

Dear Student:

There is a common rumor that it is better to stay in a course and get an **F** than it is to drop the course, which leaves a **W** on your transcript. Please be very careful in making this important decision. It may have serious consequences for you several years from now.

You need to understand that the grade you make *will show on your SMU transcript FOREVER*, even if you retake the course and make a better grade and even if SMU does not include the first grade in your GPA under the SMU First Year Repeat Rule. **Grades DO NOT GO AWAY!** Future employers and professional school admissions personnel will see ALL grades and not just the best ones.

Please see the Undergraduate Catalog under the section title *Grades for Repeated Courses*, in particular, the following two sentences.

“Both the initial and the second grades are shown on the student’s permanent academic record.

“Students are cautioned that for some purposes, such as admission into an academic program, both grades *or only the initial grade* may be used.”

Students who will apply to graduate programs in most fields, including the health professions and MEDICAL SCHOOL, must understand that even if the course is repeated, both grades may be used to calculate the GPA.

The following statement appears in the *American Medical Colleges Application Service (AMCAS) Instruction Manual*:

“AMCAS counts all attempts of a repeated course, even if your school does not.”

Note that AMCAS does NOT count (weight or value) a course from which an applicant has withdrawn or “dropped” and which appears as a **W** on the transcript.

So think long and hard before making this decision. *See your Advisor*, and discuss the information in this letter with him/her.

Dr. Patty Wisian-Neilson
Professor of Chemistry
Southern Methodist University
pwisian@smu.edu
214-768-2483