

Title/Subject: **STUDENT BEREAVEMENT**

Applies to: faculty staff students student employees visitors contractors

Effective Date of This Revision: October 16, 2016

Contact for More Information: Office of Student Affairs

Board Policy Administrative Policy Procedure Guideline

BACKGROUND:

Over the course of the Academic Year, it is an unfortunate but not uncommon reality that students request meetings with the Associate Vice President for Student Affairs to voice concerns related to academic difficulties they encounter resulting from the death of a family member, spouse, child or other eligible individual during the semester.

Students often share stories of the personal challenges associated with trying to complete course requirements during the time they were involved in the grieving process (making funeral arrangements, supporting family members, traveling, personal grieving). These challenges are often aggravated by having to notify and make arrangements with multiple faculty members.

PURPOSE:

In order to mitigate the added stress caused by the death of a loved one, and to allow students the optimal environment in which to live and learn, CMU adopts the following Policy supporting students caught up in these circumstances.

POLICY:

It is the policy of CMU to allow appropriate support to students in the event of a death of a student's loved one, including but not limited to time off and other support as defined in the Procedure included below.

PROCEDURE:

As soon as practicable after learning of the death of a family member, students should notify the Office of Student Affairs (989-774-3346, or studentaffairs@cmich.edu) of the passing. It is important that documentation of the passing (e.g., obituary; service card) is sent to the Office of Student Affairs as soon as possible following the death. The Office of Student Affairs will determine the sufficiency of the submitted documentation and retains the right to request additional documentation if it deems the original documentation insufficient. This information will be kept on file in the event that faculty or university personnel request verification. This is intended to eliminate the need for individual faculty to request and require verification of the event giving rise to the bereavement from the grieving student. The Office of Student Affairs will then notify appropriate members of the faculty of the absence via email.

Students are given up to three (3) consecutive calendar days off to attend funeral and/or memorial services and to provide support to family members. If additional days are needed, due to travel or other reasons, that information must be provided in the initial report to the Office of Student Affairs. Approval for additional days (if necessary) will be granted (or denied) by the Associate Vice President for Student Affairs and adjusted when the notice is sent to faculty. The adjusted amount of approved leave (if any) shall be communicated to appropriate faculty members at the time the notice is sent.

Authority: George E. Ross, President
History: New Policy
Indexed as: funeral, grief, death, absence

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Students are expected to stay in contact with the appropriate faculty members to ascertain how the opportunity for equivalent credit will be determined for missed course assignments. Such determinations shall be at the sole discretion of the faculty member, but shall be reasonable when considering the circumstances of each leave. The Provost, working with the Vice President for Enrollment and Student Services will resolve any disputes arising from an allegation that a faculty member's determination of a bereavement accommodation is unreasonable.

All missed course assignments shall be eligible to be made up and include, but are not limited to: exams, quizzes, presentations, and other required assignments. Once again, ongoing communication with appropriate faculty is very important during this time. Failure of a student to maintain adequate communication with the faculty may result in a failing grade for any or all course assignments missed as a result of leave granted pursuant to this Policy.

Procedures for Faculty Members:

Once a leave has been approved by the Office of Student Affairs, faculty members shall approve the student's absences as "excused" for their time away as indicated in the leave notification.

Faculty members shall communicate with students to discuss opportunities to earn credit for missed coursework and assignments. Members of the faculty shall have the option to adjust course requirements and assist the student in ways deemed appropriate including, but not limited to, the following:

- Extension of due dates
- Providing make-up exams
- Assigning alternative assignments and/or evaluations
- Assigning a grade of Incomplete
- Issuing the student a final grade for coursework earned to date without a requirement to complete remaining academic assignments (typically for situations occurring within the last two weeks of the semester)
- Other measures agreed upon by the instructor and the student

Any plan agreed to by the student and faculty member, pursuant to this Policy, shall be final as to the nature of the accommodation for the leave time except in those cases where an allegation that a faculty member's determinations of a bereavement accommodation is unreasonable. In that event, the Provost, working with the Vice President for Enrollment and Student Services, will make a determination about the reasonableness of a determination.

Any questions concerning the available options or implementation of this policy should be directed to the Office of Student Affairs or the appropriate dean's office or department chair for clarification and guidance.

Additional Student Support Resources

The CMU Counseling Center offers free counseling to all students and can be reached at 989-774-3381. Many college students each year lose a loved one and the Counseling Center is available to listen and help students move through this difficult time. More information can be found on the CMU Counseling Center website at:

www.cmich.edu/ess/studentaffairs/CounselingCenter

Students who need additional academic support may also contact the Office of Student Success at 989-774-3401 to speak with a Success Coach.

Central Michigan University reserves the right to make exceptions to, modify or eliminate this policy and or its content. This document supersedes all previous policies, procedures or guidelines relative to this subject.