

## 05.07 Student Leave of Absence Policy

### Purpose

The leave of absence policy is designed to allow students flexibility in completing their educational program in response to extraordinary events. The leave of absence policy grants students the ability to make up any course work missed during the approved leave. The policy establishes systems and processes that enable students to request a course/program leave of absence.

### Policy

A student may request a Leave of Absence from their coursework for medical emergencies or for other extraordinary circumstances. The Leave of Absence policy covers RVCC credit and non-credit courses/programs. When a student initiates a Leave of Absence, all requests must be received and approved by the *Dean of Students or Division Dean* prior to a student beginning their Leave of Absence.

A student on an approved leave of absence will be considered enrolled at RVCC and would be eligible for an in-school deferment for student aid loans. Federal student financial aid and in-school deferment may be negatively impacted if a student fails to apply for the Leave of Absence or if the application is denied. *This impacts students who receive Title IV federal student financial aid (Federal Pell Grants, Federal Supplemental Grants, Federal Stafford Subsidized or Unsubsidized Loans, Federal Parent Loans) or who want to have a federal student loan deferred from payment while in school.* Students are **not** deferred from making regularly scheduled payments to the Finance Office for normal fees incurred.

In compliance with Title IX regulations, Raritan Valley Community College will take reasonable steps to ensure that pregnant students who take a leave of absence or medical leave return to the same position of academic progress that they were in when they took leave, including access to the same course catalog that was in place when the leave began.

The Title IX Coordinator has the authority to determine that such accommodations are necessary and appropriate, and to inform faculty members of the need to comply. As with disability accommodations, information about pregnant students' requests for accommodations will be shared with faculty and staff only to the extent necessary to provide the reasonable accommodation.

Failure to return from an approved leave of absence may have an impact on student loan repayment terms as well as a student's academic standing, as the student will be considered withdrawn as of their last date of attendance. If a student fails to return to complete their coursework by the end of the Leave of Absence period, they must either apply for or receive an extension or the grade will become a W.

### **Definitions**

- Leave of Absence – a temporary suspension of coursework for a student who will be out of attendance for a period between 14 and 120 days.
- Examples of extraordinary situations – military deployment, legal, medical condition, jury duty, loss of job, family emergency, employment emergency, health and safety consideration, or other reasons as approved by the Dean of Students and/or Division Dean.

### **Procedure**

Students requesting a Leave of Absence must fill out the Leave of Absence Request Form. In order to qualify, the student must be in good academic standing and have a passing grade in all courses for which leave is requested. A student need not request leave for all courses in their schedule if the circumstances legitimately allow for continued enrollment in some courses but not others. Students may be asked to provide supporting documentation to the Office of the Dean of Students or the Division Dean. Supporting documentation may include confirmation from medical professionals, notes from emergency agencies, published death notices or obituaries, etc., as applicable. After review and verification, this documentation will be kept on file and a Leave of Absence determination will be made.

After approving the Leave of Absence request, the Dean of Students or the Division Dean will coordinate any needed services on the student's behalf, including contacting the student's instructors to determine and discuss any coursework, academic accommodations, and/or requirements that must be communicated to the student. The Office of the Registrar will also be notified and the student's enrollment status will be updated.

#### Responsible Administrator(s)

- Dean of Students
- Division Deans

#### Revised

- July/2020

#### Communication

- College Catalog
- Student Handbook
- Faculty Handbook
- Public Web Page