



## UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA FAIRBANKS

Associated Students of the University of Alaska Fairbanks

P.O. Box 756640 • Fairbanks, Alaska 99775-6640 • (907) 474-7355 fax: (907) 474-5157

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).





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Whereas, There are 9,330 students enrolled at UAF (Fall 2016), and using the statistics above, it could be estimated that:

About 3,265-4,478 UAF students have lost a family member or close friend in the last two years (35%-48%),

About 747 UAF students' academic performances have been affected by the loss of a family member or close friend in the last year (8.6%).

Whereas, Students who have experienced a significant loss might not return to school, might choose to drop classes, might be unable to return to classes within a week, might be unable to complete late work, might struggle with returning to academic life, might require delayed assistance/services, and might feel uncomfortable asking for more help,

Therefore Be It Resolved that, Faculty Senate consider the following ways, as well as their own ideas, for bereaved students at UAF to continue their degree progress.

2-week grace period from missed class days, assignments, tests.

One-on-one discussion with each professor to ensure students have a goal/plan to finish their classes; must mention options for grades (NB, W, Incompletes, Audits, etc.).

Statement of Purpose: To accommodate bereaved students through academic grace periods and other supportive university resources.

Dawson Mann

8/11/17

Dawson Mann, Summer Committee Chair/Vice President

Date

