“Formally endorsed by Trustees, the Shared Governance Council (SGC) will serve as a high level advisory body to the STCC President on the recommendations developed by the College community that are then submitted to the Board of Trustees. The body will operate on a consensus mode rather than voting. The President will present to the Board of Trustees recommendations via consensus by the SGC with his/hers/their view as to what action the Trustees should take.”

Additional Detail/ACCT Consultant Report (June 2022):

“Proposals may come to the SGC from any constituent group via written request.”

“The SGC considers fiscal, union, student, administrative impact of the proposal.”

“The President decides to accept, modify or reject the proposal if it is an administrative procedural matter; the President decides to recommend to the Board of Trustees any policy recommendation accompanying it with a statement of support or concern.”

This form is to be used for generating recommendations for shared governance consideration that potentially lead to changes in policy and/or practice-protocols. For an overview of topics to be considered by the STCC Shared Governance Council, please confer with your appropriate representative. The comprehensive consultant report prepared for the college (June 2022) is readily available, and a public-facing website is currently in development that will ensure information, and the availability of agendas, minutes, and decision/actions.
I: Proposed Recommendation

[The following section is to be completed by the body bringing forward the recommendation]

Name of Entity Making Recommendation:
Geraldine de Berly, Ph.D., Vice President for Academic Affairs

- Nature of the Recommendation:
  
  ____X____ Academic
  
  ____X____ Student Success/Systems of Operation
  
  ______ Budget/Fiscal
  
  ______ Health-Safety-Security (Students, Employees, Campus)
  
  ______ Technology/Innovation
  
  ______ Facilities
  
  ______ Other: __________________________________________

- Describe current policy/ protocol/ challenge:

The STCC Withdrawal Policy allows for the withdrawal of a student for excessive absences. Our current policy is not consistent with other MA community colleges and none of the CT community colleges. Historically, this was added to the policy for two major reasons.

The first reason was administrative in that it allowed for return of Title IV funds. Essentially, if a student does not attend 60% of the semester, any federal funds that have been awarded are prorated for the amount of time that the student did attend. If the student remains in the course for over 60% of the duration of the course, the student aid is not prorated.

The second reason was to protect students that walked away from receiving a failing grade on the transcript which had a negative impact on the student GPA.

From an administrative perspective, the Return of Funds can be handled at various times throughout the semester. If a student has a failing grade at midterm and has not attended
since the fifth week of classes, the student receives a W at midterm (WM) and Return of Funds is calculated based on that date. As a student initiates a withdrawal, the date is recorded and Return of Funds can be calculated. If a student fails the term, faculty report the Last Date of Attendance (LDA) and the Return of (Title IV) Funds will be calculated from this date.

While the intent of this policy was student-centric, the outcomes have not been as positive.

**Equity: BIPOC Students Disproportionately Affected**
The Excessive Absence Withdrawal negatively impacts BIPOC students at a far higher rate than their counterparts. The chart below depicts the use of the Withdrawal at Midterm (WM) and the Excessive Absence Withdrawal (WU). Based on the demographic make up at STCC, one would expect that the effect of a policy would mirror the STCC demographic make up. For example, if 42% of students at STCC identify as White, one might expect 42% of those affected to be White. In the case of the WU, that is not the case. While 42% of STCC students are White, only 26% of the excessive absence withdrawals were awarded to White students. In this case, there was a differential of 16 lower than the expected outcome. Conversely, while STCC is approximately 30% Hispanic, over 36% of all withdrawals due to excessive absences were assigned to this group. We notice a higher number of the WU awarded to Black, Hispanic, Two or More Races, and the Unknown group. While it was likely not the intent, the current practice harms BIPOC students at an exceedingly high rate. This policy is not consistent with STCC’s goals regarding equity and anti-racism.

**Faculty InitiatedWithdrawals Affect BIPOC Students Disproportionately**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>American Indian</th>
<th>Asian</th>
<th>Black or African American</th>
<th>Hawaiian/Pacific Islander</th>
<th>Hispanic</th>
<th>Two or More Races</th>
<th>Unknown</th>
<th>White</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WM Total</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>226</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>695</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.29%</td>
<td>2.19%</td>
<td>13.00%</td>
<td>0.17%</td>
<td>39.97%</td>
<td>3.22%</td>
<td>12.42%</td>
<td>28.75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Withdrawal per Midterm (LDA)</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>4.00%</td>
<td>13.00%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>30.00%</td>
<td>3.00%</td>
<td>8.00%</td>
<td>42.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WU Total</td>
<td>1739</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>366</td>
<td>793</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>301</td>
<td>566</td>
<td>2181</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.37%</td>
<td>2.20%</td>
<td>16.78%</td>
<td>36.36%</td>
<td>4.54%</td>
<td>13.80%</td>
<td>25.95%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Withdrawal Excessive Absence</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>4.00%</td>
<td>13.00%</td>
<td>30.00%</td>
<td>3.00%</td>
<td>8.00%</td>
<td>42.00%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 1- Depicts the distribution of withdrawal grades that were initiated by the instructor and the race/ethnicity of the students awarded those grades.*
Student-Centered: Continued Access and Financial Implications
One of STCC’s Core Values is Student-Centered as noted on the website.

Student-Centered: We encourage our students to be the best that they can be. We provide a diverse educational experience that promotes personal and professional growth.

