To: The University Senate  
From: Student Affairs Committee  
Subject: Student Absences for University Sanctioned Activities  
Disposition: University Senate for Discussion

WHEREAS: University Regulations outline guidelines and responsibilities concerning student absence from class and accommodations for these absences (see attachment), and

WHEREAS: Members of the Athletic Affairs Committee as well as other student and faculty groups have requested that the Student Affairs Committee consider bringing this to the attention of the University Senate and the faculty, and

WHEREAS: Students on the Student Affairs Committee have also indicated issues with absences for University sanctioned, required duties that are sometimes not considered as “excused”, and

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT: The Purdue University Senate fully supports the regulations as stated and encourages the Provost's office to reaffirm this policy to all faculty each semester.

Respectfully submitted,
Russell Jones, chair
Student Affairs Committee

Approved by:
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Academic Regulations regarding Attendance
(http://www.purdue.edu/studentregulations/regulations_procedures/classes.html):

A. Attendance (University Senate Document 6-5, March 19, 2007)
The resources of Purdue University are provided for the intellectual development of its students. Courses with defined schedules are provided to facilitate an orderly and predictable environment for learning, as well as to provide assurance of a registered student's right to access the course. Scheduled courses allow students to avoid conflicts and reflect the University's expectation that students should be present for every meeting of a class/laboratory for which they are registered. Faculty are responsible for organizing and delivering a course of instruction and for certifying student accomplishment on the basis of performance.

The University recognizes that the learning mission can be enhanced significantly by extracurricular experiences. Students participating in University-sponsored activities should be permitted to make up class work missed as a result of this participation. Ultimately students are responsible for all required coursework and bear full responsibility for any academic consequences that may result due to absence.


   Instructors are expected to establish and clearly communicate in the course syllabus attendance policies relevant to individual courses. Course attendance policies must be consistent with University policy.

   It is recognized that occasionally it may be necessary for a student to be absent from a scheduled course activity for personal reasons beyond his/her control (e.g., illness, family emergency, bereavement, etc.). The University expects each student to be responsible for class-related work missed as a result of an unavoidable absence; this work may be made up at the discretion of the instructor.

   Only the instructor can excuse a student from a course requirement or responsibility. When conflicts or absences can be anticipated, such as for many University sponsored activities and religious observances, the student should inform the instructor of the situation as far in advance as possible and the instructor should strive to accommodate the student. Individual course policies may state expected notification periods. For unanticipated or emergency absences where advance notification to an instructor is not possible, the student should contact the instructor as soon as possible by e-mail, phone, or by contacting the main office of the department that offers the course. When the student is unable to make direct contact with the instructor and is unable to leave word with the instructor's department because of circumstances beyond the student's control, and in cases of bereavement, the student or the student's representative should contact the Office of the Dean of Students. A member of the Dean of Students staff will notify the student's instructor(s) of the
circumstances. The student should be aware that this intervention does not change in any way the outcome of the instructor's decision regarding the students' academic work and performance in any given course.

Regardless of whether these absences are anticipated or unanticipated, instructors are to allow for absences in accordance with the Student Bereavement Policy and in all other cases, are encouraged to accommodate the student. In certain laboratory-based or intensive short-term courses, a student can jeopardize his/her academic status with an unreasonable number of absences, particularly in lab courses that cannot be made up later. The student should always consult with the instructor to determine the potential impact of any absence.

Students holding the opinion that they have been wrongly denied an excused absence or the opportunity to make up missed work should contact the head of the department offering the course or the Office of the Dean of Students to attempt to resolve the conflict.

2. Conflicts with Religious Observances

The University values a community with diverse backgrounds and traditions and recognizes that conflicts between regularly scheduled curricular activities and religious observances of some members of our community can arise. Instructors are encouraged to cooperate with students in dealing with work missed due to absences resulting from participation in religious observances.

Students requesting special consideration in scheduling are encouraged to make this known to instructors well in advance, minimize the length of the absence, and be flexible in arranging alternative times to complete any assignments they might miss. Students holding the opinion that they have wrongly been denied an excused absence or the opportunity to make up missed work due to an absence for a religious observance should contact the head of the department offering the course to attempt to resolve the conflict.

3. Grief Absence Policy for Students (University Senate Document 10-6, March 21, 2011)

Policy Statement: Purdue University recognizes that a time of bereavement is very difficult for a student. The University therefore provides the following rights to students facing the loss of a family member through the Grief Absence Policy for Students (GAPS).

GAPS Policy: Students will be excused for funeral leave and given the opportunity to earn equivalent credit and to demonstrate evidence of meeting the
learning outcomes for missed assignments or assessments in the event of the
depth of a member of the student's family.

Scope: This policy applies to all full-time and part-time students currently enrolled
in the Purdue University System.

Immediate Family: Students are eligible for up to three (3) days of excused
absence over five (5) consecutive calendar days for the death of a spouse,
parent, child, grandparent, grandchild or sibling, or a corresponding in-law or
step-relative.

Relative living in the student's home: Students are eligible for up to three (3) days
of excused absence over five (5) consecutive calendar days for the death of an
uncle, aunt, niece, nephew or first cousin living in the student's home.

