Academic Standards Subcommittee Minutes, November 14, 2019

Utah State University

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A meeting of the Academic Standards Subcommittee of the Educational Policies Committee was held on November 14, 2019 at 3 pm in Old Main 136 (Champ Hall Conference Room).

Present:

- Renee Galliher, Chair, Associate Vice Provost
- Dan Coster, College of Science
- Fran Hopkin, Registrar’s Office
- Kacy Lundstrom, University Libraries
- Mykel Beorchia, Advising
- Paul Barr, Vice Provost (ex officio; not a voting member)
- Robyn Peterson, subcommittee secretary (ex officio; not a voting member)

Absent:

- Christa Haring-Biel, Emma Eccles Jones College of Education & Human Services
- Dexton Lake, USUSA
- Frank Galey, Provost/Executive Vice President
- Sterling Bone, Jon M. Huntsman School of Business

AGENDA

New Business

A. Language of Excused Absence Policy in the general catalog (see https://catalog.usu.edu/content.php?catoid=12&navoid=3160)

Discussion: Renee Galliher presented concerns of a university faculty member regarding the current Excused Absence Policy in the general catalog. The faculty member’s concerns addressed the lack of provision for student accommodation through the Disability Resource Center, Office of Student Conduct, and Office of Equity. The faculty member had also expressed concerns regarding upholding current policy while maintaining state and federal laws and regulations.

Discussion of the committee included the current policy’s location in the catalog, beneficiaries, and parameters, and whether or not an additional provision should be added to the “Other Allowable Reasons” section of the policy. The committee discussed procedures currently in place in other university offices regarding extenuating circumstances, parties responsible for allowing reasonable accommodation, and faculty responsibilities in regulating excused absences. The process for instituting policy change was addressed, and offices that should be included in the policy were discussed. The committee addressed the possible collaboration between university offices and faculty in creating optimal circumstances for students. Faculty and student responsibilities in
excused absences were addressed. The committee discussed the policy’s ability to guide faculty members and protect students. The committee looked at similar policies currently in place among peer institutions and found those examined very similar the current Excused Absence Policy at Utah State.

The committee discussed the third paragraph under the Excused Absences “Reasons” section of the page and suggested removing specific examples under the Title IX clause and possibly relocating this clause to be incorporated into a fifth allowable reason for excused absences. Renee Galliher offered to draft the new proposed language for the Excused Absence Policy which will be voted on via email.

**Outcome:** Committee will review proposed language draft and move forward with an email vote regarding proposed changes. See proposed language attached.

**Old Business**

- None

**Other Business**

- None

*Motion to adjourn made by Fran Hopkin. Seconded by Dan Coster.*

*The committee’s next meeting will be held December 12, 2019.*

*Adjourn: 3:44 pm*
The red font indicates the text we propose to remove.

**Excused Absences**

*Reasons*

A student requesting an excused absence is responsible for providing evidence to the instructor substantiating the reason for absence.

Excused absences may not exceed 20% of the class meetings.

Among the reasons absences are considered excused by the university are the following. Note that in accordance with Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972, Utah State University shall treat pregnancy and related conditions as a justification for an excused absence for so long a period of time as is deemed medically necessary by the student's physician. Questions about Title IX should be directed to the University Title IX Coordinator.

Instead, we’ll propose adding the following red text toward the bottom of the policy.

**Other Allowable Reasons**

1. Required participation in military duties, including mandatory medical appointments for veterans and military personnel.
2. Mandatory admissions interviews for professional or graduate school, or internships, that cannot be rescheduled.
3. Religious holy day.
4. Participation in legal proceedings or administrative procedures that require a student's presence.
5. Accommodation or other support requests, as negotiated with student service offices, such as the Disability Resource Center, Office of Student Conduct, or the Office of Equity.