

A-term of the Academic Year 2020/2021 SUPPLEMENT

**Worcester Polytechnic Institute
Faculty Handbook
COVID-related temporary motions
2021 SUPPLEMENT**

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August 27th, 2020

Tanja Dominko, Secretary of the Faculty

Date: August 27, 2020

To: WPI Faculty

From: Committee on Governance (Prof. Boudreau, Chair)

Re: Motion to extend remote voting in emergency settings only

Motion: The Committee on Governance (COG) recommends and I move that faculty meetings continue to be conducted remotely, including synchronous remote voting, through the first faculty meeting of C term 2021.

Rationale: Given WPI's hybrid mode of course delivery and ongoing efforts to keep the campus population safe during the COVID 19 pandemic, faculty meetings will continue to be held remotely for the duration of 2020. Although getting back to in-person faculty meetings remains our strong preference for conducting faculty business, our spring/summer experiment with synchronous remote voting at faculty meetings was successful, allowing for faculty meeting operations to continue during the emergency situation. This resolution extends that practice through the end of the calendar year. If necessary, faculty can consider a separate motion to extend the practice at a later time.

Date: August 27, 2020

To: WPI Faculty

From: Committee on Governance (Prof. Boudreau, Chair)

Re: Motion to allow elected faculty governance committee members to vote on critical issues if a meeting of entire faculty cannot be called

Motion: The Committee on Governance (COG) recommends and I move that if a Faculty meeting cannot be convened in a timely manner for any reason, **all the elected members of Faculty governance committees** will have the power to vote on critical time-sensitive issues through the first faculty meeting in C 2021 with a quorum of at least 25 percent of those members required. Any such vote would be revisited by the Faculty at the earliest possible convenience.

Rationale: In the current crisis, emergency situations may arise where Faculty approval is urgently needed. In emergency cases where waiting for the next scheduled Faculty meeting is not soon enough for a decision, a vote by a majority of elected Faculty governance members can serve as an interim decision of the Faculty. This group is large enough to represent the campus while also being small enough to quickly convene.

Date: August 27, 2020

To: WPI Faculty

From: Committee on Academic Policy (Prof. Heineman, Chair)

Re: Overloading policy

Motion: The Committee on Academic Policy recommends, and I move, to change the policy regarding the overload policy.

CAP recommends that students be allowed to overload in A term 2020 (that is, register for more than three undergraduate classes) without receiving prior advisor approval. The registrar will email all faculty advisors the list of their students who have chosen to overload. The only students that would require advisor approval would be:

- First-year students
- Students enrolled in a full-term project work (either IQP or MQP)
- Students enrolled in ID 2050

Rationale

Registration for courses which will result in an overload may take place, on a space-available basis, as of the first day of the term in which that course is offered. This proposal aims to streamline the registration process during the first week of A term.

Note that students enrolled in ID 2050 are still highly discouraged from overloading during this term.

The reason for amending the policy is the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The traditional practice of “seeking a signature for an overload” is complicated because not all academic advisors are going to be physically on campus when A term starts. More challenging, however, is that the students often would “try out a course” by attending a few lectures when deciding their courses. For online and even hybrid courses, all course material is in Canvas, and thus can only be accessed by students in the course; and with de-densified classrooms, there is literally no opportunity for an unregistered student to attend a class.

Due to the unprecedented situation in D-term 2020, CAP proposed a one-time change to the overload policy.

Overloading: Beginning March 23, undergraduate students may overload up to 21.75 credits (C and D credits included in total) on Bannerweb. Students are *strongly encouraged* to consult with their advisor BEFORE registering for an overload. Anything over 21.75 credits will require permission from their advisor (see above for steps).

Students enrolled in ID 2050 or a full-unit project (that is, 9 credits of IQP or MQP) in D-term are not eligible to overload. Advisors will get a list of any advisees overloading by March 27.

The limit of 21.75 credits is equivalent to seven undergraduate courses plus a 1/12th PE credit. There were 629 students who overloaded in D-term 2020 which was actually lower than the 639 students who overloaded in D-term 2019. It seems that students “did the right thing” in D term, and this trend should continue.

This policy will not apply to first-year students or to students who are completing a full-term project (such as an IQP or MQP).

Implementation Plan

The registrar will include the following information in emails to undergraduate students.

Overloading: Beginning August 24 with sophomore or higher standing may overload up to 21.75 credits (C and D credits included in total) on Bannerweb. Students are *strongly encouraged* to consult with their advisor BEFORE registering for an overload. Anything over 21.75 credits will require permission from their advisor (see above for steps). Students enrolled in ID 2050 or a full-unit project (that is, 9 credits of IQP or MQP) in A-term must receive permission from their advisor to overload. Advisors will get a list of any advisees overloading by September 9.

The registrar will send a report of the total number of overloaded students to CAP by Monday September 9th.