



UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA FAIRBANKS

Associated Students of the University of Alaska Fairbanks

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SR 189-001 - Resolution to Faculty Senate in Regards to Student Bereavement Leave

Sponsors: Durden, von Hafften, Mitchell, Dougherty

First Considered: 06/27/17

Whereas, Many students at UAF have lost (or will lose) an immediate family member(s) and close relative(s)/friend(s) during an academic semester, and there is currently no policy in place that guarantees a bereavement period for students and/or assistance to students affected,

Whereas, Actively Moving Forward (AMF) states on its website that it is a national, non-profit organization dedicated to supporting young adults grieving the illness or death of a loved one. AMF presents the data:

That, between 35% and 48% of college students have lost a family member or close friend within the last two years.

That, between 22% and 30% of college students have lost a family member or close friend within the last year (Balk, 1997; Wrenn, 1999; Balk, Walker & Baker, 2010)

That, 8.6% of college students' academic performances have been affected by the death of a family member or close friend within the last year (Servaty-Seib & Hamilton, 2006).

Research shows that a student's GPA significantly decreases during the semester of loss, providing empirical support for the assertion that bereaved students are at risk for declined academic performance (Servaty-Seib, 2006).

Whereas, AMF also states that:

For 10% to 15% of the bereaved, a debilitating and prolonged form of grief can pose severe long-term risks for psychological and physical health (Ott, 2003; Prigerson & Maciejewski, 2006).

While counseling has been shown to have a positive impact on the retention rates of all college students, only 10% of college students seek counseling services. (Bishop & Brenneman, 1986; Gallagher, 2004, 2010).

Students are not likely to complain to physicians about grief but instead about symptoms like insomnia, lack of motivation and an inability to concentrate (Janowiak, Mei-tal, & Drapkin, 1995).

Studies indicate that bereaved individuals who receive adequate support experience lower levels (both in intensity and incidence) of anxiety or depression, fewer psychosomatic and autonomic symptoms, and decreased use of alcohol, tobacco, and tranquilizers (Parkes, 1975, 1979, 1981).

