

MEMORANDUM

DATE: May 6, 2008

TO: Academic Advisors, Academic Counselors, Admissions Counselors, and Registrar's Office Staff

FROM: George Gehrels, Chair, Undergraduate Council
Celeste F. Pardee, Curriculum Associate, Academic Affairs

RE: **Amendment to the Undergraduate Leave of Absence (LOA) Policy**

On April 7, 2008, the Faculty Senate approved an amendment to clarify the undergraduate Leave of Absence (LOA) Policy as it pertains to first semester freshmen and transfer students. The amendment, suggested by the Office of the Registrar and supported by the Office of Admissions, was passed by the Undergraduate Council in January 2008, has now been added to the 2008-09 General Catalog, <http://catalog.arizona.edu/2008-09/policies/leavingu.htm#LeaveofAbsence>. Because the referral applies to freshmen and transfer students enrolling in Fall 2008 and in the future, the amendment has not been added to earlier catalogs.

The clarification reads as follows:

First semester freshmen and transfer students, due to personal or family emergencies, may need to drop their courses or withdraw from the University during their first semester; those students should consult with a supervisor in the [Office of Registration and Transcripts](#) on their leave options.

Rationale for adding the note of clarification:

The Office of Registration & Transcripts has considered LOA requests from first-semester freshmen and transfer students on a case-by-case basis when they withdraw early in their first semester. Faculty and advisors have supported LOA benefits for first semester students who drop their courses due to personal or family emergencies. The LOA is a good retention strategy because it simplifies a student's return to the UA. This amendment doesn't change the LOA policy but simply clarifies that an occasional exception may be made. By adding a note stating that first semester students should inquire about an LOA, advisors and other UA personnel will refer students who need to withdraw to the Office of Registration & Transcripts for assistance. New students who were admissible to the UA and who are in good standing should not necessarily be excluded from the LOA as long as they satisfy other criteria.

Management of the policy:

The Office of Registration and Transcripts oversees implementation of a student's LOA, which is dependent upon approval by the college dean. The following guidelines apply to first semester students who are granted the LOA:

1. The LOA for a first semester student should be limited to one semester; any exceptions to this time period will be made by the Senior Associate Registrar.
2. First semester students who drop all classes during the first 4 weeks of the regular semester take the LOA for the current semester; students who withdraw after the first 4 weeks take the LOA for the

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following regular semester, if it is needed, since their withdrawal status allows them to pre-register for the next regular semester without a LOA.

3. At the time the LOA is approved, students are informed that, should their student status change during their leave (e.g., they complete courses elsewhere or take CLEP exams), they are responsible for submitting official transcripts to update their UA records.
4. First semester freshmen who take a LOA will follow the General Catalog in effect upon their return. First semester transfer students who take a LOA are held to the University's Choice of Catalog policy, <http://catalog.arizona.edu/2008-09/policies/catchoice.htm>.
5. A report of continuing and first semester students on LOA is available to college advising coordinators or directors upon request each semester. College advisors are strongly encouraged to contact all first semester LOA students prior to their return, inviting them to see their academic advisor before registering for classes.

Questions about the policy amendment may be addressed to Celeste Pardee, Curriculum Associate, at 621-5375 or at cpardee@u.arizona.edu.