



## University Senate TRANSMITTAL FORM

<b>Senate Document #:</b>	10-11-51
<b>PCC ID #:</b>	NA
<b>Title:</b>	Revisions to the Policy for Class Excuses from the Health Center
<b>Presenter:</b>	Matthew Stamm, Chair, Student Affairs Committee
<b>Date of SEC Review:</b>	April 21, 2011
<b>Date of Senate Review:</b>	May 4, 2011
<b>Voting (highlight one):</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. On resolutions or recommendations one by one, or</li> <li>2. In a single vote</li> <li>3. To endorse entire report</li> </ol>
<b>Statement of Issue:</b>	A majority of University of Maryland students are unable to provide documentation of illness in order to be excused from class because the current policy states that the University Health Center does not issue excuse notes and because most students do not have access to a primary care physician within the local area. This leaves students in the position of choosing whether to attend class while ill or accept an unexcused absence and stay home.
<b>Relevant Policy # &amp; URL:</b>	V-1.00(G) Policy for Class Excuses From the Health Center <a href="http://www.president.umd.edu/policies/v100g.html">http://www.president.umd.edu/policies/v100g.html</a>
<b>Recommendation:</b>	<p>The Student Affairs Committee recommends approval of the attached revisions to the Policy for Class Excuses From the Health Center (V-1.00(G)).</p> <p>Additionally, the Student Affairs Committee recommends that the new policy be referenced in the Attendance and Assessment/Examination Policy and where appropriate in the Undergraduate and Graduate Student Catalogs.</p>
<b>Committee Work:</b>	<p>In September 2009 the Student Affairs Committee began exploring concerns with the Policy for Class Excuses from the Health Center (V-1.00(G)). In October 2009 the committee met with Dr. Sacred Bodison, Director of the University Health Center to discuss the current policy and procedures for medical excuses.</p> <p>In March 2010, following discussion of the available options for a</p>

	<p>student to receive an excuse due to illness, from the Health Center, the committee submitted a draft of proposed revisions to the policy to Ms. Susan Bayly, University Council and Dr. John Zacker, Director of the Office of Student Conduct. Ms. Bayly and Dr. Zacker offered comments on the proposed policy changes, which were discussed and considered by the committee at their April 2010 meeting.</p> <p>The committee discussed several drafts of the proposed revisions to the policy throughout the fall of the 2010-2011 academic year. In February 2011 the committee agreed on the language for the proposed revisions to the policy and submitted the revisions for review to Ms. Bayly.</p> <p>In March 2011 the proposed revisions of the policy were submitted to; the Office of Faculty Affairs, the Office of Student Conduct, Legal Office, and the Department of Disability Support Services. The proposed revisions were also presented to Dr. Bodison in a meeting on April 1, 2011. All of the suggestions and comments from the above mentioned administrative units and Dr. Bodison were considered and incorporated into the proposed revisions of the policy prior to the committee's April 4, 2011 meeting.</p> <p>On April 11, 2011 Matt Stamm, Chair of the Student Affairs Committee met with Ms. Bayly for a final review of the proposed revisions to the policy. The Student Affairs Committee voted electronically on April 13, 2011 to approve the proposed revisions to the policy.</p>
<b>Alternatives:</b>	The current policy could remain unchanged leaving students with limited alternatives to receiving an excused absence from class.
<b>Risks:</b>	There are no associated risks.
<b>Financial Implications:</b>	There are no financial implications.
<b>Further Approvals Required:</b> <i>(*Important for PCC Items)</i>	Senate and Presidential approval are required.

Senate Student Affairs Committee Report  
Revisions to the Policy for Class Excuses From the Health Center  
Senate Doc # 10-11-51  
April 2011

## Background

In September 2009 a member of the 2009-2010 Student Affairs Committee raised concerns with the Policy for Class Excuses From the Health Center (V-1.00(G)). The Committee member noted that the University Health Center does not issue medical excuse notes and most students do not have access to a primary care physician within the local area to issue such a note. Therefore, the majority of University students are unable to provide documentation of illness in order to be excused from class and are left in the position of having to choose whether to attend class while sick, or to accept an unexcused absence and stay home.

