

Update on Academic Regulation 38b Suspension for Fall 2021

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Overview of data from the Pullman Campus

In Fall 2021, the WSU Faculty Senate agreed to support a petition to suspend Academic Regulation 38b, hereafter Rule 38b, for the that semester. Under normal conditions, Rule 38b stipulates that first-time, first-year undergraduate students are recessed from the University after their first term of enrollment if their semester GPA is below 1.0. Individuals are recessed from the University for one full semester (Fall or Spring). Instead of being recessed for the Spring 2022 semester, students who fell into this category were invited to apply for reinstatement with very specific conditions, including: i) meet with their academic advisor three times during the upcoming Spring semester, ii) participate in four academic coaching sessions throughout the semester, and iii) participate in a holistic review of the challenges that the student faced in Fall 2021 in order to seek the appropriate support during the Spring 2022 semester.

On the Pullman Campus, 234 students met the conditions for Rule 38b at the end of the Fall 2021 semester. The demographics for this group indicate that there was an overrepresentation of students from groups that are under-represented or been found to have a higher risk of lower academic achievement.

124 students identified as male (53%)	80 students were Pell-eligible (34%)
97 students identify as first-gen (41%)	102 students are ethnic minority (44%)
164 students brought in no prior credit (70%)	
122 students were pursuing a STEM degree (52%)	

The fall-term GPA distribution for these students was as follows:

0.0 GPA	99 students (42%)
0.01-0.49 GPA	44 students (19%)
0.50-0.99 GPA	91 students (39%)

Nathan Lindstedt in WSU Institutional Research performed an analysis of the Rule 38b student population. Using chi-square contingency tables, statistically significant overrepresentation of Rule 38b students was associated with the following categories; a) male (53% of deficiencies; 44.9% of the total population), b) low income (34.2% of deficiencies; 26.2% of the total population), c) underrepresented minority (35.5% of deficiencies; 26.2% of total population), and d) first-generation (43.5% of deficiencies; 31.5% of total population). However, when subjected to logistic regression models of the population-level data between Rule 38b and the general WSU student population:

- a) There was no significant significance between Rule 38b students and students in the general WSU population in any of the following demographic categories: family income, WA resident/nonresident, gender, reported race/ethnicity, or first-generation status.
- b) Students in non-STEM programs tended to be less deficient than students in STEM programs

Spring 2022 Results

A total of 165 students (71% of eligible) went through the reinstatement and academic coaching process to return to WSU-Pullman for the Spring 2022 semester. Of the previously identified groups of students, the percent of eligible students that returned is indicated below. An initial observation is that there was no group in this list that returned at a significantly reduced rate.

students identifying as male (68%)
 first-gen students (66%)
 students with no prior credit (68%)

Pell-eligible students (68%)
 ethnic minority students (76%)

122 students were pursuing a STEM degree (66%)

Intervention Program

During the Spring 2022 semester, Rule 38b students were required to:

1. Earn a minimum GPA of a 2.0 for the semester.
2. Repeat one or more classes identified by an academic advising professional from the Academic Success and Career Center.
3. Limit their Spring 2023 Semester enrollment to a maximum of 15 credits.
4. Meet with their academic advisor 3 times for an Academic Improvement Conversation (AIC). The first AIC was due no later than the end of the 2nd week of classes (1/21/2022). The second AIC was due no later than the end of the 8th week of classes (3/11/2022). The third AIC was to occur between the 9th and 13th week of classes so preparations for the upcoming semester could occur.
5. Complete 4 Academic Success coaching appointments: the first coaching appointment was due January 28th, 2022; the second coaching appointment was due February 18th, 2022; the third coaching appointment was due March 25th, 2022; and the fourth coaching appointment was due April 8th, 2022.

Of the 165 students who returned from Fall 2021 to Spring 2022, 125 students completed the Spring 2022 term (76%) and the other 40 students cancelled their enrollment at some point during the Spring term. The academic performance of the reinstated students during the spring semester breaks down as follows:

- 1) 40 students (24%) cancelled their enrollment at some point in the semester
- 2) 25 students (15%) earned a 0.0 GPA for the Spring semester
- 3) 53 students (32%) earned a 0.01-1.99 GPA for the Spring Semester

- 4) 34 students (21%) earned a 2.0-2.99 GPA for the Spring Semester
- 5) 13 students (8%) earned a 3.0 or higher GPA for the Spring Semester

This data indicates that 29% of the Rule 38b students who returned (20% of the total Rule 38b population) for the Spring Semester and received the structured support and resources were able to achieve a semester that was academically sufficient (2.0 > term GPA).

Preliminary Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions:

1. Rule 38b does not differentially impact students from marginalized backgrounds. Students in STEM programs tend to be more at risk of earning less than a 1.0 term GPA during their first semester at WSU.
2. 20% of the Rule 38b students in Pullman utilized University resources and the support needed to be academically successful (term GPA > 2.0) in the Spring 2022 semester.
3. Even with a plan that was built “on the fly”, ASCC was able to move 47 students from suspension status to successful academic standing and progress towards a degree. While this may not look significant at first glance, retention of these 47 students will yield a significant return on investment in later years since it will increase WSU’s year-to-year retention and graduation rates, and it could yield an additional tuition revenue of almost \$1.5M (47 students x \$11,000 / year x 3 years) to the institution.

Recommendations:

1. We propose to extend the suspension of Rule 38b for the 2022-2023 academic year to gather a second year of data about the students who are impacted by this Academic Regulation and to implement a revised engagement plan for students who would normally be recessed from the university under Rule 38b.
2. ASCC is developing a more robust engagement plan for students who fall under Rule 38b if the rule is allowed to again be suspended during the 2022-2023 academic year. Enhancements to the intervention plan utilized in Spring 2022 will include:
 - Students will be asked to complete an intake form prior to attending their first Academic Coaching Session. The intake form is designed to gather information on study skills, career development, financial literacy/assistance, technology/computer access, fundamental needs (e.g. housing, food, transportation), and personal needs (e.g. support system, personal crisis, mental health, support system).
 - Students will be asked to complete a time management exercise, mapping out a typical week to include courses, study time (2 hours/credit), commitments, etc.

- Students will be asked to attend a tutoring session (as long as tutoring is available for their courses either through ASCC, Departmental, or College resource centers) or a study group within the first four weeks of the semester. ASCC will hire a timeslip student to help track attendance and participation.
 - Rule 38b reinstated students will be required to attend office hours at least twice a month with their instructors during student office hours. Instructors will be asked to help track attendance at these sessions through a signature form.
 - Course attendance will be mandatory. ASCC will need instructor support in this effort since instructors will need to track student attendance and sign off on student forms, and they will need to set expectations for these students (is 90% attendance acceptable? Is 100% the expectation?). Requiring attendance may be a good practice that would help all students, not just those who fall under Rule 38b students, but we recognize that it is in the purview of the instructor to set and communicate attendance policies.
 - Information about students who will be repeating courses that fall under Rule 38b will be communicated to instructors early in the semester.
 - Students will be asked to complete a “Semester Snapshot” mapping out due dates for assignments, tests, quizzes, etc. in each course.
 - Students will be asked to share/show course grades in canvas.
 - Students will pick 2 academic skills workshops to attend within the first six weeks of the semester. Topics include motivation, learning styles, time management, note taking, study tips, etc.
3. ASCC will continue to track the 47 students who successfully completed the Rule 38b pilot program over the coming years to investigate if there are secondary points where these students struggle in their academic careers.