

April 15, 2016 – Attachment E

Motion to approve revisions to the Faculty Handbook regarding the class attendance policy – Michael Schleeter (Philosophy), Campus Life Committee, and Keith Cooper (Philosophy), Educational Policies Committee.

Resolved, that the class attendance policy in the Faculty Handbook (Section III, Part VII, Section 10) be revised as presented in Attachment E.

Rationale

Class attendance policies vary widely. While many faculty focus on student participation, others make part of the course grade a matter of attendance alone, including grade penalties for missing more than a certain number of classes. Sometimes these penalties provide no exceptions for illness, family emergencies, or – the point of the current proposal – for missing class when away from campus representing the university.

There is value, to both the university and our students, in having students participate in a wide range of educational experiences, which often involve **missed class time while representing the university off campus**. The perception among many students is that they are penalized for participating in the sorts of activities for which they have been recruited to PLU. Anecdotal evidence suggests some negative impact on recruitment of students and even on retention. Conversations over the past three academic years in faculty committees (EPC, Campus Life, ARTS, and Governance), as well as in the Provost's Academic Council and during an informal discussion at Faculty Assembly last May, have resulted in broad consensus for revising the attendance policy to reflect the value of student involvement. The changes below put the burden on the student to make arrangements for making up missed class material and missed assignments, while also recognizing that some absences adversely affect participation and cannot be made up for.

Revision

Changes to the Faculty Handbook are indicated using bold to signify additions or changes and striketthrough to indicate deletion.

SECTION 10. CLASS ATTENDANCE—STUDENTS

The university assumes that every student has freely accepted personal responsibility for regular class attendance. ~~While~~ **Although** attendance itself is ~~no~~ **not** a measure of successful learning, and course grades are issued **on the basis of academic performance and** not on the basis of attendance **alone** ~~but on the basis of academic performance~~, such performance normally includes regular participation in the total class experience and is evaluated accordingly. In the event of unavoidable absence students are strongly encouraged as a matter of courtesy to inform their instructors and may be required to do so. Any arrangements for ~~remedial~~ **missed** work are discretionary between instructor and student, **except as specified below**.

Undergraduate students officially representing the university off campus for a performance, competition, or academic presentation shall not be penalized solely for missing class due to such events (including travel time). With prior documentation of such involvement, these students shall be allowed to complete missed exams or substitute an alternative assignment. However, whether a missed lab, clinical, or other in-class activity may be made up shall be up to the academic unit.

The burden is always on the student, not the faculty member, to take steps to remedy the effects of absences from class. In particular, the student is responsible for making prior arrangements with the instructor to complete missed work or to substitute comparable work instead. An academic unit may adopt shared policies to govern such assignments, including an expectation that the work be submitted, or the test taken, prior to the absence.