

SPECIAL REPORT
of the
**ACADEMIC MATTERS AND
UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION COUNCILS**
concerning
**ACADEMIC REGULATIONS UPDATES:
VIII. ATTENDANCE**

Presented at the
694th Regular Meeting of the Faculty Senate
May 6, 2010

COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP

ACADEMIC MATTERS COUNCIL

Neal Abraham, Flavio Azevado, Martha Baker, Carol Barr, Michael Begay, Cynthia Boissonneault, Stephanie Chapko, Priscilla Clarkson, Jake Clemen, Ginger Etinde, Bryan Harvey, John Jenkins (Chair), Patrick Kelly, M. Christine King, John Lenzi, Linda Lowry, Pamela Marsh-Williams, Ernest May, Daphne Patai, Gerald Platt, Patrick Sullivan, Cynthia Suopis

UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION COUNCIL

Neal Abraham, Meghan Banach, Joseph Bartolomeo, Michael Begay, Rajesh Bhatt (Co-Chair), Beatrice Botch, John Cunningham, Sidonio Ferreira, Dina Friedman, Judith Goodenough, Daniel Gordon, Lisa Green, Bryan Harvey, John Jenkins, Shona Macdonald, Ernest May (Co-Chair), John McCarthy, William McClure, Alice Nash, Mathew Ouellett, Alaina Patsos, Cory Pols, Richard Rogers, Clement Seldin, Martha Stassen, Karen Stevens

ACADEMIC MATTERS COUNCIL

Background

The issue of Make-Up Exam usage by faculty members was brought to the attention of the Academic Matters Council by Catharine Porter, University Ombudsperson. The issue raised was faculty members not providing an opportunity for a make-up exam when deemed appropriate due to excused absences or extenuating circumstances, but instead dropping the lowest exam grade (which in this case would be a zero for the missed exam).

AMC Observations

There is a University policy, Academic Regulations: Section VIII. Attendance, currently in place that states:

Students absent due to extenuating circumstances – including jury duty, military obligations, scheduled activities for other classes, the death of a family member, or verifiable health-related incapacity – remain responsible for meeting all class requirements. Faculty shall offer such students reasonable assistance in making up missed classes (i.e., making arrangements for attendance at labs or discussion sections which meet at other times; providing makeup exams or labs where feasible).

The question of whether the dropping of an exam grade by the instructor meets the policy as it currently exists was raised, or whether this is an unfair practice as the student may have performed better on that particular exam (section of material) than another exam that they would then have preferred to be dropped.

AMC Recommendations

The Academic Matters Council proposes that accommodations need to be made for “excused” absences, and that the option of dropping the lowest exam grade and not allowing the student the ability to make up the exam may work to the disadvantage of the student. As such, we propose the following changes to the policy (changes in **bold**):

Students absent due to extenuating circumstances – including jury duty, military obligations, scheduled activities for other classes, the death of a family member, or verifiable health-related incapacity – remain responsible for meeting all class requirements **and contacting the faculty member in a timely fashion about making up missed work**. Faculty shall offer such students reasonable assistance in making up missed classes (i.e., making arrangements for attendance at labs or discussion sections which meet at other times; providing makeup exams or labs where feasible **or offer mutually agreeable alternatives to make up work**).

UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION COUNCIL

At its meeting on February 22, 2010, the Undergraduate Education Council wholeheartedly concurred with the recommendations of the Academic Matters Council and members noted that the policy being proposed was in the best practices demanded by basic considerations of fairness.

MOVED: That the Faculty Senate approve the Changes to Section VIII (Attendance) of the 38-10 Academic Regulations, as presented in Sen. Doc. No. 10-033.