

FACULTY SENATE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Workload, Sabbaticals, and Teaching

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A. **Consultation on Faculty Utilizations**

Therefore be it resolved that no campus policy on faculty utilization should be formulated or promulgated without full consultation with the campus governing structure nor promulgated with the distribution of these draft policy statements to all faculty who would be affected by their implementation.

[passed by Faculty Senate on 2/18/92 by a majority with 1 abstention]

B. Comparison with Leading Institutions

The Faculty Senate respectfully requests that the President and the Provost instruct the Deans that they should neither require nor suggest that departments adopt policies different from those at leading institutions in their disciplines with regard to teaching load and assignments.

[passed by Faculty Senate on 4/7/92 by a vote of 35/16/6]

C. Faculty Responsibility Policy

Faculty are expected to be publishing scholars or to be otherwise actively engaged in creative activity, to make significant attempts to obtain external support for their work in fields where this is possible, to contribute effectively to the instructional programs of the University, and to participate actively in University, professional, and where appropriate, community service. The precise balance among these aspects of a faculty member's responsibilities will vary from one program to another, among individuals within a program, and even from time to time in a particular individual's career.

In accordance with Article IX, Title C, Section 4 of The Policies of the Board of Trustees (1990), it is the chairs and unit heads who are responsible for allocating duties among the faculty in their programs. Each academic unit must develop and adhere to written guidelines which define faculty responsibilities within that unit. These guidelines should be consistent with the norms in the relevant discipline at leading institutions, and especially at leading public universities.

Faculty members are required annually to submit a report describing in detail their professional activities and accomplishments, for review by the chair and the dean. Based on this report and on consultation with the faculty member, the chair should ascertain that the performance of the faculty member is consistent

with departmental guidelines and with the current needs of the unit. As needed, the chair should make efforts to assist the faculty member toward suitable professional development. The dean, in evaluating a chair's performance, should emphasize the extent to which the unit is playing its proper role in the university and the extent to which all the members of the unit are contributing appropriately to that role.

[Promulgated by the President March 1993, based on prior resolutions of the Faculty Senate]

D. Sabbatical Leaves

In view of the time-honored value of sabbatical leaves in advancing excellence in research and teaching, the Faculty Senate recommends that requests for sabbatical leaves, whether for one semester or a full year, continue to be granted on their merits in accordance with the applicable policy of the State University of New York.

[passed by the Faculty Senate on 4/7/92 unanimously with 1 abstention]

E. Teaching

Teaching is central to the mission of this research university. It ordinarily will be the case that equality in basic teaching obligation provides the soundest norm for allocating specific assignments among faculty members of a given rank within the same department or school. Using that norm of equality as a starting point, a lightening of teaching assignment in a given semester or academic year for specific faculty members may be warranted because of time budgeted for funded research, administrative duties, or other substantial cause having to do with

carrying out the mission of this university. As a matter of general principle, however, and subject to only brief exception for a limited time, all faculty members should participate substantially in carrying out the teaching mission of the university. Competing obligations should not mean that highly talented faculty become inaccessible to our students.

Finally, teaching is a special trust. An increased teaching assignment should never be used as a sanction or disincentive, or because of asserted deficiencies in other areas of a faculty member's academic performance.

[passed by the Faculty Senate on 4/7/92 by a vote of 25/10/6]

F. Teaching Assessment and Improvement

The State University of New York at Buffalo has a primary commitment to the generation of new knowledge and insights through research and other creative activities by its faculty. An integral part of our scholarly mission is the dissemination of knowledge to and the cultivation of intellectual and professional skills among our students. While excellence in content is the primary criterion by which the effectiveness of instruction at a research university is measured, it is also of great importance that we continually assess and work to improve the teaching process itself.

On April 12, 1983, the Faculty Senate passed a resolution confirming the importance of quality teaching to the University's overall mission. That resolution called upon each department to define standards for teaching effectiveness, to assess the quality of instruction, and to assist departmental faculty in improving their teaching. The Faculty Senate pointed in particular to inconsistencies among Departments in their efforts to evaluate teaching, and emphasized the need for

systematic assessment and evaluation.

As a result of discussions with the Faculty Senate, the Vice Presidents, and the Deans, I have approved the following guidelines for assessing and improving the quality of teaching at the University at Buffalo.

