Meeting Minutes

1. Approval of minutes from October 12, 2021
   - Motion to approve the minutes of October 12, 2021. Motion was seconded and approved unanimously (10-0-0).

2. Proposal from the Caregiving Task Force to add 8th Authorized Absence category to FASRP
   - Silviana Amethyst, Jill Markgraf, and Abbey Fischer were in attendance to answer questions.
   - Provide more information on inclusion of pets?
     - Pets are dependents. Students should be given the opportunity to provide quality care to all dependents—human or not.
     - No distinction, would this include all pets?
       - Slippery slope to distinguish which animals deserve rights, need to support students caring for dependents.
   - Already an authorized absence for emergencies and excessive cases.
   - Is there a definition of what a caregiver is?
     - Don’t want parameters on what a caregiver is (e.g., Is a roommate if there is no one else available?). Definition of “caregiver” should be broad, similar to “family”. Look holistically at students for definition.
     - Concern surrounding the lack of ambiguity and terminology of “caregiver.” Senators want clarity before commenting.
   - Any statistics of students who have encountered an unsympathetic professor? Is there really a need for this addition?
     - Unsure, would think most are empathetic, but this makes it policy and allows students the right to advocate for themselves. Feel if it is written down, more students are likely to advocate for what they/their family need.
     - Some students assume they can’t do it if it’s not included on a list. There are probably students who should have asked, but didn’t. Students shouldn’t be excluded when faculty/staff are able to. Shouldn’t have to collect more data.
     - Data for underrepresented students confirms they’re less confident asking for permission, we want to encourage them and help them be successful. Also an EDI issue, could be a gender issue. Hope most instructors would approve the seven authorized absences as an excused absence.
     - Policies also create unintended consequences and situations that weren’t what the policy was established for. Concern with some of the wording. When dealing with a situation surrounding caregiving, better handled on an individual basis, taking into consideration which classes are being missed, how many absences have occurred and the impact. Blanket policy covering all faculty when only few need help with empathy. College tends to be more forgiving than work
environments, if the absence is impeding upon their ability to do a job it becomes an issue, need to prepare professionals. Students are informed every decision has consequences (e.g., If you miss a class, you are making the decision to lose the five points.).

- Faculty/Staff have sick days and bereavement leave. Students don’t. This doesn’t encourage abuse of a policy, and the last paragraphs discuss lengthy absences and working with the Dean of Students.
- Consider adding “non-routine caregiving.”
  - That doesn’t cover something like bringing someone to a routine physical which is scheduled months in advance. “Emergency” and “unforeseen” aren’t accurate.
- Is the word “necessary” needed? Same as “non-routine?”
  - Comfortable removing the word if it’s a dealbreaker. “Unavoidable” is better than “necessary.”

- Unsure if there’s an understanding of the scope being requested; the language doesn’t convey it.
  - Understand faculty tend to be flexible, extenuating circumstances already covered, asking it be expanded to include caregiving.
- A lot of ambiguity. Are students or faculty interpreting it? Could be taken advantage of. Who determines if it’s unavoidable or critical? Is it a conversation between faculty/student or can students determine it’s necessary and their needs must be met? Wide array of interpretations throughout Senate and the proposal doesn’t clarify the concerns.
  - No more ambiguity than the seven authorized absences and interpretation isn’t different either. The last paragraph addresses it and caregivers deserve the same level of protection and respect afforded to athletes, students who are ill or in the military or participate in extracurricular activities.
- Faculty members need to have the students’ backs, it’s part of the EDI mission, need to respect diversity within the student population.
- APC votes only on the additional bolded wording.
- What is “caregiving” exactly? This doesn’t change anything I currently do or force me to do something. There isn’t enough information.
- Proposed alteration of wording to include in the already established absences: (6) illness, injury, or emergency related to the student, or as a result of the role of caregiving, that is of such severity as to prevent the student from being able to attend class.
- Does pregnancy need to be included since it’s protected under Title IX?
  - This policy serves the Deans of Students and helps inform faculty/staff when accommodations should be provided and helps students know when they should be provided accommodations. Should be explicit vs implicit.
- This agenda item will be discussed further next week.

### 3. Service Learning vs. Community Engagement Information Gathering Update

- ULEC is developing the rubric to assess what is approved and prefer some version of Service Learning – don’t want it eliminated. Data gathering is being completed by Institutional Research and the Registrar’s Office.

Chair Marquell Johnson adjourned the meeting at 2:54 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah Forcier
Secretary for the Meeting