AUTHORIZED ABSENCE INFORMATION

Brief History of Issue - why the issue is being considered:

The goal of the Attendance Policy in the Faculty and Academic Staff Rules and Procedures (FASRP) handbook is to retain faculty control over course-related activities, including attendance. Instructors are encouraged to establish course attendance policies in conjunction with departmental curriculum committees, negotiating infractions directly with students. The proposed modifications to the existing policy eliminate current duplication of services, streamline and clarify the authorized absence process, allow faculty to retain control over absences, and reduce frustrations among students and faculty regarding the current authorization process. Additionally, the proposed modifications will not alter the currently approved categories for authorized absences. Faculty members are strongly encouraged to refer students to the Dean of Students Office when lack of attendance affects academic performance. The Dean of Students Office continues to be a great resource for referral to other services.

Current Process
Routinely, students provide faculty members with documentation regarding absences and are referred to the Dean of Students Office for processing. The Dean of Students Office collects the documentation and determines if the absence falls under one of the approved absence categories. Those categories were created, defined, and approved by the faculty in the current authorized absence policy, and those categories are not being modified as part of this proposal.

If the absence request complies with one of the approved absence categories, the Dean of Students Office collects the documentation and notifies the faculty member of the approved absence. The student is referred back to the faculty member to determine the best way for the student to resume participation in the class without penalty.

If the request for authorized absence does not fall under an approved category, after meeting with the student, the Dean of Students Office refers the student back to the faculty member for additional review of the absence request. The faculty member has complete discretion in approving all absences that fall outside the approved categories. If the student desires to appeal the faculty member’s decision, the Dean of Students Office refers the student to the chair of the department for assistance. If the faculty member is the chair of the department, the student is referred to the appropriate assistant/associate dean of the college.