

TO: Purdue Faculty and Staff

FROM: Dale Whittaker, Vice Provost for Undergraduate Academic Affairs

SUBJECT: "Roll Call" Initial Course Participation Recordkeeping

DATE: May 16, 2011

The University is required by the U.S. Department of Education to ensure student financial aid recipients have commenced initial participation in coursework to be eligible for financial aid.

According to the Federal Student Aid Handbook...

- "After the start of classes, Title IV funds should not be disbursed without schools confirming that recipients have begun attendance".
- "A student is considered not to have begun attendance if a school is unable to document the student's attendance in any class."
- "A school may not ignore information available to any office at the school indicating that a student failed to begin attendance."

To comply with these regulations, the Division of Financial Aid (DFA) and the Office of the Registrar have been working with the Provost's Office and Internal Audit to ensure Purdue "instructors of record" (instructors) are conducting effective recordkeeping that assists Purdue in our federal student aid compliance efforts.

For the Spring 2011 semester, the University implemented a "Roll Call" reporting process. To clarify, the "Roll Call" effort is actually being renamed an "Initial Course Participation Reporting" process. We think this terminology may better reflect the recordkeeping we need for federal student aid compliance. Also, the term "Roll Call" seems to imply a one-time event at the beginning of the term, when actually any course activity during the first 25% of a course can be confirmed as initial course participation (i.e., the first 4 weeks of 16-week course, first 2 weeks of 8-week course, and first week of 4-week course, etc.).

We are working to improve this process for Purdue instructors for the Summer 2011 and Fall 2011 semesters. For example, we plan to automate the loading

of Blackboard course participation records into Banner for those instructors who use Blackboard.

Note that Purdue instructors are NOT required to take attendance. But our understanding of federal regulations is that Purdue is required to confirm a student has “commenced attendance” during the first few weeks of classes to be eligible for federal student aid for the courses for which they are enrolled. If a student has attended at least one class OR submitted one academic-related activity (quiz, homework, sign-in sheet, etc.), they are considered to have commenced participation in a course. For large classes suggestions are to use clickers, sign in sheets, tests, quizzes, projects, or some other type of work that a student is required to submit.

Over half of all Purdue instructors participated in the Roll Call reporting process at the beginning of the Spring 2011 semester. That said, DFA has had to contact some instructors that did not participate in the Roll Call reporting for a select group of students.

If DFA does not receive a response from the instructor, DFA must assume that a student did not commence initial course participation. This could result in a billing for financial aid already disbursed and could lead to tuition and fee collection problems for Purdue students and the University.

Individual students have been billed for as much as \$5,000 in lost financial aid because instructors did not properly report the student as having commenced attendance in coursework. In these situations, the student had to report the problem to the instructor, and the instructor has had to correct the information with DFA. We obviously would like to avoid these types of situations that result in a negative impact to the student.

In summary, it is essential that Purdue instructors maintain good records of initial course participation at the beginning of courses and that they reply to information requests from DFA.

We welcome your feedback on how to improve this process for Purdue instructors.

DFA and the Registrar have developed some FAQ's for instructors in the attached document.

Question and Answer for Initial Course Participation Reporting

Q: Is it required that all instructors participate in initial course participation reporting?

A: Yes.

Q: What constitutes initial course participation?

A: If a student has attended at least one class OR submitted one academic-related activity (quiz, homework, sign-in sheet, etc.), they are considered to have commenced participation. Only those students who have never attended at least one class or have never submitted an academic-related activity should be reported as NEVER ATTENDED on initial course participation reporting.

Q: Is there is a deadline or due date for initial course participation reporting?

A: Reporting should be done during the first 4 weeks of 16-week course, first 2 weeks of 8-week course, and first week of 4-week course (i.e., first 25% of course length). Moving forward the initial course participation reporting function will remain “open” from the first week of semester until the end of the semester.

Q: How often are we required to record initial course participation in myPurdue?

A: Once at the beginning of each gradable course (i.e., those courses that have final grades)

Q: What happens if instructor does not report initial course participation?

A: By not recording initial course participation, the instructor could affect the student’s financial aid eligibility and result in billing and collection problems for the student and Purdue University.

Q: What if I report a student as NEVER ATTENDED in initial course participation reporting and the student starts showing up to class?

A: Contact the Division of Financial Aid, facontact@purdue.edu for specific guidance in these situations.

Q: Is reporting required for every lecture and lab meeting?

A: No, initial course participation should be reported for only gradable sections of a course. Recitations and labs that are paired with a gradable course do not require initial course participation reporting, but note that academic-related activity within a recitation or lab can be considered initial

course participation for the course.

Q: How do we confirm initial course participation for a large class?

A: Suggestions are to use clickers, sign-in sheets, tests or quizzes, projects, or some other type of work that is due. Note that Blackboard also can collect course participation information electronically.

Q: If we were to have a student who is off campus but attends every class through Skype or online teaching, would that count?

A: Yes, they would receive a report of ATTEND.

Q: Does this apply to undergraduate courses only, or to graduate courses as well?

A: It is for both undergraduate and graduate students.

Q: Does this include research and independent study courses?

A: Yes, any course in which a grade report is expected at the end of the term is required to report. The following are considered grades: A+ through F, S, U, I, or P.

Q: If the student quits attending halfway through the term, do instructors need to somehow change the initial course participation information?

A: No, but the instructors should record a grade of "FN", Failing/Non-authorized Incomplete and record the last date of the student's academic-related activity as directed during final grading.

Q: Are Purdue instructors required to take attendance on a regular basis?

A: No, initial course participation recordkeeping and reporting is only required at the beginning of the course.

Q: Can this reporting be done automatically using Blackboard?

A: At this time it is not possible, but we are planning to have this done in the future.

Q: Will instructors need to mark all students to indicate they are attending or not attending?

A: No, the default is set to attending so instructors will only need to uncheck those not attending and submit.

Q: Since the default is set to yes, can instructors simply do nothing?

A: No, while the default is set to yes, instructors still must press the submit

button to be in compliance.

Q: Can students view how instructors report initial course participation?

A: Yes, students will have a view of their classes for the term and how each instructor reported on them.

FURTHER CONTACT INFORMATION

If you have enrollment or myPurdue questions that are not addressed here, please direct them to the Office of the Registrar at registrar@purdue.edu

If you have financial aid questions that are not addressed here, please direct them to the Division of Financial Aid at facontact@purdue.edu.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "A. Dale Whiteaker". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping tail on the final letter.