REPORT FOR THE UNIVERSITY SENATE

University Senate Committee: Academic Policies Committee

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

A student with a required legal obligation (court appointment related to his employment as a police officer) was not covered under the current Class Attendance and Authorized Absence Policy, resulting in an unauthorized absence from a class. The student appealed to the Dean of Students, who then forwarded the issue to APC, since the current policy did not authorize this type of absence.

Points Discussed by Committee:

1. Faculty should use reason when approached with requests for absence.
2. Not all situations can be anticipated and included in the Class Attendance and Authorized Absence policy.

Pros of Recommendation:

1. The addition would cover multiple legal-related absences.

Cons of Recommendation:

1. This addition would increase the published list of reasons for an authorized absence.

Technology/Human Resource Impact: None

Committee Recommendation:

Motion: Add "or (7) required legal obligation." to Article Five, Section B, Class Attendance and Authorized Policies, Authorized Absences.

The resulting policy would read as follows, with the addition in bold:

Authorized Absences (US 11/09)
The determination of what constitutes an authorized absence involves a joint effort between the offices of the College Dean and the Dean of Students. Authorized absences include: (1) participation in an approved field trip listed in the catalogue as a requirement for a course in which the student is enrolled; or (2) participation in an authorized extra-curricular activity on the regularly approved calendar of university events [such absences are reported by the Dean to each Department at least 48 hours in advance of the trip or event]; or (3) Labor Day employment; or (4) active military service; or (5) accommodation of students’ religious beliefs [see Accommodation of students’ religious beliefs policy]; or (6) illness, injury, or emergency of such severity as to prevent the student from being able to attend class, or (7) required legal obligation.
In the case of severe illness, injury, or emergency, instructors should be kept apprised of the situation through direct communication with the student and/or via the Dean of Students Office which will assist students and communicate with instructors as needed.

When absences are authorized, instructors are obligated to work with students to determine the best way for students to resume participation in the class without a penalty. If the absences are lengthy, the student, instructor, College Dean, and Associate Dean of Students should work together to determine if it will be possible for the student to successfully complete the course.

The Dean of Students sends the following policy email to students at the beginning of each semester:

Dear Students –

In an attempt to clarify the University’s absence policy, I have inserted below our office protocol for authorized absences, which is also available online at http://www.uwec.edu/DOS/policies/attendance.htm. If you have questions about this protocol, please feel free to contact our office at (715) 836-5626.

Protocol for Authorized Absences

For all absences, the student is responsible for contacting professors individually or through the professors’ departments. If a student will be absent for illness, medical reasons, or exceptional personal reasons for three (3) or more consecutive class days, the Dean of Students Office may be asked to notify professors regarding the student’s absences. Students will be required to provide verifiable documentation regarding the reason for the absences to the Dean of Students Office. Though notification may be provided by the Dean of Students Office, arrangements for make-up work, make-up exams, or possible assignment adjustments are the responsibility of the student.

It is not the practice of the Dean of Students Office to document short-term illness, medical reasons, or personal reasons that have caused a student to miss class for less than three days. If the student is absent fewer than three days, it is his/her responsibility to contact his/her instructors personally, or leave a message with the department program associate. The Dean of Students Office will notify instructors when the student is absent for fewer than three days if the reason for the absence is exceptional family or personal emergency or a death in the family.

If you meet the conditions above, please use the online absence form to report your absence to the Dean of Students Office. Documentation must be provided by one of the following methods: email deanofstudents@uwec.edu, fax (715) 836-5911, or deliver it to Schofield 240. If additional documentation is required or there are questions, a member of our staff will contact you.

Best,
Brian

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MOTION FOR THE UNIVERSITY SENATE

The University Senate Committee: Academic Policies Committee

by a vote of ___9__ for to _0___ against on _____9/20/2011___________ (Date)

Recommends that

Article Five, Section B, Class Attendance and Authorized Policies, Authorized Absences section of the Faculty and Academic Staff Rules and Procedures be amended to include “or (7) required legal obligation.”

Implementation Date: Immediate

Signed: ____________________________________________

Chair of the Committee

Send to: University Senate Office