1. Each Department should develop, adopt, and implement an appropriate teaching evaluation process. While procedures will vary from department to department, a systematic assessment process should be in place in every department, a systematic assessment process should be in place in every department by the fall of 1984.
2. Students should have the opportunity to evaluate instruction in every course. The form of that evaluation should be consistent with the nature of the academic experience.
3. Department chairs should review (at least annually) with each faculty member the results of student evaluations and of other forms of assessment adopted by the Department. The principal purpose of such reviews shall be to provide faculty members with the opportunity to improve the quality of their teaching.
4. Professorial faculty from each Department should directly monitor and supervise all teaching by graduate teaching assistants. Moreover, each Department should have in place, by fall 1984, a mandatory teaching effectiveness program for its teaching assistants.

Implemented by the President - December, 1983

[Current University policy]

G. Faculty Roles in Advisement

1. BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Senate recommends that every faculty member be involved in academic advisement. Further, it is recommended that every

student be assigned a faculty advisor.

Finally, the Provost and Deans are strongly urged to implement a campus-wide advisement system which enables advisors to function effectively, facilitates information flow, and assists students in broadening their academic horizons.

[passed by Faculty Senate on 2/8/94 by voice vote]

[endorsed by the President on 2/22/94]

2. WHEREAS the University at Buffalo, in response to President Greiner's call for a "renewed emphasis on teaching and student development," must find effective ways, in addition to the efforts of the professional advising staff, to guide its many students who have not yet been accepted into undergraduate programs, and

WHEREAS advising undergraduates about academic matters and other concerns, while also providing guidance for departmental majors, has long been an important professional function for faculty here and at other universities;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Faculty Senate endorses the intention of the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs to explore and initiate, where appropriate, more organized activities for faculty members in undergraduate advisement, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the Executive Committee of the Faculty Senate shall, during the current academic year and thereafter, invite the Vice Provost to report regularly on developments in student advisement by faculty and shall, at its discretion, refer matters of concern to the Committee on Educational Programs and Policies for discussion and possible recommendations. (passed by Faculty Senate on 2/8/94 by voice vote)

[endorsed by the President on 2/22/94]

H. **Assesment of Educational Programs**

Whereas it is essential for the University's overall mission that there be assessment of the effectiveness of educational programs, including UB's program of general education for undergraduate students, in order to improve student learning and to improve courses, curricula, and programs; and

Whereas assessment, which is an authoritative and critical analysis or appraisal, can and should be distinguished from evaluation, which is a setting of value in comparison to others within the same category; and

Whereas it has become standard practice for regional and professional accrediting organizations to request and expect to receive the reports and results of program assessments that have been conducted both regularly and frequently and furthermore such program assessments have become standard practice within several departments at UB; and

Whereas there exist diverse procedures and indices for program assessment, including but not limited to standardized measures, student interviews, student essays, student portfolios, faculty teaching portfolios, student retention rates, job placement rates, student self-report surveys, employer surveys, certification tests, licensure examinations, student self-assessment, as well as other quantitative and qualitative measures: and

Whereas program assessment can be conducted at diverse times, including while students are currently engaged in educational programs, immediately after students have completed programs, or months or years after students have completed programs; and

Whereas there can be diverse outcomes following a program assessment such as, for example, demonstrating program effectiveness, changing the program content or structure, changing teaching methods, providing faculty development seminars, changing prerequisites, and adding, modifying, or deleting program requirements and furthermore changes such as these should be followed by additional cycles of program assessment; and

Whereas the primary responsibility for assessment of educational programs is held by the faculty who are most closely associated with those programs;

Therefore, Be It Resolved: That we the faculty of the University at Buffalo recognize our responsibility to participate fully in assessment of educational programs, including setting goals for student learning, choosing appropriate assessment procedures and indices, and modifying and strengthening of educational programs as appropriate; and

Furthermore, Be It Resolved:

That the President of the University is called upon to ensure, through appropriate leadership, collaboration with UB's faculty, provision of resources, and recognition of faculty assessment efforts as significant service to the University, that assessment of all educational programs at UB, including UB's general education program for undergraduate students, be conducted both regularly and frequently.

