

20030212 Paid Flag Issue

Summary of Meeting on Feb 7/2003

Attended: Charlotte, Jack, Rick, Kay, Marlies

Today:

The **“Paid Flag”** is not a flag indicating that the student paid. Instead, the flag is set when the fee calculation was performed and the tuition fee posted to the student’s account. The terminology is a holdover from the days of “tentative”, “confirmed” and “paid” status indicators.

The “Paid Flag” is used to differentiate those students who have booked courses and were charged for them from those who also booked courses but were not charged. In SIS, the “Paid Flag” is related to two holds: “Accounts Receivable Hold” and “Do not auto-process Hold”.

The various flags are used in two situations:

1. A student booked courses before the “Accounts Receivable Hold” was raised, e.g. a student books Summer and Fall Classes during priority registration in April. The student doesn’t pay the Summer Fees and ends up with a Financial Hold at the end of June. However, the university does not want to cancel the student’s Fall bookings. Although, the student has an outstanding obligation to the university the Bursar’s Office doesn’t want the individual to incur further debts.
2. A student already has the “Accounts Receivable Hold” and is prevented from booking modules. The student goes to the Bursar’s Office and begs for understanding. Sometimes, the financial difficulty is related to outstanding financial aid. In any case, if the Bursar’s Office decides in favor of the student, the Hold is overridden to allow the student to get a class schedule. The Hold stays in the system and would stop booking for other terms. The “Do not auto-process Hold” is also set to avoid increasing the debt on the student’s account.

The above Flag and Holds help the Bursar’s Office to identify individuals who require special attention, e.g. financial counseling and extra time to pay. By preventing the posting of the charges to the student’s account, the Bursar’s Office also helps the student to avoid the service charges.

The “Paid Flag” has to be passed to Financial Aid to avoid disbursing aid for students whose charges have not been posted.

According to Jack and Charlotte, most of these students remain at the university and eventually, pay their bills or receive sufficient financial aid.

Here are statistics of students with the “Do not auto-process hold” and eventual de-enrollments:

Fall 2001: 692 students flagged as DNAP -> 16 students de-enrolled
These students had a fall schedule and their account balance was greater than \$500.

Fall 2002: 745 students flagged as DNAP -> 14 students de-enrolled

Summer 2001: 190 students flagged as DNAP -> 30 students de-enrolled
Summer 2002: 126 students flagged as DNAP -> 25 students de-enrolled

Spring 2002: 185 students flagged as DNAP -> 18 students de-enrolled
Spring 2003: 96 students flagged as DNAP -> approximately 17 will be de-enrolled.

Future:

The CM fee calculation evaluates the bookings at a specific point in time. In its current form, the hold functionality is not fully developed in the fee calculation process. However, this is not an obstacle in this situation. The solution is not more flags and holds to interfere with the automated process. Instead, the situation should be resolved proactively by the timely identification of students who are in financial difficulties but already have a class schedule or would like one but are prevented from booking due to existing holds.

Contract Accounting permits a “posting” lock, but that could stop all charges from posting. As long as charges are not posted, the system is unable to produce a billing statement to remind the student of the outstanding debt.

Contract Accounting has tools allowing the Bursar’s Office to help student with financial difficulties.

- Change of the due date after posting the charges.
- Defer payment

Recommendation:

When booking classes, a student enters into a financial obligation towards the university. The individual also takes space away from students who paid their debts. Since most of these students stay at the university and eventually clear up their financial obligations, the university does not want to cancel their schedule until the situation is deemed hopeless.

Based on the statistics of the past 2 years, it does not seem practical to interfere with the automated processes.

Proposed solution:

- Eliminate the “Paid Flag” and the “Do not auto-process Hold”.
- Where the situation warrants it, give the student a window to book courses by temporarily inactivating the “Accounts Receivable Hold” and reactivating it with a future date.
- Calculate and post fees for all students with booked courses.
- Disburse financial aid to all students who have booked courses and are deemed eligible by the FA Department.
- When appropriate, change the due date to prevent service charges for students with short-term financial difficulties.
- When appropriate, defer payment for a period of time.

Preventative steps:

The “Accounts Receivable Hold” is set automatically during the dunning process. The Bursar’s Office could use the output from this report to look for students with future bookings and contact them.

SAP provides a report to inactivate the “Accounts Receivable Hold” when open items were cleared through credits other than cash desk payments. This report can be executed frequently and the output could be used by the Bursar’s Office for further manual investigation.

Alternative, a report could be developed to identifying those students who have future bookings and overdue items above a specific amount. It should be possible to download the output of this report to Excel.