

Resolution Opposing Course Drop Fees

Adopted by the DSC on March 15, 2019

WHEREAS, the Graduate Center of the City University of New York (hereafter, "CUNY") promotes creative and independent thinking and strives to train graduate students in that spirit; and

WHEREAS, the Doctoral and Graduate Students' Council (hereafter, "DSC") comprises representatives from Doctoral and Master's programs at the Graduate Center CUNY; and

WHEREAS, the DSC promotes the democratization within the university in order to empower its students, faculty, and staff to participate in the important social, political, and economic decisions that affect the quality of their lives and of their community; and

WHEREAS, graduate students must have latitude in choosing the courses that are most likely to enrich their intellectual and scholarly training and serve their unique research goals; and

WHEREAS, as a result, graduate students may need to drop a course at the beginning of the term, should they realize, during the first weeks of class, that that course will not effectively serve these goals; and

WHEREAS, since the Fall 2018, the Graduate Center has instated course drop fees such that: students can drop a course free of charge only if they do so before the start of the term, and incur 25% of the cost of tuition if they drop the course by the end of the first week of class, 50% of the cost of tuition if they drop the course by the end of the second week of class, 75% of the cost of tuition if they drop the course by the end of the third week of class, 100% of the cost of tuition if they drop the course any time after that; and

WHEREAS, these fees sorely undermine graduate students' ability to design their program of scholarship that best serve their aspirations; and

WHEREAS, the transition to CUNYFirst brought about an implementation of these fees, instituting a policy that had never existed previously; and

WHEREAS, CUNYFirst should be no more than an interface, meant to administer CUNY effectively and to serve harmoniously CUNY's constituencies; and

WHEREAS, the rules encapsulated in such interfaces should serve the constituency at-large, rather than financially punishing graduate students for being intellectually curious and exposing themselves to a wide range of courses and selecting from among them; therefore, let it be

RESOLVED, that the DSC vehemently opposes the newly instated course drop fees and believes that they radically conflict with the core missions of graduate education; and let it be

FINALLY RESOLVED, that the DSC demands that policies allow courses to be dropped free-of-charge until at least the end of an add-drop period, which is 3-weeks after the start of the semester.