



## **CT State Senate College Senate**

### **Drop for Non-Payment (DNP) Recommendations**

In spring 2024 the College Senate Council of Professional Staff worked in collaboration with CT State enrollment managers to discuss the process and timing of dropping students for non-payment (DNP). Campuses continued to articulate problems with the DNP process at the September 2024 Senate meeting. The problems campuses identified:

- Students being dropped who had paid their bill in full
- Students dropped who had financial aid which had not been applied to their courses (loans)
- Students with third-party payments
- Veterans
- Students were dropped for non-payment when campuses indicated there was a Banner “Memo” notation not to drop

Collaboratively, the Council has been working with CT State Enrollment Management leadership, and Institutional Research, as well as on-campus stakeholders including the Deans of Students and Deans of Faculty, advising, Bursars, and financial aid, and lastly, CSCU Finance, to analyze systems and identify gaps in the process.

Some aspects to the current DNP process which the Council has identified as problematic are:

- The drop process begins far too late in the enrollment cycle. It teaches students to procrastinate. Then once the student is dropped they are often unable to get back into the classes they need because they are full. So, they go back to advising for help in selecting available classes. Advisors are being asked in some cases to advise multiple times during their busiest time of the year. Some students end up registering for any class they can, which might cause a CPoS alert, which creates more work for advising, the One Stop and Financial Aid. This oftentimes causes both confusion and frustration for the student. Or students will select a course out of sequence, which might add a semester or two to before they can graduate. These issues hinder our retention and graduation rates. Consequently, if we begin the drop process earlier in the enrollment cycle, financial aid application data suggests we will still have similar problems with those students who are the most at risk of not being ready to pay at the start of the semester, even with the late start program classes.
- The one-week period between when the initial drop list is created, and students are physically dropped does not provide enough time for all departments involved to

thoroughly vet the list to ensure accuracy. To add to the issue, we recognize that once the data is extracted from Banner, it is already old.

- Some campuses have reported as much as a 30% error rate among dropped students. These errors then cause frustration and a lack of trust in our college among students who believe they were incorrectly dropped. Staff feel they look foolish when they tell students they owe money when they have already paid, which further undermines their trust in staff. Alternatively, CSCU Finance and the campus Bursars have received few of these complaints and of the complaints forwarded, few prove to be a legitimate error.
- Students who have paid a portion of their bill and are still dropped, are dropped from all their courses, instead of the one or two they did not pay for. This creates chaos for the student.
- Faculty and staff are not comfortable being perceived as bill collectors. They feel it undermines relationships with students who need to rely on the advice and support of campus personnel. Faculty and staff callers also do not feel comfortable with private financial information being shared throughout the campus for people to make calls. Furthermore, not all employees have access to enrollment information such as financial aid, SAP Holds, student balances, etc. So, they are just calling blindly creating more calls to other offices.
- There is not enough time for on campus personnel to thoroughly vet the drop lists once received. Campuses have indicated receiving lists 24-36 hours before the scheduled drop, which is next to impossible given they are in the middle of peak advising and registration. As a result, some campuses do not vet the list at all. Vetting responsibilities also differ widely among the campuses. Some include advising, some utilize clerical staff, some utilize management, some faculty, and some use an all-hands-on approach.
- The removal of the Hold for students who pay online is not automated.
- Literature indicates payment must be made by end of business. But *End of Business* is identified differently on each campus.
- Not all personnel involved in the drop campaigns are in the Call Campaigns team in MS Teams. Individual campus deans determined access.
- Callers would benefit from more data fields on the DNP lists to mitigate needing to utilize multiple tools for outreach.
- Banner notes and notations from the DNP file stemming from the on campus vetting process do not always appear to be applied so students who are being dropped anyway.
- Black and Hispanic/Latine students are more likely to be dropped for nonpayment, representing just over half of dropped students but only half of the general population. They are also less likely to re-enroll, more likely to be in debt, and have higher levels of debt. These disparities remained stable from the CCC Era to the CT State Era (IR, 2025). However, they still need to be addressed.
- While communications regarding the Drop for Non-Payment process are documented and dates are posted on the CT State website, there is not enough education and communication to students and employees about the process and deadlines. We also

know that many students do not thoroughly read all campus communications and students have reported they are inundated with school email.

- CT State Financial Aid is required by law to inform students as to when their financial aid will be applied to their account. However, students do not realize how their personal aid package may have an impact on their college balance and often do not follow up, leaving them at risk of being dropped.
- There appears to be a breakdown in the reporting of suspected errors, which may be contributing to perceptions about errors.

The Council recognizes that it cannot correct every problem all at once and understands recommendations may need to be put forward incrementally as the Council and College assess each drop period. The Council also recognizes that issues might be negated depending on which recommendations are implemented. The Council can make a series of recommendations now to help support the retention of our most disenfranchised students from being dropped for non-payment while also ensuring accuracy, communication, and fiscal responsibility. Lastly, the Council also recognizes the importance of utilizing multiple means of communication to inform students of their payment responsibilities beyond the promissory note on myCTstate.

After much consideration about the DNP process, the College Senate recommends:

1. CT State should enhance communications and marketing efforts by developing clear and accessible materials, including tutorials for both students and employees, on drop dates and related processes. To achieve this, we recommend that the College Senate Council of Professional Staff, CT State Enrollment Management, CSCU Finance, CT State Marketing, and Instructional Design and Educational Technology Coordinators collaborate to create a glossary of terms and simplify the language in marketing materials and tutorials. This approach will ensure that the information is easily understood by the entire campus community, using less jargon and more straightforward language. Others of considerations would include:
  - a. Campus social media
  - b. Campus TV monitors for those that have them
  - c. Online and in person New Student Orientation programs
  - d. CT State website
  - e. Handouts
2. CT State develop marketing plans to help students understand the importance of following up with their financial aid from semester to semester.
3. Education and communication regarding the importance of financial aid and payments be included in all online and in person all New Student Orientation programs.
4. CT State and CSCU Finance educate advisors and all call team members on appropriate use of “Memos” in Banner and when students should start a payment plan.
5. To give advisors query access to Customer Service Inquiry Screen, named TSICSRV.
6. All Guided Pathway Advisors are added to the twelve campus Call Campaign Teams.

7. DNP lists are shared with campuses no less than three business days prior to the scheduled drop excluding abbreviated terms.
8. Each campus must designate an owner of the DNP list and the outreach process for their campus.
9. Drop lists also include student's program, advisor, all holds, if they have a FAFSA on file, email address, and phone number.
10. All campus personnel report any discrepancies or suspected errors to their assigned Bursar to investigate and report to the CSCU Finance Director of Systems and Support to track, distinguish between what was an error and what was resolved, assess patterns, and report outcomes to campuses at the conclusion of each of the DNP cycles.

In collaboration with CSCU Finance and the AVP Enrollment and Retention Services the College Senate further recommends we pilot recommendations 6-10 for spring 2025 course drop cycle for 7B.

In conclusion, the College Senate believes that the Drop for Non-Payment process can be a valuable tool to enhance CT State's retention if the drop lists are accurate, if on campus personnel have enough time to review their respective campus lists, communication to students is ample and consistent, and campus personnel know the facts about the DNP process.

*The above recommendations to the Senate and CT State College Leadership were approved by the College Senate on February 28, 2025.*