## Committee Work

The Student Affairs Committee met with Dr. Sacred Bodison, Director of the University Health Center at their October 2009 meeting to discuss the current policy and procedures for medically excused absences. Following a discussion of the available options, the Committee sent a draft policy change to Susan Bayly, University Counsel, Legal Office, and Dr. John Zacker, Director of the Office of Student Conduct, in March 2010. Ms. Bayly and Dr. Zacker offered comments on the proposed policy changes. The Committee discussed and considered the comments at their April 2010 meeting and agreed to continue revising the proposed policy changes.

The Student Affairs Committee resumed work on the proposed policy revisions at the beginning of the 2010-2011 academic year. The Committee invited Dr. Zacker to their October 15, 2010 meeting to review a section of the proposed changes to the policy referencing the Honor Code. Dr. Zacker advised the Committee to remove the reference to the Honor Code, as the section cited relates to examinations only. He instead suggested inserting language referring to the Code of Student Conduct (V-1.00(B) UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND CODE OF STUDENT CONDUCT); specifically section 9(h) which prohibits providing false information to University officials. The Committee agreed on the language for the proposed changes to the policy and sent the proposed revisions back to Ms. Bayly.

In February 2011 the Committee received feedback from Ms. Bayly. The Committee carefully considered all of her comments and suggestions at their March 2011 meeting. The Committee agreed upon the new revisions to the proposed changes to the policy and sent them back to Ms. Bayly to ensure the revisions were within the University's policy standards.

On March 18, 2011 Matt Stamm, Chair of the Student Affairs Committee, met with Ms. Bayly. The meeting resulted in a new draft of the proposed revisions. This draft of proposed changes to the policy was vetted through, the Office of Faculty Affairs, the Office of Student Conduct, and the Office of Disability Support Services. The new draft also included a change to the policy

name: Policy for a Student's Medically Necessitated Absence from Class. The new draft of the policy was also sent to Dr. Bodison for review by the Health Center Staff's.

On April 1, 2011, Chair Stamm met with Dr. Bodison to discuss the implications of the new revisions for the Health Center. Dr. Bodison and her staff were amiable to the suggested revisions from the committee provided some minor changes were made.

At the April 4, 2011 meeting the process of the many revisions was explained to the committee. It was agreed that once a final draft was available it would be circulated to the committee for final comments and a vote.

Chair Stamm again met with Ms. Bayly on April 11, 2011, which resulted in further edits to the revised policy. Per Ms. Bayly's suggestion, section II.C of the policy, titled "Decisions to Drop a Course for Medical or Psychological Reasons," was removed from the policy. This section was not only outdated, but covered withdrawals from a course(s)-which has a separate policy already in place (this was later verified with the Registrar's Office). The final version of the revised policy was made available to the Student Affairs Committee and put to an electronic vote. The committee voted to approve the recommended policy changes on April 13, 2011.

#### Recommendation

The Student Affairs Committee recommends the Senate approve the following changes to the Policy for Class Excuses From the Health Center. In addition, the new policy should be referenced in the Attendance and Assessment/Examination Policy and, where appropriate in the Undergraduate and Graduate Student Catalogs.

### **V-1.00(G) UMCP POLICY FOR ~~CLASS EXCUSES FROM THE HEALTH CENTER~~ A STUDENT'S MEDICALLY NECESSITATED ABSENCE FROM CLASS**

#### I. Policy

~~Students who receive treatment at the Health Center may be provided with a written excuse for absence from classes or an exam. Such excuse shall be honored as an excused absence. The granting of an excuse is at the discretion of the Health Center.~~

**The University shall excuse class absences that result from a student's own illness. As explained below, the procedures and the documentation a student is required to provide to the class instructor for the purpose of obtaining an excused absence differ depending on the frequency of the absence.**

#### II. Procedures

A. ~~Absence from a Single Lecture, Recitation or Lab~~ **Medically necessitated excused absence from a single lecture, recitation, or lab per semester.**

1. No written excuses or documentation from the Health Center shall be provided for absences from single lecture, recitation, or lab. ~~Absences should be resolved between the student and the instructor.~~

2. For a medically necessitated absence from a single lecture, recitation, or lab, students may submit a self-signed note to their instructor a minimum of once per course per semester. Such documentation shall be honored as an excused absence unless the absence coincides with a Major Scheduled Grading Event. The procedure for a medically necessitated excused absence for a Major Scheduled Grading event is set forth below.

