

“Course Shopping” Suggestion
(Rejected by Academic Quality Committee)

Currently, many WKU students register for more hours than they intend to complete (“course shopping”). In Fall 2010, over 3500 students registered for between 15.5 and 18 hours of classes. More than 20% of these students reduced their hours by the end of the first week of classes and over one-third of these students reduced their hours by the census date. The numbers are even more striking for students who register for more than 18 hours. Approximately 30% of these students reduce their hours by the end of the first week and nearly half by the census date.

Course shopping is problematic for the student, individually, and the university as a whole. Students who reduce their hours between the first day of class and the census date have lower GPAs than those who do not. Although the direction of effect is unclear, course shopping does not appear to improve GPA. Moreover, course shopping unnecessarily increases expenditures on faculty workload. In Fall 2010, 4867 student credit hours were dropped, which translates into approximately 81 course sections.

Academic Affairs is considering instituting a fee that would reduce the tendency for students to course shop. It is important to note that the goal of such a fee is to change students’ behavior, not to raise revenue. A current suggestion is 20% of the regular course fee (about \$70 per credit hour) for course registration between 16 and 18 hours. Beyond 18 hours, the regulation tuition rate would apply.