Unofficial Withdrawal

Summary/Purpose: The effect of an unofficial withdrawal on a student's federal financial aid.

An unofficial withdrawal is when a student stops attending classes during a term. Although the student did not formally withdraw from the University, the student did not complete the period of attendance for which the federal aid eligibility was based. For schools like the University of Mississippi that are not mandated to take attendance, the Department of Education has informed schools to review grades at the end of each semester. Those students who receive all F and/or W grades for a given term are contacted in order to determine if they ceased attendance. If so, they are responsible for returning a prorated portion of the Federal Title IV funds they received for the term. Some of these programs are as follows:

1. the Federal Pell Grant,
2. the Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (SEOG),
3. the Federal Work-Study,
4. the Federal Perkins Loan,
5. the Federal Stafford Subsidized and/or Unsubsidized Loan,
6. the Federal PLUS Loan (borrowed on the student's behalf), and
7. various other Title IV programs.

These provisions are federally mandated and may supersede all refund policies.

The Office of Financial Aid identifies all students who received federal aid and whose posted grades were all F’s and/or W’s. These students are then processed as unofficial withdrawals. Tentative refund calculations are performed. The Department of Education allows schools to use the midpoint of the semester unless another date can be documented; an unofficial withdrawal calculation is performed for refund purposes.

Each student is notified by letter that it has been determined that he/she may be an unofficial withdrawal, and as a result, federal financial aid paybacks will be issued. The letter informs the student of his/her right to dispute the determination. If the student has attended any of his/her classes past the midpoint date, the student should contact the instructor and have the instructor inform the Office of Financial Aid before the stated deadline in the student's Unofficial Withdrawal letter. If the instructor has provided the required documentation of a later attendance date by the stated deadline, the new date will be used for the unofficial withdrawal calculation.