



Central Student Government

Assembly Resolution 13-027

Creation of a Bereavement Absence Policy for the University of Michigan

Resolution Information

Sponsor(s)	Riley Kina, Rules Vice Chair Paige Cook, Non-Traditional Ex Officio Alexander Gavulic, Law
External author(s)	Sharon Thomas, Rules Committee Intern Tyler Fioritto, Windridge Village Civic Association Vice President
Endorser(s)	Magda Wojtara, Rackham Hope Techlin, Engineering Jacob Amspaugh, LSA Patrick Szendro Arceo, Executive Nominations Vice Chair Chrystian Phillips, Rackham Taylor Peterson, Ross Benjamin Thomas, LSA Liam Reaser, Rules Chair (LSA)
Long title	A Declarative Resolution to Advocate for the Establishment of a Bereavement Absence Policy for the University of Michigan.
Author Summary	This resolution urges the University of Michigan to change its policies on absences to allow excused absences for bereavement. This policy should allow up to five excused absences within two weeks for the death of a loved one and students should be able to request additional excused absences accommodating for travel time. As well, students should not be penalized for missed work and should be given the opportunity to make up for missing work. This resolution encourages the Dean of Students and professors to be accommodating to students who may be dealing with a loss.

Assembly Information (to be completed by the Speaker)

Requirements	Reading in two separate meetings; simple majority vote; Presidential approval.
Committees	Communications

Committee Information (to be completed by the respective Committee Chairs)

Committee (if applicable)	Passed For First Reads (Y/N; Initials)	Passed For Second Reads (Y/N; Initials)
Rules		
Finance		
Communications	Y; AG	Y; AG

Resolutions		
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Attest

Jarek Schmanski, LSA
Speaker of the Assembly

Unanimous Consent

Date: 26 November 2023

Presidential Approval

Meera Herle, Ford

Date

Section 1.

The Central Student Government Assembly finds and declares all of the following:

WHEREAS,

The University of Michigan has several colleges within it, and each of these colleges has its own absence policies; AND

WHEREAS,

The College of Literature, Science, and the Arts allows excused absences for illness or unexpected circumstances, as well as for religious conflicts¹; AND

WHEREAS,

When students miss class due to illness or an unexpected circumstance, they are required to notify their professors and give an explanation. However, they are not required to provide documentation. However, if a student misses an assignment, an exam, or other required work then they are required to provide documentation for missing class²; AND

WHEREAS,

Professors are encouraged to put in “...a reasonable effort...” to accommodate students when this occurs³; AND

WHEREAS,

When students miss class due to religious obligations, they are only required to notify their professors; they are not required to provide documentation for missing their classes. Also, professors are encouraged to find another way for the student to make up their missed work⁴; AND

WHEREAS,

Although professors are encouraged to accommodate students for missing classes under these circumstances, for funerals (the death of family and/or close friends), professors are not always willing to excuse absences; AND

WHEREAS,

Many people would argue that the death of a loved one (a funeral) would count as an unexpected circumstance; AND

WHEREAS,

The Ross School of Business ultimately has no specific policy on absences and allows professors to determine how absences should be handled⁵; AND

WHEREAS,

Other colleges within the University of Michigan do not have specific absence policies for students; AND

WHEREAS,

The University of Michigan should update its policies surrounding this issue so that students will no longer be penalized for missing classes due to the loss of a loved one; AND

¹ [Class Attendance | U-M LSA](#)

² [Class Attendance | U-M LSA](#)

³ [Class Attendance | U-M LSA](#)

⁴ [Class Attendance | U-M LSA](#)

⁵ [Class Attendance and Retaking Courses: BBA](#)

WHEREAS,

Dealing with the death of a loved one is already extremely heartbreaking and hard to cope with. “Bereavement affects student success as they must balance grief and academics.”⁶ By allowing excused absences for funerals, students will be more likely to succeed in their academics and will feel less burdened during this grieving period, as they will have time to process this significant change rather than work through their grief during class, research, or other academic pursuits; AND

WHEREAS,

The University of Michigan’s current absence policy allows professors to drop students from their classes if those students miss the first one to two class sessions of the semester, regardless of the reason; AND

WHEREAS,

Students may be forced to make arduous travel plans to attend to the loss of a loved one at the beginning of a semester in order to avoid being dropped from a class during a time of bereavement; AND

WHEREAS,

Other universities have absence policies surrounding bereavement that accommodate students, including Purdue University⁷, Michigan State University⁸, and Oakland University⁹; AND

WHEREAS,

Purdue University has an especially accommodating bereavement absence policy. For immediate family students are allowed up to five days of excused absences over two weeks and for other relationships students are granted up to three days.¹⁰ In addition, if students have to travel during this time, they are given extra days of excused absences, depending on how far from the university they have to travel. Along with excused absences, “...the student will be given the opportunity to make up coursework...”¹¹; AND

WHEREAS,

To better accommodate students, the University of Michigan should create a new absence policy for bereavement. This policy should be similarly structured to Purdue University’s bereavement absence policy. Students should be allowed up to five days of excused absences for the death of a loved one, and if they are required to travel, they should be able to apply for extra excused absences through the Dean of Students. The Dean of Students should be accommodating to students and give them an adequate amount of time off for travel. Also, students should be excused from any missed work in classes and should be allowed to make up that work, including other academic activities such as research and practicums.

Section 2.

THEREFORE it is, by the Students of the University of Michigan, through Central Student Government:

RESOLVED,

We encourage the University of Michigan to update its absence policy to better accommodate students who are grieving a loss.

⁶ [Understanding Bereavement among College Students: Implications for Practice and Research](#)

⁷ [Absence Policies | Purdue University](#)

⁸ [MSU RO: Grief Absence Policy](#)

⁹ [Administrative Policies-Office of the Provost-Oakland University](#)

¹⁰ [Absence Policies | Purdue University](#)

¹¹ [Absence Policies | Purdue University](#)

AND FURTHER RESOLVED,

We urge the University of Michigan to allow students up to five excused absences per class, as well as other academic activities such as research and practicums, within two weeks for the death of a loved one.

AND FURTHER RESOLVED,

We recommend that students should not be required by their professors to provide proof of their bereavement, including but not limited to providing proof of attending a funeral or a copy of a death certificate.

AND FURTHER RESOLVED,

We also encourage the university to allow students to be able to request additional absences if students have to travel during this time and we urge the Dean of Students to accommodate such requests.

AND FURTHER RESOLVED,

We propose that students may not be subject to being dropped from a class for missing up to five class meetings over a span of two full calendar weeks as a result of bereavement.

AND FURTHER RESOLVED,

We believe that students should not be penalized for any work or classes they missed as a result of this policy. We further request that professors accommodate students and give them opportunities to make up missed work within a reasonable time.

AND FURTHER RESOLVED,

Upon passage, the Communications Director is directed to distribute this resolution through the CSG Instagram and the monthly CSG update email to the student body.

AND FINALLY RESOLVED,

Upon passage, this resolution will be sent to:

- The President of the University of Michigan, Dr. Santa J. Ono
- The Board of Regents
- Dean of Students Dr. Laura Blake Jones
- Vice President of Student Life, Martino Harmon
- University of Michigan Faculty Senate