



Academic Senate

05/AS/19/UEPC: Leave of Absence Policy

RESOLVED: That the Academic Senate of California State University, Stanislaus approve the attached Leave of Absence Policy. The policy shall be effective Fall 2019, providing time for the Request for a Leave of Absence form to be revised to reflect the new policy language and requirements.

RATIONALE: At Stan State the Leave of Absence Policy is currently an administrative policy, developed out of Enrollment Services. The University Educational Policies Committee (UEPC) has not only recommended changes to the policy, but has put forward these revisions in the form of an Academic Policy requiring approval by Academic Senate and the President. Such a move both elevates recognition of the role a leave of absence may play in a student's progress toward degree completion, and ensures that faculty are aware and supportive of any future changes to the policy.

The current Leave of Absence Policy indicates that students may not request a leave for "financial reasons," yet this is not required by system policy nor law. For many students, financial concerns are a primary reason for needing to take time away from their degree progress, and this policy language suggests to students that they must withdraw from the university if they need to take more than one semester off within a calendar year. In reality, financial concerns often are at the root of approved Leave of Absence requests, and we want to ensure that all students know this is a valid reason to request a leave. The revised policy makes explicit that financial reasons are an acceptable reason to take a leave.

The revised policy removes the language of "Planned" and "Unavoidable" leaves, as these terms are often confusing to students and advisors as they apply to the reasons a student may desire a leave. The policy instead identifies four types of leave that are available, and any coding of "planned" or "unavoidable" will be addressed administratively by Enrollment Services after the request is submitted.

To help students to better understand eligibility, access to services, and what is expected upon return, more detailed information about these topics is included in the policy.

Revision of the Request for a Leave of Absence form is currently underway, as members of the GREAT Advising Practices Work group, UEPC, and staff in SPEMI and Student Affairs are making suggestions for changes to many Enrollment Services forms prior to likely conversion to

electronic formats. It was this review process that drew attention to need to revise the Leave of Absence policy. This Leave of Absence Policy revision will inform the revision of the request form, whether or not the electronic conversion occurs.

Approved by the Academic Senate on 03/12/19

Approved by President Junn on 04/23/19