Statement, on Budget Impact

In the short term, modest resources may be required for external consultants on assessment and faculty development seminars on assessment in order to quickly bring about the required level of faculty expertise on assessment at the University at Buffalo. Once regular assessment procedures are in place, the overall budget impact will be positive. Assessment procedures, properly carried out, will strengthen educational programs at UB. Stronger educational programs

will attract better-prepared students to our campus and improve retention rates and graduation rates, thus leading to budgetary economies. In addition, educational programs with a documented record of success will be better able to attract external funds from foundations and government agencies for program enrichment and expansion.

[passed by the Faculty Senate on 11/16/99]

I. STUDENT EVALUATIONS OF INSTRUCTION

WHEREAS: Questions have arisen as to current campus-wide procedures for collecting and interpreting student evaluations of instruction, and particularly whether student written comments should be published;

WHEREAS: There is a wide variety of purposes and procedures used by different decanal units, with little prospect for campus-wide standardization; and

WHEREAS: The literature suggests that student evaluations do provide limited but valid and useful information about courses and UB has not yet adopted alternative and systematic ways of evaluating instruction,

WHEREAS: The educational measurement literature recognizes two different purposes for evaluations:

1. norm-referenced assessments, for rankings or comparing scores or ratings to appropriate data or norms provided by peers; and
2. criterion-referenced assessments for evaluating and providing feed to individuals on how well they have achieved certain goals, standards, or criteria (independently of how their peers have performed),

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

3. In accordance with the Faculty Senate resolution implemented December 1983, entitled: Teaching Assessment and Improvement," the policy of this University is to mandate student evaluations of all courses.
4. Deans are responsible for appointing faculty committees to establish policies for the administration of these evaluations, including among others:
 - Ensuring within discipline clusters standardization of the instrument and procedures used to collect data;
 - Constructing or otherwise ensuring use of appropriate items for the instrument.
 - Establishing, specifying, collecting, and updating (in a timely fashion), appropriate normative data against which instructors and courses will be compared;
 - Assuring that ratings from criterion-referenced questions are reported appropriately and not as norm-referenced data (e.g., T-Scores) and vice versa.
 - Deciding whether and how to publish, or otherwise make available, course ratings and the norms for providing the context for interpreting those ratings.
5. Students' written comments should be given to the instructor and distributed to chairs, deans, or others (such as personnel committees), depending on the needs, traditions, and protections offered by these units. The responsibility falls to each Dean to have a published policy on publication of student written comments.
6. Since, by definition, norm-referenced comparisons do not provide feed that is, specific information on what is commendable, what needs improvement, and how to improve a given component of a course - some of the questions on the course evaluations should be designed for criterion-referenced purposes. This is especially important for mentoring new faculty and teaching assistants, but is useful throughout an academic career.
7. Those who are responsible for supervising instruction and making promotion/tenure decisions need to be fully informed about 1-4.

*Based on the Faculty Senate Teaching and Learning Committee's April 1999

Report: "Student Evaluations of Instruction: What Should Be Published?" and revised following the Faculty Senate 1st reading (12/7/99) and approved at the Committee's meeting of 2/4/00.

[passed by the Faculty Senate on 2/15/00]

J. **Assessments of Instructional Effectiveness**

1st reading 5/2/00

2nd reading 11/7/00

Passed by the Faculty Senate 11/7/00

Revised 9/27/01

Resolutions on "Assessments of Instructional Effectiveness"

PREAMBLE

We should ridicule a merchant who said he had sold a great many goods although no one had bought any. But perhaps there are teachers who think they have done a good day's teaching irrespective of what pupils have learned. There is the same exact equation between teaching and learning that there is between buying and selling. (J. Dewey, 1933, How We Think. Boston: Heath, pp. 35-36).

Dewey's conception of teaching and learning being a two way street will serve as the basis for several of the following arguments and recommendations for improving instruction. Specific activities for teachers, students, and the institution are identified. However, teaching and learning does not occur in a vacuum. Interactions between students and teachers take place within an institutional context which ultimately may have the greatest influence on the quality of instruction.

The tripartite mission of nearly any large academic institution consists of research, teaching and service. However, when it comes to promotion and tenure decisions, faculty's research and publication accomplishments are more heavily weighted than their accomplishments in the areas of teaching and service. This fact is well known to faculty and greatly influences career decisions, how faculty choose to spend their time, and ultimately the quality of instruction.

