

From: Student Academic Support Committee

To: Senate Steering Committee

Re: Recommendation to Adopt a Student Bereavement Leave Policy

Pursuant to the will and best interest of the Student Body of Oakland University, and mindful of efforts to better the lives of Oakland Students, we the members of the Student Academic Support Committee do affirm our support for University-wide implementation of a Bereavement Leave Policy which would provide support to students at a difficult time, and reaffirm our view of the students as our most valuable resource. This policy proposes that all eligible full or part-time undergraduate students receive up to three (3) days of bereavement leave in the event of the death of a loved one. Under this system additional days may be allotted to accommodate travel situations (to be determined by the distance of the student's home or location of service from Rochester, Michigan) or other special circumstances (to be discussed with and approved by the Dean of Students office).

The members of the committee strongly encourage the adoption of this proposal as it would, in our view, serve to strengthen the bonds of the campus community by showing that we stand together with one another in difficult times. It would free students to travel for the purpose of mourning a loved one without fear of falling behind academically or experiencing other repercussions which may arise from their absence. The successful implementation of this policy would cast Oakland University in a very positive light before everyone with whom it is connected, showing our donors, our alumni, and our current students why it is appropriate to invest more time and money into this institution--a progressive and understanding community which seeks to go above and beyond the call of duty and to act in the best interest of the students.

We lay out the case in support of this policy before you today as we believe it best illustrates the opportunity which Oakland University has to set a high bar for other universities to follow by essentially doing all that they have done and going one step further, showing that Oakland University is a compassionate institution, and proving that we are in touch with the everyday lives of our students. The life of students can be stressful and hectic enough; when experiencing sudden grief, they should not have to worry about academics in addition to everything else concerning them. In that same spirit of empathy, solidarity, and progress, we submit this proposal to you, and encourage its swift passage and implementation.

## **SUBJECT: BEREAVEMENT LEAVE POLICY FOR UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS**

**RATIONALE:** Oakland University recognizes that bereavement is a difficult life event. The University also recognizes the necessity of taking time to grieve and fulfill social or family obligations, and not doing so may negatively impact students' study and transition back to a normal routine.

**POLICY:** In the event of the death of certain members of students' families or loved ones, the University would grant necessary bereavement absences upon student request.

**SCOPE of APPLICABILITY:** This policy is applicable to all full- and part-time undergraduate students.

### **DEFINITIONS:**

***Certain members*** refers to

1. Members of immediate family, including step-family, members living in the same household, as well as legal guardians.
2. In the event of the death of a friend or family member outside of these definitions, the student may petition for bereavement leave through the Dean of Students Office.

### ***Necessary Bereavement Absences are***

1. Up to three (3) days of bereavement leave.
2. Additional days may be allotted to accommodate travel situations (to be determined by the distance of the student's home or location of service from Rochester, Michigan) or other special circumstances, to be determined in consultation with the Dean of Students Office.

### **PROCEDURES:**

1. Students
  - i. Fill out online form to request leave from the Dean of Students Office up to 3 work days prior to the funeral, or travel to the funeral.
  - ii. Place a call or e-mail to the Dean of Students Office up to 2 work days prior to the funeral or travel to the funeral. In case of extenuating circumstances, students must still email the Dean of Students offices prior to departure.
  - iii. May request extended leave of absence for special circumstances. This must be discussed with and approved by the Dean of Students office.
  - iv. Collect and submit required proof to the Dean of Students to justify the leave, either immediately or by the second day of returning to campus.
    - a. Proof should be in the form of a written statement, provided by the funeral home, on stationery from the funeral home, of attendance at the funeral for the student. (This should be provided in English.)

- b. Additional proof or alternative may be required by the Dean of Students Office.
- v. Notify their instructors as soon as possible before the leave begins.
- vi. If students do not return within the guidelines provided by the Dean of Students Office, they need to notify the Dean of Students and their instructors with the expected date of return. When they return, they will meet with the Dean of Students to discuss their reason for delay and face possible consequences.
- vii. When students return to school, they need to communicate with their instructor to define a schedule to make up missed work.
- viii. Complete all assigned work as agreed upon with the instructor.
- ix. In the case students will not be returning before the end of the semester, this schedule must be agreed upon with their instructor before the leave begins.

## 2. Office of Dean of Students

- i. Approve leave based on proof provided by the student.  
(Proof may be provided after the leave of absence.)
- ii. Notify instructors through email
- iii. Notify Office of Financial Aid through email
- iv. Notify Office of the Registrar through email

## 3. Instructors

- i. Provide the student opportunity to earn equivalent credit for work missed.
- ii. Work with the student to define a reasonable timeframe to complete the work.
- iii. Add a reference to the policy in their syllabus

## 4. Registrar

- i. Request a meeting with the student if the leave of absence affects issues like financial aid, graduation, etc.

**RELATED FORMS:** (online form to be created by Dean of Students)