



## **University of Pittsburgh Student Leave of Absence Policy Committee Charter**

### **I. Preamble**

This body is called the Student Leave of Absence Policy Committee (Committee). It is authorized by the Chancellor and will serve at the Chancellor's discretion. The Chancellor has authorized the Provost and Senior Vice Chancellor (SVC-P) to direct the operations of this Committee, consistent with the terms of this Charter. This Charter outlines the purpose, relevant background, scope, responsibilities, composition, and operations of the Committee, as well as the review process for any proposals generated by this Committee.

This document should be read in conjunction with Policy 01-01-01, Establishing University Policies, and all other applicable University policies, protocols, and procedures.

### **II. Purpose**

The Committee is created for the purpose of proposing a new University Policy (or Policies) on Student Leave of Absence, as well as documents that will support implementation, which will govern situations in which students take a leave of absence (involuntarily or voluntarily) from undergraduate or graduate and professional programs.

### **III. Background**

The University does not have a University Policy in place to govern situations in which students take a leave of absence (involuntarily or voluntarily) from undergraduate or graduate and professional programs. Various circumstances might compel University students to temporarily interrupt their enrollment in coursework, an interruption formally recognized as a leave of absence (LOA). The LOA might be voluntary or involuntary, might occur while the student is in good standing or on academic probation, and might be associated with a medical condition. While LOAs are currently an option for students at the University, there is no formal University guidance (e.g., a Policy) to assist students or administrators through this process. The University is developing this policy (or policies) to establish University-wide requirements that must be followed to ensure reasonable evaluation and responsible handling of a student's break from enrollment either before or after a semester begins.

#### IV. Scope and Authority

The Committee will recommend a new University Policy (or Policies), and supplemental documents (e.g., guidelines and procedures), which will govern situations in which students take a leave of absence (involuntarily or voluntarily) from undergraduate or graduate and professional programs. In doing so, the Committee's deliberations must address the following topics:

- **Consistency.** Ensure consistency in terms and procedures with other related University Policies (e.g., Policy 09-05-08, Termination of Registration).
- **Compliance.** Establish procedures and guidelines that comply with relevant federal/state/local laws (e.g., Americans with Disabilities Act, Civil Rights Act, FERPA).
- **Update.** Address and update relevant procedures and standards associated with taking a LOA (e.g., course registration and housing).
- **Clarity.** Provide clarity for students and administrators to better understand the processes for, and conditions of, the various types of LOAs (e.g., voluntary, involuntary, regular, extended).

#### V. Responsibilities

As provided above, the Committee is created to propose a new University Policy (or Policies), and its supplemental documents (e.g., guidelines and procedures), on Student Leave of Absence. To perform this function, the Committee has the responsibility to:

- Review and consider current University practices and processes related to LOA.
- Research and discuss best practices for LOA, including a benchmarking of peer universities' respective policies.
- Incorporate or address applicable federal/state/local laws and regulations in the proposed Policy (or Policies) and associated procedure.
- Establish a formal Policy (or Policies) governing LOAs that, to the extent possible: (1) allows students to take time away from studies, without formally withdrawing from the University, to focus on their well-being and/or other pertinent life circumstances; (2) does not count toward time limitations for degree completion; and (3) develops plans for students' return, allowing them to stay on track for successful degree completion.
- Consult with the Student Government Board (SGB) and the Graduate and Professional Student Government (GPSG) during the drafting stage(s) of the Policy (or Policies) and associated procedure(s).

- Consult with University Associate Deans during the drafting stage(s) of the Policy (or Policies) and associated procedure(s) to ensure various school standards (e.g., degree requirements) are appropriately taken into consideration.
- Recommend a draft Policy (or Policies) for review pursuant to the process described in Section VIII below and consider feedback received during that review.
- Recommend a draft procedure (or procedures) needed for the effective and efficient implementation of the proposed Policy (or Policies).

It is expected that the Committee will work in confidence to have full and frank discussion of all options. Individual members should maintain the deliberations of the Committee confidential and are expected to not discuss the content of the Committee's deliberations outside of the Committee, unless authorized to do so by the Committee. The broader community will have an opportunity to consider the Committee's proposals pursuant to the process described in Section VIII below.

## **VI. Composition**

This Committee, at the direction of the SVC-P, will be co-chaired by **Kenyon Bonner**, Vice Provost and Dean of Students, and **Joe McCarthy**, Vice Provost for Undergraduate Studies. The Committee will include the following members:

1. **Steve Anderson**, Associate Dean and Director of Residence Life
2. **Jay Darr**, Director of University Counseling Center
3. **Rick Fogle**, Dean of Student Services (Pitt-Greensburg)
4. **Stephen Gilson**, Associate Legal Counsel
5. **Dustin Gray**, Senior Associate Athletic Director for Administration
6. **Pilar Herr**, Assistant Professor of History (Pitt-Greensburg)
7. **Stephanie Hoogendoorn**, Senior Assistant to the Provost for Academic Affairs
8. **Carolyn Kaikaka**, Director of Operations, Student Financial Services
9. **Patti Mathay**, University Registrar
10. **Randy McCready**, Director of Financial Aid
11. **Jacob Synder**, Student Representative (Pitt-Greensburg)
12. **Juan Taboas**, Assistant Professor, School of Dental Medicine; Co-chair of SAAA Committee

**Leigh Culley**, Director of Disability Resources and Services, will support the Committee on behalf of the Office of Diversity and Inclusion.

**Brittany Conner**, Policy Specialist, will help facilitate and support the Committee's work on behalf of the Office of Policy Development and Management.

## **VII. Operations**

The Committee will meet once per month or more frequently as circumstances dictate, until the work set forth above is complete. The Committee's proposed Policy (or Policies), and supporting documents (e.g., guidelines and procedures), on Student Leave of Absence will be submitted to the SVC-P no later than Spring 2020. The SVC-P may ask for interim status reports.

After the SVC-P's review is complete, the draft Policy (or Policies) will be submitted to the Office of Policy Development and Management (Policy Office) to coordinate its review consistent with Policy 01-01-01.

## **VIII. Proposed Policy Review Process**

The review process for the Committee's recommended Policy (or Policies) will include:

- University comment period;
- Council of Deans;
- University Senate's Student Admissions, Aid, and Affairs Committee;
- Faculty Assembly;
- University Senate Council; and
- Administration Leadership

The Committee will coordinate with the Policy Office to consider feedback provided throughout this process.

Once this review process is complete, the proposed Policy (or Policies) will be sent to the Policy Office for review and submission to the Chancellor in accordance with Policy 01-01-01.

## **IX. Amendment**

Any amendments to this Charter must be made in accordance with Policy 01-01-01 and receive the approval of the Chancellor or designee.

This Committee shall expire on the publication of a new University Policy (or Policies) that governs Student Leave of Absence, unless otherwise directed by the Chancellor.