To maximize instructional effectiveness, the institution must ensure that just as the research accomplishments of its faculty are encouraged, nurtured and rewarded, the same should occur regarding faculty's teaching accomplishments. Methods are now widely available to evaluate teaching effectiveness. These methods must become an integral part of the culture of teaching at our institution and faculty's teaching accomplishments must be prominent in promotion and tenure decisions. Emphasis on the importance of high quality instruction for every student encourages such high quality instruction.

Just as a "culture of teaching" needs to be nourished and expected of the faculty and administration, so too does a "culture of learning" need to become integral to the experience of being a student. For many students, the culture of a university is quite different from anything else they have ever experienced. Thus, they may not understand what it takes to succeed at this level – to self-diagnose how well they are comprehending; when their study or writing skills are weak; the value of attending office hours, review sessions, or extracurricular campus-wide events; or how much time they need to learn. While the responsibility for the above naturally falls on students themselves, faculty have an important role to play in helping students become enculturated.

The reciprocal sides of the teaching-learning equation, then, seem to be the following:

- From the teaching side: Instructors are responsible for clear course goals and expectations, for effective instruction, and for continued expansion of their teaching/testing repertoires to provide a wide variety of equitable opportunities for students to succeed.
- From the learning side: Students are responsible for their own learning, for taking advantage of the opportunities provided in class (and for seeking out remedial and advanced opportunities outside of class), and for adopting and contributing to the culture of the university regarding the advancement and fair distribution of knowledge. In the attempt to provide university-wide guidelines, it is recognized that one size does not fit all. Different academic disciplines can achieve these goals in a variety of acceptable ways. For example, according to assessments built in to their accreditation processes, some professional schools may invent coherent and sequenced curricula which lead students through stages of competence toward eventual expertise. In those cases, recommendations for syllabi and documentation of instructional effectiveness (in Resolutions #1 and #2) should reflect and describe these standards. Disciplines with less structured sequences of courses and experiences may invent very different ways to accomplish the same ends.

The following six resolutions address various aspects of these interactive cultures of teaching and learning. They follow the six recommendations in the March 27, 2000 report on which they are based (see note on p. 1), but have been somewhat revised and expanded based on discussions with the Faculty Senate Executive Committee (4/19/00 and 9/13/00) at the first reading of the Faculty Senate (5/2/00), and following input from the Council of Deans (Spring, 2001).

Resolution #1: Concerning Syllabi and Course Policies

WHEREAS:

1. It is already University policy that instructors publish a syllabus for each course (as specified in "Faculty Teaching Responsibilities" in the Faculty/Staff Handbook, 1993-94, p. 3.9.1. Passed by Faculty Senate, April 1983);
2. Neither teaching nor learning can be assessed in the absence of clear expectations of what is required to succeed in the course, which, of necessity, differs across disciplines and according to diverse professional accreditation processes; and
3. A syllabus is here defined as the established policies and major requirements of a course, publishable in perhaps 2-5 pages, which is different from the day-to-day schedule of classroom events and requirements;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

A syllabus is published within the first week for each course which specifically addresses fairness and disclosure concerning course goals, expectations (of attendance, performance, and deadlines), grading, and availability of the instructor. For most courses, this may include some or all of the following:

4. general goals for the course;
5. specific objectives, in accordance with the requirements of all oversight and certifying units, which must be achieved to demonstrate sufficient mastery of the content to receive a passing grade;
6. whether and how course requirements and schedules might change throughout the semester (e.g., based on research being conducted);
7. how attainment of goals and objectives (in a & b) will be evaluated;
8. what additional support, tutorial remediation, etc. is available and how to access it;
9. attendance policies;
10. what else (over and above a-f), such as laboratory or recitation policies, is required in the course and how it will be evaluated;
11. the overall grading scheme.

12. a statement that students are responsible for the academic integrity policies of the University and the unit.

Resolution #2: Concerning Documentation of Instructional Effectiveness

WHEREAS:

It is already University policy that all promotion and tenure decisions include teaching portfolios ("Checklist for Promotion Dossiers prepared after September 2000,"),

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

In accordance with University policy, Deans will be responsible for assuring that all promotion and tenure decisions include teaching portfolios, and that the items of information in those portfolios generally include the following for each course taught:

13. course syllabus;
14. student evaluations of instruction (see Faculty Senate resolution on this topic, adopted February 15, 2000);
15. instructor self-evaluations of their teaching philosophy, methods, and effectiveness;
16. evidence on the effectiveness of instruction – that is, how students who passed the course benefited from the instruction (e.g. pretest – posttest gains, type of student projects produced, student testimonials on specific effects of the course, examination results, etc.);

Resolution #3: Concerning Faculty Development and the Culture of Teaching

WHEREAS:

information on course policy and procedures for identifying the difficulties students are having and how students can access help.

