S2020 - R1 - Grief Absence Policy for Students

WHEREAS, there is currently no standardized grief absence policy for students at the University of North Texas.

WHEREAS, the Student Attendance and Authorized Absences Policy (06.039) references “other extenuating circumstances” as a reason an absence may be excused without explicitly mentioning attendance to the funeral of a loved one or grieving the death of a loved one.

WHEREAS, the Dean of Students Office can help students document absences for verification that are not explicitly categorized as excused, but “the decision to allow a student to make up course work is left to the discretion of the professor and/or the department” (Dean of Students website).

WHEREAS, the Student Attendance and Authorized Absences Policy as written does not guarantee students the ability to make up course work that was missed due to funeral attendance of a loved one or a grieving period.

WHEREAS, students must have the right to grieve the loss of a family member not to the detriment of their academic success.

LET IT BE RESOLVED THAT, the University of North Texas adopt a grief absence policy, with the intent of allowing students to attend funeral services for deceased loved ones and grieving the loss of loved ones without consequence.

LET IT BE FURTHER RESOLVED, that the proposed grief absence policy include provisions allowing for no less than three days of excused absences following the death of a loved one, regardless of surname, familial relationship, or appearance of student name in program.

LET IT BE FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Dean of Students Office provides clear information on their website outlining the process for requesting an excused absence for grievance following adoption of this policy.

LET IT BE FURTHER RESOLVED, that this resolution be sent to the following offices and individuals:
- UNT CARE Team
- Dr. Maureen McGuiness, Dean of Students
- Dr. Jennifer Cowley, Provost
- Dr. Neal Smatresk, President
- Dr. Elizabeth Oldmixon, Student Absence and Authorized Absences policy contact
- Dr. Denise Catalano, Faculty Senate Chair

- Death of a loved one (family or friend) is not an excused absence in attendance policy
  - A student needing assistance verifying absences due to illness or extenuating circumstances for all courses should contact the Dean of Students office. The Dean of Students office will verify the student's documentation and advocate on the student's behalf, as appropriate, to instructors for excused absences

- Dean of Students can verify absence but doesn't ensure that course work is able to be made up
  - The Dean of Students Office is also available to assist you with documenting your absence. Students must provide the Dean of Students with official and verifiable documentation related to the reason for absence. Once the absences have been verified the decision to allow a student to make up course work is left to the discretion of the professor and/or the department.

Respectfully Submitted,

Senator Marisela Zubia
College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences

In Witness thereof, I hereby certify the Student Senate of the University of North Texas Student Government Association has approved this document and is referred to the office of the President.

Speaker of the Senate

President of the Student Government Association

Vice President of Student Affairs

02/25/2020

Date

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Date