Relative: Students are eligible for one (1) day of excused absence for the death
of an uncle, aunt, niece, nephew or first cousin.

In the event of the death of another family member or friend not explicitly
included within this policy, a bereaved student should petition for grief absence
through the Office of the Dean of Students (ODOS) by meeting individually with
an ODOS staff member for case evaluation.

In addition, students may be granted additional absences to account for travel
considerations, to be determined by the distance of the verified funeral services
from West Lafayette, IN, as follows:
Within 150 mile radius of West Lafayette - no additional excused absence days;
between 150-300 mile radius of West Lafayette - one additional excused
absence days; beyond 300 mile radius of West Lafayette - two additional
excused absence days; outside the 48 contiguous United States - four additional
excused absence days.

A student should contact the ODOS to request that a notice of his or her leave be
sent to instructors. The student will provide documentation of the death or funeral
service attended to the ODOS. Given proper documentation, the instructor will
excuse the student from class and provide the opportunity to earn equivalent
credit and to demonstrate evidence of meeting the learning outcomes for missed
assignments or assessments. If the student is not satisfied with the
implementation of this policy by a faculty member, he or she is encouraged to
contact the Department Head and if necessary, the ODOS, for further review of
his or her case. In a case where grades are negatively affected, the student may
follow the established grade appeals process.

4. Military Absence Policy for Students (University Senate Document 13-4, March
24, 2014)
Purdue University recognizes that those who are actively serving in the Reserves or National Guard of the United States are required by their military contract to attend mandatory training through the Military Absence Policy for Students (MAPS).

Students will not be penalized for mandatory military training and will be given the opportunity to earn equivalent credit and to demonstrate evidence of meeting the learning outcomes for missed assignments or assessments in the event of a schedule or class conflict due to mandatory military training. It is the responsibility of the student to inform the instructor at the beginning of the semester of the potential for mandatory military training conflicts. Students should expect that absences from heavier course loads will be more difficult to recover from than absences from lighter course loads.

Students are eligible for up to fifteen (15) days for military-required absences per academic year with no more than ten (10) academic calendar days taken consecutively, for their mandatory military training. Total absences, including travel, may not exceed 1/3 of the course meetings for any course. Students may be granted additional absences to account for travel considerations, to be determined by the distance of the verified military training from the Purdue campus, as follows:
- Within 150 mile radius of the Purdue campus, no additional excused absence days.
- Between 150 - 300 mile radius of the Purdue campus, one additional excused absence days.
- Beyond 300 mile radius of the Purdue campus, two additional excused absence days.
- Outside the 48 contiguous United States, four additional excused absence days.

A student should contact the Office of the Dean of Students (ODOS) to request that a notice of the leave be sent to instructors as soon as he or she is informed of the dates of mandatory military training. The student will provide documentation of the mandatory military training in the form of orders or equivalent documents as proof of legitimate absence to the ODOS as soon as these documents are available. If necessary, the ODOS may consult with the Veterans Success Center about the nature of the documentation. When documentation is presented to the Office of the Dean of Students, a verified absence notification will be sent to the student’s instructors.

The student may provide verbal information about the leave to the ODOS and an unverified preliminary (non–MAPS) notice will be sent to instructors for planning purposes only. MAPS will be applicable only when the student has returned to the ODOS with substantiating documentation and ODOS has sent a verified absence notification to the instructors.
With a verified absence notification from the ODOS, the instructor will not penalize the student for missing class and will provide the opportunity to earn equivalent credit and to demonstrate evidence of meeting the learning outcomes for missed assignments or assessments. If the student begins to make up the work and is not satisfied with the implementation of this policy, he or she shall provide, within 10 days, a written statement to the professor clearly explaining their objection and suggesting an alternative accommodation. If the professor and student cannot expediently resolve this written objection, then the student may appeal for further review or consultation of his or her case to the Department Head, whereupon ODOS or the Veterans Success Center may become involved. In a case where grades are negatively affected, the student may follow the established grade appeals process.

Unique or variant exceptions should be dealt with in a negotiated manner between the student and professor, which may include involving the Department Head, ODOS, or the Veterans Success Center to review and consult on his or her situation. In certain laboratory-based or intensive short-term courses, a student can jeopardize his/her academic status with an unreasonable number of absences, particularly in lab courses that cannot be made up later. In courses with extensive laboratory exercises, group projects, group performances, or participation requirements, equivalent exercises or assessments may not be possible as determined by the instructor and subject to review by the Dean of the school offering the course, or their designee. In such a case the student may be eligible for retroactive withdrawal. The student should always consult with the instructor to determine the potential impact of any absence.

5. Conclusion

The University expects that students will attend classes for which they are registered. At times, however, either anticipated or unanticipated absences can occur. The student bears the responsibility of informing the instructor in a timely fashion, when possible. The instructor bears the responsibility of trying to accommodate the student either by excusing the student or allowing the student to make up work, when possible. The University expects both students and their instructors to approach problems with class attendance in a manner that is reasonable.