17. Faculty have always been expected to remain up-to-date in the instructional techniques and technologies available for teaching in their disciplines;
18. Continuing development and expansion of the instructional repertoires, both high- and low-tech, are more likely to occur via “a campus-wide collaborative effort around teaching”*; and
19. A campus-wide culture of teaching can and should be central to every program level of governance at the university, especially with leadership and support – both moral and financial – from the highest levels of governance on campus, including the President and the Provost;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

The Provost, in collaboration with the Deans, initiate and fund a high-profile, long-range, systematic, and comprehensive professional development effort for faculty to continue expanding and improving their instructional repertoires and pedagogical skills. This can be parallel and complementary to the Educational Technology Center. Such an effort, at a minimum, should include the following:

20. graduate courses (on teaching and learning, instructional technology, mentoring and supervision, innovative teaching and testing strategies, etc.) which can be audited or taken for credit (perhaps through the UUP tuition payment plan);
21. workshops, speakers and other programs, with discussions and reflections scheduled as follow-ups;
22. advertising and encouragement for faculty to participate in both intradisciplinary and interdisciplinary programs;
23. encouragement for faculty to visit one another’s classes; and
24. if the former Office of Teaching Effectiveness is not reinstated, then the Provost should establish and ensure that its functions are fulfilled in some way.

Resolution #4: Concerning Students’ Academic Responsibilities and the Culture of Learning

WHEREAS:

1. High quality instruction provides opportunities for academic achievements, the processes and content of that learning ultimately depend upon what students do; and
2. Academic assignments, schedules, lectures – indeed, almost all course requirements and options – assume certain amounts of preparation, prerequisite skills and/or an attitude of readiness;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

The Provost and Deans promulgate (via the Student Handbook as well as in other ways) a list of Student Academic Responsibilities that, at a minimum, should include the following:

- knowing and following University policy regarding drop-add dates, making up incomplete grades, etc;
- understanding and following each course syllabus, particularly in regard to assignments, due dates, attendance policies, office hours, available assistance and how to access it (by e-mail, graduate assistants, extra labs), etc;
- preparing for and participating in class;
- informing the instructor, in advance if possible, if for any reason a deadline cannot be met or a class must be missed; and
- requesting of the instructor as soon as possible the need for extra help on an assignment or topic.

Resolution #5: Concerning the Development of Academic Skills

WHEREAS:

- a. Amount of learning can be defined as the extent to which students persevere to spend the time they need, which likely differs for each student across academic domains;*
- b. Many students are not prepared for the kind of learning experiences required at UB: that is, to understand what it takes to succeed at this level – to self-diagnose how well they are comprehending; when their study or writing skills are weak; the value of attending office hours, review sessions, or extracurricular campus-wide events; or how much time they need to learn; and
- c. UB and individual schools and departments have invented several programs specifically to teach strategies of learning and metacognition, self-diagnosis, and time management;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

UB and individual schools and departments maintain, strengthen, better publicize, and recommend such courses. In addition, academic units should take every opportunity to invent other courses and prominently include these skills in such courses as The University Experience, if they are not already included. These ideas can be accomplished by:

- a. providing workshops for faculty;
- b. highlighting these courses in the course schedules; and
- c. regularly circulating the goals, cognitive and metacognitive skills and instructional techniques used to teach them in these courses.

Resolution #6: Concerning Faculty-Student Dialogue

WHEREAS:

All the above teaching-learning interactions need to be continually communicated and shared to create and maintain a culture of teaching and learning,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

The Provost, in collaboration with the Deans, initiate discussions with the various campus student organizations about the above issues, including perhaps the following as a minimum:

- a. their input on the policy issues in this document;
- b. the establishment of lectures, panels, discussion groups on practical topics of teaching, learning, cognitive processes, and so forth for their own academic careers; and
- c. whether GSEU members should be included in, or have separate programs like, the Professional Development effort in Resolution #3.