Part of being student-centered is allowing students to make the decisions that are best for them while guiding them. The current policy fails to allow students to make the ultimate decision in their education. Students are not at the center of the decision making process that allows the student to continue attending a class in which the student has satisfied a financial obligation. When a student is withdrawn from a course, the student is no longer allowed to attend that course. Without due process, the student is removed and no longer has access for which the student has made financial arrangements. We have students who are aware they are likely to have to repeat the course; nevertheless, continuing to attend class or have access to lectures would be of benefit when repeating the course. Consequently, students should have the option, or more strongly put, the right to remain in the course even though a failing grade seems likely.

Oftentimes, the student has not attained the threshold required for the Return of Funds (60% of the course) and the student ends with an unexpected balance. In most of these cases, the students that acquire a balance are Pell Grant students. For these students who are low income, leaving them with a balance requires them to find funds that they might not have in order to return to STCC in subsequent semesters. (If that obligation is not met, their tax returns are intercepted after approximately two years.)

Inconsistent Implementation: Use of Excessive Absence Withdrawal is Confusing and Not Transparent

Our current Excessive Absence Withdrawal policy is not applied consistently from one subject area to another and, even less so, from one faculty member to another. General Education (e.g., Math, English, etc.) faculty tend to issue Excessive Absence Withdrawals heavily whereas program (i.e., discipline specific) level faculty use them less frequently. Adding to the inconsistent use, some faculty within an area do not use Excessive Absence Withdrawals and others use them heavily. This leads to student confusion. Students are removed from some classes with little or no warning while being allowed to continue in other classes for the same level of attendance/participation. Cases exist when students that have received a WU in one course, have stopped attending all courses and then have a mixture of failing grades and withdrawal grades on their transcript when they stopped attending on the same day. Again, this may have unforeseen financial consequences.
Describe recommended policy/protocol change, and the benefit/impact:

General Information regarding withdrawing from a course

- Beginning Fall 2023, STCC will change its Withdrawal Policy
- STCC will no longer use the Excessive Absence Withdrawal.
- **STCC recognizes and values academic freedom**- Instructors develop their own course policies and these may include grade reduction for absences/lack of participation that may lead to a course failing grade.
- *Students wishing to withdraw from course(s) have the responsibility to initiate the process as faculty will no longer issue withdrawals.* Notifying the instructor or ceasing to attend class does NOT constitute official withdrawal. Failure to officially withdraw may result in an “F” grade.
- Withdrawing From Courses: After the course drop period, students have the right to withdraw from one, several, or all courses through the last day to withdraw as published in the academic calendar (e.g., the twelfth (12th) week of the fall or spring semester). Withdrawals will not be processed after the last day to withdraw, unless there are extenuating circumstances for which the student must meet with the Academic Dean that oversees the course that the student is attempting to withdraw from.
- For students who withdraw by the withdrawal deadline, a “W” will be recorded on the transcript and will count as a course attempt, but will not be factored into the GPA calculation.
- If a student receives a failing grade (F) at midterm and has not attended class since the fifth week of a standard semester, the student will be administratively withdrawn (WM) from the course and a Return of Title IV funds may apply.

Procedure to Withdraw

- By the withdrawal deadline, students must withdraw from the course in ARIES. Students needing assistance should contact registrar@stcc.edu.
- Depending on the reason for withdrawal, various offices from STCC will reach out to the student to ensure that this is the right decision.  

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1 *The SGC should note Addendum A as an example of the triage that will occur when a student opts to withdraw from a course. This ensures that the student is making the most informed decision and allows an opportunity to retain the student.*
Describe background and rationale for how the recommendation was generated (involvement of staff-faculty-students-governance bodies), include any supporting data, reports, survey results, research, et al.:

- As the withdrawal policy was developed, the following shareholders were able to provide input:
  - The Anti-Racism and Inclusion Alliance
  - The Recruitment, Registration, and Recruitment group
  - The All Unit Congress Academic Affairs Standing Committee
  - Faculty at various levels
  - The Academic Leadership Team
- Presentations were given on the withdrawal data and stakeholder voices were crafted into the recommendation
II: Recommendation Review

Shared Governance Council Review and Consideration (Date):

Generated Consensus (minutes made available):

Next Steps (as needed):

III: Presidential Action

Decision on the Recommendation:

Rationale/Summary:

Date of Presentation to STCC Trustees:

__________________________________________  ______________________
(Signature)  (Date)
### Addendum A: Example of Student Outreach by Withdrawal Reason

#### Withdrawal Interventions

- **Similar to a triage tree**
- **When a specific withdrawal is initiated by a student outreach by various offices will begin**
- **Stakeholders with intervene to attempt to “save” the student**
- **Goal is increased student retention**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Withdrawal Code</th>
<th>Withdrawal Reason / Prevention Day</th>
<th>Intervening Stakeholders</th>
<th>Potential Interventions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WN</td>
<td>Withdrawal at Midterm</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WM</td>
<td>Withdrawal at Midterm</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Additional codes or DR**

**WN**

- **Withdrawal at Midterm**
  - Greater use of Early Alert System: Message to faculty after week four to intervene with students not attending/participating
  - Developing a model to work with students to self-advocate and determine if they can be reassigned if successful completion is still a possibility

**WM**

- **Withdrawal at Midterm**
  - Greater use of Early Alert System: Message to faculty after week four to intervene with students not attending/participating
  - Developing a model to work with students to self-advocate and determine if they can be reassigned if successful completion is still a possibility

- **WCR**
  - Success/Coach
  - Adviser, CAS
  - STEC/CAS Foundation
  - Student Success Services
  - CAS Foundation, Student Success Services
  - Assess funding sources for students

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  - Success/Coach
  - Adviser, CAS
  - STEC/CAS Foundation
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