Faculty/Staff Guidance on Students Requesting Policy Exceptions

CONTEXT: Increasingly, students are requesting exceptions to policies in all areas of student life: academics, student development, athletics. These exceptions often have to do with attendance and/or deadlines. This user-friendly guidance is intended to help faculty and staff navigate these requests as efficiently and effectively as possible, while receiving support from campus resources, to help our students flourish while here at Wheaton and prepare them for life after Wheaton.

WHAT FACULTY/STAFF CAN DO PROACTIVELY:

- Identify and be clear on the Learning Outcomes (LOs) for your program, course assignment, extra-curricular activity, etc. as this is the starting point for consideration of any exception.
- Make participation/behavioral expectations and LOs clear at the start (especially for attendance and late assignments), both spoken and written down for students to reference later.
- Provide ongoing feedback so they know where they stand and if there are risks of them not meeting the LOs.
- Make referrals as needed! See below guidance.

Learning Outcomes:

It is critical to be aware of one's course or program/activity "learning outcomes", i.e. that which ought not be fundamentally altered even in cases of approved exceptions to policies such as official ADA accommodations. Further guidance on determining if something is a fundamental alteration is available from LAS.

Questions to Consider:

Is the request a single request or chronic?

In what category are the barriers that the student is currently citing as the cause for the request for exception?

Is the policy in question a policy tied to the Learning Outcomes or is it more of a "behavior modification" policy?

Is there an alternate route for the student to meet the same Learning Outcome(s) in a path that reduces or eliminates the barriers? Or would an exception result in a fundamental alteration of the L.O.

If I say no, can I clearly show how if an exception was made, a fundamental alteration would occur?

Student Wellness &

REFERRALS GUIDANCE:

Grad Student Life Crisis management

and reporting via Cares Referrals

Distressing life circumstances, family circumstances

Financial issues/basic needs not met

Concern for multiple consecutive absences and lack of responsiveness to outreach (2 weeks or more total should always be reported)

Notice of Absence (only non-health related) Learning & Accessibility Services (LAS)

Academic struggles

Observed gaps in time mgmt, study strategies, motivation

Impairment, injury, or health related concerns (affecting student for 2 weeks or more)

Student has ADA/504 accommodations via LAS but needs adjustments or additional support Student Health Services (SHS)

Physical health issues cited or observed

Sleep issues cited

Medication mgmt or support needed

Notice of Absences (limited to very specific criteria, not general illness/common cold, etc. students will get sick!)

WC Counseling Center

Mental health issues cited Anxiety/distress/ other mental health symptoms observed See further guidance on mental health crisis response

below

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Why refer a student?

- Gives the College a broader perspective of the student/student needs over time and across other areas of student life
- *Reduces burden faculty/staff to be the sole evaluator or decision-maker*
- We don't want students feeling like they have to disclose personal mental health or medical information to each individual faculty/staff (who may all respond differently)
- We don't want students feeling like they have to submit personal medical or disability documentation to faculty/staff (outside of LAS) in order to get accommodations
- Connects student to available supportive resources and centralizes the support

Mental Health Levels of Concern and Response:

