

Resolution Opposing Penalty for Course Changes

Adopted by the DSC on October 18, 2019

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

WHEREAS, the Doctoral and Graduate Students' Council (hereinafter, "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 and flexibility 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 Fall 2018, the Graduate Center (obeying a long-standing but until Fall 2018 institutionally impotent policy endorsed by the CUNY Board of Trustees) has instituted course drop fees such that: students can drop a course free of charge only if they do so before the start of semester, 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, since Fall 2018, the Graduate Center has instituted a "Program Adjustment Fee" in addition to the tuition charges cited above, and the "Program Adjustment Fee" assesses students an \$18.00 change fee for every day they make an alteration to their schedule past the first day of semester (including swapping, dropping, and adding) and that the "Program Adjustment Fee" of \$18.00 will be accrued multiple times throughout the semester if the student decides to make adjustments to their class schedule on different calendar days, in addition to potentially losing 25%, 50%, or 75% of the tuition for the course; and

WHEREAS, in correspondence from August and November 2018, the DSC were assured that the aforementioned \$18.00 fee would be reviewed by the Board of Trustees, but we have been given no formal indication that this has happened; and

WHEREAS, these fees punish graduate students for being intellectually curious and sorely undermine their ability to design their program of scholarship that best serve their aspirations; and

WHEREAS, any added costs onto an already economically vulnerable graduate student only further disenfranchises them; and

WHEREAS, the DSC already passed a "Resolution Opposing Course Drop Fees" on March 15, 2019, and has been advocating on this issue since to no avail; let it be

RESOLVED, that the DSC vehemently opposes the course drop fees and Program Adjustment Fee and believes that they radically conflict with the core missions of graduate education as well as tangibly harm the students that attend The Graduate Center; and let it be

FINALLY RESOLVED, that the DSC demands that interim President Muyskens, interim Provost Wrigley, the Board of Trustees, and CUNY Central work together to eliminate the course drop fees and "Program Adjustment Fee" so that students are no longer penalized for making adjustments to their schedules during the first three weeks of their semester.