Mental Health Implementation Work Team on Academic Policies

DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS
Selections for Assoc. Dean stakeholder feedback focused on recommendations 2.a., 2.b., and 3.h.

Vice Provost Associate Dean Group (VPADG)

> Preview presentation (October 14, 2022)
> Full presentation, discussion, and feedback (November 11, 2022)

Sub committee presenters (from sub groups 1 & 2)

Darlene Ray-Johnson
Director, Student and Program Consultation Services and Resolution Officer, Rackham Dean's Office

Norman D. Bishara
Associate Dean for Undergraduate Programs, Ross School of Business

Workgroup Charge

Identify key academic policies impacting students and provide recommendations as to ways in which the university and its academic units should alter its policies to reduce academic stress without compromising excellence.

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The Goal of this Discussion

Share a subset of the Work Team Recommendations.

Seek your feedback about:

- The degree to which the recommendations will positively impact student mental health and wellbeing
- Whether/how the recommendations could be improved

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*Central University Student Success Role and Office

Recommendation 1: Create a senior position (open to a staff or faculty appointment) within the Office of the Provost that
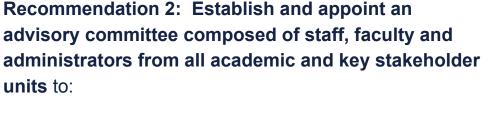
- Focuses on central undergraduate student success initiatives, efforts, and concerns

- Collaborates with other executive leaders to plan and implement undergraduate student success strategies and support

- Leverages data to drive strategy development, inform key decisions

- Promotes a student- and service-focused culture so students perceive that the university cares about them and their success

*Central University Student Success Role and Office

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Recommendation 2: Establish and appoint an advisory committee composed of staff, faculty and administrators from all academic and key stakeholder units to:

Advise the proposed senior leader

Ensure coordination on initiatives

Provide information on school and college considerations

Make recommendations for shared policies or best practices

*Academic Calendar

Recommendation 1: Shift the academic calendar so the winter semester begins on the Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday.

- Implement over 2 academic years to permit spring/summer programs time to adapt
- Provide administrative and financial resources to programs that are disrupted by the change
- Provide scheduling flexibility for spring/summer offerings

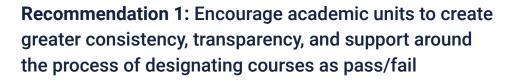**Recommendation 2:** Provide accommodations for students during winter break.

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*Academic Calendar

Recommendation 3: Reduce the length of the Spring/Summer semester to 12 weeks

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Mental Health Implementation Work Team on Academic Policies

FOR ADDITIONAL CONTEXT THE FOLLOWING ARE THE FULL SET OF DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

Grading Policies

Recommendation 1: Encourage academic units to create greater consistency, transparency, and support around the process of designating courses as pass/fail

- Clear policy on courses that can be designated P/F
- University-wide deadline to choose P/F option (same as course late drop deadline)

Grading Policies

Recommendation 2: Implement a policy that allows repeated classes to be factored into the GPA so that the academic record reflects both the initial grade for the class and the following re-attempts

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Grading Policies

Recommendation 3: Create a university-wide policy regarding incompletes that reduces penalties for students.

- Remove "I" upon course completion and replace with final grade
- Do not calculate "I" in GPA (do not lapse to failing grade)
- Clear deadline for course completion (1 year)

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Grading Policies

Recommendation 4: Improve communication of administrative policies and deadlines.

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Timeline for Withdrawal from Courses

Recommendation: Create a consistent university-wide policy for a course withdrawal deadline around week 9 of each semester.

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Priority Registration

Recommendation 1: Review course availability

Recommendation 2: Eliminate split registration appointments (do not schedule same appointment group over multiple days)

Recommendation 3: Establish a wave system for undergraduate registration.

- Initial limit to keep more seats open while allowing students to register for 3-4 high priority classes.
- Prevent students from over-enrolling in classes they intend to drop.
- *Need to consider students late in their careers (phase in this approach?)*
- *Need to consider programs that pre-enroll students in core classes*

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Priority Registration

Recommendation 4: Make the priority registration process transparent.

Recommendation 5: Establish a Priority Registration Advisory Committee.

- Review current priority registration groups, make recommendations for changes (removal or reduction in priorities for some groups). Potentially establish a maximum percentage of the student body that can receive priority registration.
- Consider additional groups for priority registration on an annual basis.
- Review summary data of previous year's priority registration outcomes and suggest modifications to priority registration groups.

