ATTENTION	Senate	DATE	October 15, 2021
FROM	Wade Parkhouse, Chair Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies	PAGES	1/1
RE:	Withdrawal Deadline (WD) Extension (SCUS 21-72)		

For information:

Acting under delegated authority at its meeting of October 14, 2021, the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies approved the permanent extension of the withdrawal deadline (WD) to week eight of the academic term.



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MEMORANDUM

ATTENTION SCUS DATE October 1, 2021
FROM Tom Nault
Registrar and Executive Director, Student
Enrolment
RE: Withdrawal Deadline (WD) Deadline Permanent Extension to Week Eight

Background:

In July 2020, SCUS approved a pilot to temporarily extend of the last day of the Course Drop Period (also known as “the WD deadline”) from the end of week 5 through to the end of week 8 for the 2020/2021 academic year. The deadline for this pilot was chosen to help make it more likely that students would have enough feedback to make a good decision on keeping or dropping a course. The change to week 8 also moved SFU from being the earliest WD deadline among other major Canadian universities, to being closer to the average. SCUS later extended the pilot to the end of Fall 2021 to match the Elective Grade System pilot, which shares a week 8 deadline.

Preliminary data from the pilot shows an increase in the number of students dropping courses with a WD (~150%), and a decrease in the number of students dropping courses with a WE (~60%). This suggests the extra three weeks is indeed giving students more time to get feedback on their courses, and more are choosing to make a course drop. It also suggests the administrative burden on students with extenuating circumstances has decreased as they are able to drop themselves from courses rather than have to go through a lengthy application process.

At this point it is unclear how much of the increase in WDs can be attributed to pressures from the COVID-19 pandemic and if that number may decline in future terms. It is also difficult to tease out the role of this pilot in changes to overall academic success levels due to the number of other temporary measures introduced for the 2021 calendar year (i.e. changes to the academic standing policy, repeat rules, and elective grading system).

Motion:

“that SCUS approve under delegated authority and submit to Senate for information the *permanent extension of the withdrawal deadline (WD) to week eight of the academic term.*”*

** amended and unanimously approved at the Oct.14 SCUS meeting.*