3. Any student who wishes to be excused for an absence from a single lecture, recitation, or lab due to a medically necessitated absence shall:

- a. Make a reasonable attempt to inform the instructor of his/her illness prior to the class; and,
- b. Upon returning to class, present their instructor with a self-signed note attesting to the date of their illness. Each note must also contain an acknowledgment by the student that the information provided is true and correct. Providing false information to University officials is prohibited under Part 9 (h) of the *Code of Student Conduct (V-1.00(B) UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND CODE OF STUDENT CONDUCT)* and may result in disciplinary action.

**B. Non-consecutive medically necessitated absences from more than a single lecture, recitation, or lab.**

1. At the beginning of each semester, the instructor shall establish a written policy for non-consecutive medically necessitated absences beyond a single lecture, recitation, or lab.

**~~B~~C. Prolonged Absence from Classes and/or Absence from ~~an Exam~~ a Major Scheduled Grading Event**

1. A prolonged absence is defined as multiple consecutive absences from a course during a semester due to the same illness.

2. "Major Scheduled Grading Events" shall be identified by the instructor in writing at the beginning of each semester.

3. Students who experience a prolonged absence(s), as defined above or an illness during a Major Scheduled Grading Event as identified in writing by the class instructor shall be required to provide written documentation of the illness from the Health Center or from an outside health care provider. In cases where written verification is provided, the Health Center or outside

**health care provider shall verify dates of treatment and indicate the time frame that the student was unable to meet academic responsibilities. No diagnostic information shall be given.**

~~The Health Center shall verify dates of treatment at the Health Center and indicate the time frame that the student may have been unable to meet academic responsibilities. The procedure shall be as follows:~~

- ~~1. At the time of treatment the student shall sign a release of information form, allowing the Health Center to release dates of treatment to named persons or departments. The student shall be given a statement form with the date of his or her visit. The instructor is advised that the student signed a release form authorizing the Health Center to provide the date and time of visit.~~
- ~~2. In cases where written verification is needed, the student can meet with the Social Worker. The student shall be given a form letter for the instructor that verifies the date of treatment and the time frame that the student may have been unable to meet academic responsibilities. No diagnostic information shall be given.~~

#### ~~C. Decisions to Drop a Course for Medical or Psychological Reasons~~

~~The student should make an appointment to be seen by the Social Worker for a withdrawal for medical reasons and with the Assistant Director for Mental Health for withdrawal for psychological reasons. A written report shall be prepared for the student to present to the academic department for processing the withdrawal.~~

#### D. Resolution of Problems

~~Problems not resolved by these procedures shall be reviewed on an individual basis by the Director of the Health Center or a designee. A student who wishes to contest a decision not to grant a medically necessitated excused absence should first try to resolve the issue with the class instructor. If the issue is not resolved with the instructor, the student should seek the advice of the instructor's Department Chair; the Dean's Office of the Department's College; the Health Center Director; or the Department of Disability Support Services (DSS) Director, if the student is registered with the DSS, in order to identify the proper procedure for resolution.~~

Appendices

Appendix 1- Current Policy

Appendix 2- Proposed Revisions to the policy

**Appendix 1-Current Policy****Consolidated USMH & UMCP Policies and Procedures Manual****V-1.00(G) UMCP POLICY FOR CLASS EXCUSES FROM THE HEALTH CENTER**

APPROVED BY THE PRESIDENT 1 AUGUST 1991

**I. Policy**

Students who receive treatment at the Health Center may be provided with a written excuse for absence from classes or an exam. Such excuse shall be honored as an excused absence. The granting of an excuse is at the discretion of the Health Center.

**II. Procedures****A. Absence from a Single Lecture, Recitation or Lab**

No written excuses or documentation shall be provided. Absences should be resolved between the student and the instructor.

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Problems not resolved by these procedures shall be reviewed on an individual basis by the Director of the Health Center or a designee.

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## Proposed Policy Changes

### V-1.00(G) UMCP POLICY FOR ~~CLASS EXCUSES FROM THE HEALTH CENTER A~~ STUDENT'S MEDICALLY NECESSITATED ABSENCE FROM CLASS

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