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Transfer Credit

Recommendation 1: Take steps to ease the transition and create a welcoming environment for transfer students.

Recommendation 2: Create flexibility around start dates for transfer students.

Recommendation 3: Facilitate transfer credits through more robust systems and policies.

- Include all reviewed classes in TCE
- Implement secondary process of units providing departmental evaluations
- Resource the transfer credit evaluation team

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Transfer Credit

Recommendation 4: Draw lessons from programs, initiatives, and events in units and create university-wide practices that foster transfer-receptive cultures.

Recommendation 5: Explore a more robust and user-centric technology to support accurate information, transparency, and communication.

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Recommendation 2: Establish and appoint an advisory committee composed of staff, faculty and administrators from all academic and key stakeholder units to:

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Provide information on school and college considerations

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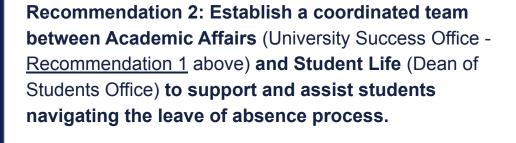# Coordinated Student Support Team for Leaves of Absence

Recommendation 1: Each school and college should create and document a leave of absence policy, including:

Clear requirements and processes for going on and returning from a leave

An appeal process

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Coordinated Student Support Team for Leaves of Absence

Recommendation 2: Establish a coordinated team between Academic Affairs (University Success Office - Recommendation 1 above) **and Student Life** (Dean of Students Office) **to support and assist students navigating the leave of absence process.**

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*Coordinated Student Support Team for Leaves of Absence

Recommendation 3: Refine and update existing best practice documents that provide guidance to schools and colleges, involving:

Relevant laws, regulations, and guidelines related to particular student populations

Ways to communicate the University's support for students and balance expectations of our students with support for their growth, development and academic achievement.

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Centralized Student Information Resources and Tools

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Recommendation 1: Create a centralized website to share relevant academic policies, information, and contacts across all key units (e.g. academic units, Student Life, Enrollment Management).

Centralized Student Information Resources and Tools

Recommendation 2: Develop resources and tools to provide students useful guidance around enrollment decisions in order to:

Supplement the general information above with clarity around the importance of various support services

Offer guided decision-making pathways ensure that students are able to navigate and own their academic journey

Ensure that staff and faculty are able to provide guidance and consultation as needed.

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Faculty Toolkit

Recommendation 1: Create a more comprehensive **Faculty Toolkit** that can be packaged with other resources that have already been established. The handbook would include:

Suggestions on creating a more inclusive classroom environment

Faculty resources for student support

Faculty Awareness of Student Mental Health Concerns

Recommendation 1: Take steps to increase mental health awareness of instructors, including:

- Encourage instructors to participate in suicide prevention training

- Encourage instructors to include a Mental Health and Wellness statement on syllabi

- Encourage faculty to increase accessibility of office hours

- Develop training opportunities for faculty and staff to increase knowledge about student mental health

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Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion

Recommendation 1: Encourage schools and colleges to take steps to strengthen commitments to DEI by:

Standardizing DEI into merit review processes

Incentivize instructor development related to DEI goals, especially inclusive teaching practices

Encourage instructors to include a DEI statement on course syllabi

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Grading Policies

Recommendation 1: Provide instructors with guidance around a set of best practices for grading, including:

Clearly articulating grading policies on syllabi

Provide students with access to current estimates of their course grades

Use straight-scale grading whenever possible

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Late Work Policies

Recommendation 1: Encourage instructors to incorporate best practices for late work in courses, including:

Developing late policies that conform with the principle of "flexibility within guardrails"

Clearly describing late policies on the syllabus

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Learning from Mistakes

Recommendation: Assist faculty in implementing policies that conform with best practices "try-fail-improve" learning models.

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Awareness of Student Academic Load

Recommendation 1: Take steps to avoid unnecessary overlap in major course events (e.g., exams, due dates), including

Encourage academic units to implement tools that allow departments and course instructors to plan for a better distribution of work across classes

ENcourage course instructors to build flexibility and clear policies for students who experience intense periods of overlapping coursework

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Course Consistency

Recommendation 1: Take steps to increase the consistency in coursework from semester to semester and better communicate the content and expectations of courses, including

Work with instructors to encourage consistency over time and across course sections

Make syllabi available for reference

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