B. University at Buffalo Class Absence Policy Adopted 11 December 2001

This "Class Absence Policy" was adopted by the Faculty Senate of the University at Buffalo at its meeting 11 December 2001:

The University at Buffalo recognizes that attendance at all class sessions and associated activities is highly valuable for all students. The University acknowledges, however, that occasional absences will occur and that some of these will be unpredictable. Fairness requires that students know the absence policies for their classes, and that to the maximum extent reasonably feasible there be alternatives permitting students to make up required course activities from which they are justifiably absent. The responsibilities of faculty and students are: Every class instructor shall provide to students a course syllabus during the first week of class that specifies attendance policies and dates and times for classes, exams and all other required activities. Instructors shall provide reasonable alternatives to students for required course activities from which they are justifiably absent. Instructors shall observe University policy when scheduling class activities: "Classes are to meet at the time and on the campus listed in the SARA schedule, unless changed with the consent of the

entire class.” [The Faculty Handbook, III.E., Faculty Teaching Responsibilities]

Students may be justifiably absent from classes due to religious observances, illness documented by a physician or other appropriate health care professional, conflicts with University sanctioned activities, public emergencies, and documented personal or family emergencies. The student is responsible for notifying the instructor in writing with as much advance notice as possible of required absences in a timely manner, preferably at the beginning of the course. It is recognized that such absences, especially for illness, emergencies, or University sanctioned activities, may not be known at the beginning of a semester. Absences for University sanctioned activities shall be certified in writing by an appropriate senior University administrator, e.g., the Vice President for Student Affairs, the Dean for Student Affairs, the Director of Athletics, or the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs. Students are responsible for the prompt completion of any alternative assignments.

In the event a student absence situation cannot be resolved between the student and the class instructor, or either party is aggrieved by the process, appeal shall proceed sequentially to the department chair, unit dean, and finally the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs.

In applying the provisions of this policy, faculty and administrative officers are responsible for exercising the fullest measure of good faith.

Comments and Observations:

This Class Absence Policy states the basic considerations governing class absences to be included in instructors' assessments of students' performance. It provides guidance for both faculty and students, but omits lengthy and detailed specifications of minutiae. The

obligations it sets for faculty and students are reasonable and feasible.

The principles stated in the opening paragraph of this policy are undoubtedly widely understood and observed. It is the infrequent - but sometimes very serious - violations of these that require the policy. The basic responsibilities of faculty and students are specified to prevent so far as possible misunderstandings, misinterpretations or misapplications of the principles and - in the worst cases - failure to observe the principles. Unfortunately, such misunderstandings and failures have occurred, to the chagrin of all involved: students, faculty, and academic officers to whom problems are appealed. A clear and widely disseminated policy is a primary requirement for preventing and - when necessary - resolving these problems.

The claim that it is sufficient to urge faculty to have a "reasonable" absence policy - e.g., the opening paragraph is all the policy required - leaves what is reasonable indeterminate. That indeterminacy provides neither adequate guidance for faculty and students nor adequate basis for action in a dispute by a unit chair or other academic administrative officer in the unfortunate cases where that becomes necessary. Those inadequacies are evidenced by the discussions of the policy, as well as by disputes between and among faculty and students and by the problems that have led to the formulation of this policy.

The policy is neither formulated only for small courses nor feasible only in such settings; it is equally applicable to large - over 200 students - courses. It applies to all required assignments - including laboratory work - and exams for students who are justifiably absent. It permits an instructor to require the student to complete the original assignment if that be feasible; it permits an instructor to waive a justifiably missed activity and base the course grade on completed activities only. The policy is not solely for absences due to student participation in intercollegiate athletics. Those are included and addressed; equally included and addressed are absences - in the experience of some more frequent and in that sense more significant - due to student participation in other

courses and University activities.

That justified absences not be penalized is a matter of fairness. Faculty are on occasion absent from class for good reason [including personal emergencies], unable to arrange a substitute, not penalized, and yet request or require additional effort from their students to compensate for the lost instructional activity. Students deserve parallel consideration.

Finally, this policy is not a license to neglect course activities. It does not excuse students who miss classes because they forgot, sleep through exams because they studied all night, or do not get to laboratories because they were mesmerized by the weather channel. Unjustified absences merit neither remedy nor defense; none is here provided.