

**UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-EAU CLAIRE
STUDENT SENATE RESOLUTION**

IN SUPPORT OF ADDING BEREAVEMENT TO THE LIST OF UNIVERSITY

AUTHROIZED ABSENCES

- 1 WHEREAS, the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire (UW-Eau Claire) Student Senate is the official
2 voice of the student body; and
- 3 WHEREAS, The University of Wisconsin Eau Claire currently has a list of Authorized Absences,
4 including active military services, religious beliefs, and student illness, injury or severe emergencies; and
- 5 WHEREAS, This list is intended to give students grace to take time away from their studies and
6 class without the fear of being penalized for being absent; and
- 7 WHEREAS, According to the *Journal of College Student Development*¹, “Experiencing the death of
8 someone close often affects college students’ overall functioning and may hinder their ultimate success;
9 37 to 44% of college students report the death of someone important to them.”; and
- 10 WHEREAS, Out of the 13 Universities in Wisconsin, four of them have explicit policies regarding
11 bereavement leave for students; and
- 12 WHEREAS, The University of Wisconsin-Green Bay policy states, “Upon approval from the Dean
13 of Students office, the students are allowed one week, commencing from the day of notification to the
14 Dean of Students Office”²; and
- 15 WHEREAS, The University of Wisconsin-Madison states, “Our students come from various cultures
16 and family configurations. In general, it is appropriate to grant an accommodation for a significant death
17 in a student’s life.”; and
- 18 WHEREAS, The *Journal of College Student Development* also states, “Students who experience
19 deaths report difficulty concentrating and display lower GPAs than their unmatched non-grieving peers
20 during the semester of their death loss. Grieving students describe isolation, lack of support, and
21 decreased belongingness and are also at risk for leaving college at higher rates than matched non-grieving
22 peers.”; and
- 23 WHEREAS, The University of Wisconsin Eau-Claire is an advocate for mental health within student
24 life; we need to enact a policy for grief; and
- 25 WHEREAS, the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire does not have explicit policies authorizing
26 absences for death, grief, bereavement; and
- 27 BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED, The University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire will add bereavement to the
28 list of University authorized absences; and
- 29 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, The University of Wisconsin Eau Claire and Academic Affairs will
30 consider the proposal in Attachment A for bereavement policy which models parts from UW-System

¹file:///Users/rossellingaitan/Downloads/Servaty-Seib%20and%20Liew%202019%20Advocating%20for%20Bereavement%20Leave%20Policies%20for%20College%20Students.pdf

²<https://www.uwgb.edu/dean-of-students/assistance-advocacy/bereavement-policy/>

31 Universities and colleges outside of Wisconsin, including the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign³ and
32 Stevenson University⁴; and

33 BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that upon passage of this resolution, President Gaitan will transmit a
34 copy to Dr. James Schmidt, Chancellor; Dr. Patricia Kleine, Provost and Vice Chancellor, Academic Affairs;
35 Grace Crickette, Vice Chancellor, Finance and Administration; Billy Felz, Vice Chancellor of Enrollment
36 Management; Gregory Heinselman, Dean of Students; Quincy Nesgoda, Student Body President, UW- Eau
37 Claire-Barron County; Evan Weiher, Chair, University Senate, Legislative and Community Relations Liaison,
38 Jake Wrasse.

AUTHORED BY:

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³<https://odos.illinois.edu/community-of-care/resources/students/bereavement/>

⁴<https://www.stevenson.edu/human-resources/policies-forms/policy-manual/standard-bereavement/>

Proposal for the University of Wisconsin Eau Claire Bereavement Policies.

Why this is important

The Office of the Dean of Students at UWEC understands that grief impacts every student differently. This is not an attempt to change the impact the death of a loved one has on any student or in any way address the nature of the grief process. The purpose of this policy is to provide students the time to attend the bereavement services of family members and have one less thing to worry about during a challenging time in their life.

The guidelines below encourage students to contact the Dean of Students office to let them handle getting professors and collecting more information. Given their academic responsibilities and goals, students are strongly encouraged to use their judgment about the time they need and can afford to take. Similarly, students should use their discretion about the need to take more extended time through mechanisms such as late course drops, withdrawal, or stepping away for a semester.

The Office of the Dean of Students knows that students will experience other types of loss not addressed by this policy. We encourage faculty and staff to be sensitive to a student's grief in these instances.

Time of Bereavement

Under this policy, a student is entitled to at least seven (7) consecutive academic days of grief to mourn a death in the immediate family as defined below. A student is entitled to at least five (5) consecutive academic days of grief for a death outside the immediate family, as described below.

The immediate family includes:

- Parent(s) or legal guardian(s)
- Siblings
- Spouse or Partner
- Children
- Other relatives living as members of the student's household

Relationships outside the immediate family may include, but are not limited to:

- Grandparents
- Aunts or uncles
- Cousins
- Nieces or nephews
- In-laws
- Friends

We understand that every situation is different and needs different types of support; if you need more time or are in a unique position, the Dean of Students office is here to assist you.

Religion/Culture

We understand that different religions and cultures may have different timelines when someone passes away because of these circumstances; we encourage you to speak to the Dean of Students' office about accommodations.

Travel outside of the United States

Students traveling more than 100 miles from the University will be accommodated up to four additional absence days. Students traveling outside the state will be accommodated for up to six other absence days.

The student or a representative (family member, room/suitemate, on-campus faculty/staff) should notify the Dean of Students before the start of the bereavement leave.

Notifying your Professor

A representative from the Office of Student Success will notify the necessary and appropriate on-campus offices (faculty, success coach/academic advisor, athletic coaches, Residence Life) of a student's bereavement leave and anticipated return date. The student is required to provide appropriate documentation to the Office of Student Success.

Upon Return

Upon return to the institution, the student must communicate with their instructors about any missed assignments and arrange to complete missed work. In keeping with this policy, instructors shall excuse the student from class according to this policy and provide an opportunity for the student to meet missed quizzes, exams, papers, other required work and alternative assignments. Students who have followed this policy should not incur academic penalties.

Counseling Services

The University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire is available to assist students and provide counseling services if so desired by the student or able to give assistance finding support outside of campus.