SB84-16/17: Resolution Regarding University of Montana’s (UM) Attendance Policy

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The Associated Students of the University of Montana

Resolution Regarding University of Montana’s (UM) Attendance Policy

4/13/2017

SB84-16/17

Authored by: Bailey Durnell, ASUM Senator; Mateen Hessami, Student-at-Large

Sponsored by:

Whereas, the current UM “Class Attendance/ Absence Policy” reads: “Instructors may excuse brief and occasional absences for reasons of illness, injury, family emergency, religious observance or participation in a University sponsored activity. Instructors shall excuse absences for reasons of military service or mandatory public service”;

Whereas, currently, under this policy there is no mention of cultural leave, or a “cultural hardship” exception;

Whereas, students who feel an overwhelming obligation to participate in specific culturally compelling events would not be excused;

Whereas, the Native American Student Advisory Council (NASAC) advocates for the success of Native American students by focusing on issues related to their academic success on campus, their need for cultural equality and recognition on campus, and their right to equal opportunity;

Whereas, the NASAC has urged the university to include “cultural hardship” to the list of enumerated circumstances that qualify as an excused absence;

Whereas, the suggested parameters put forth by the NASAC reads, “To receive an authorized absence for participation in a “cultural hardship,” an excused absence must be issued by the Department Chair or his/her designee. While every student’s request for an authorized cultural hardship absence is somewhat unique, the intention of leave must be clearly stated in a formal request to the Chair of the Department (or designee) of their respective school. The cultural hardship leave may not exceed five days”;

Whereas, this policy will go far in echoing the University of Montana’s commitment to diversity and supporting students;

Therefore, Let It Be Resolved, that ASUM supports increased recognition of minority students’ unique cultures through the establishment of a “cultural hardship” policy being added in the enumeration of acceptable circumstances for requesting an excused absence in UM’s attendance policy;

Therefore, Let It Further Be Resolved that a copy of this resolution be forwarded to Mike Reid, Vice President: Administration and Finance; Tom Crady, Vice President of Enrollment and Student Affairs; John DeBoer, Faculty Senate Chair; Mary-Ann Bowman, Faculty Senate Chair Elect; Camie Foos, Administrative Assistant, Faculty Senate; Shelia Sterns, UM President; Rhondie Voorhees, Dean of Students; Beverly Edmond, Provost.
Passed by ASUM Senate: ____________________________, 2017

Elizabeth Engebretson
Chair of Senate