

Student Rules & Regulations Committee

December 6, 2024
3:00 PM-5:00 PM
Koldus 110/Zoom Meeting



December 6, 2024 Minutes

Approval of 11.1.24 minutes

Move to accept minutes by Trent Smith, seconded by Chris Cherry, motion passes with clear majority by a show of hands

Voting members in attendance: Eshani Yeragi, Jacob Becker, Chris Cherry, Rob Rahm, Delisa Falks, Venesa Heidick, Angie Hill Price, Trent Smith, Dale Rice, Susan Phillips, Heather Klein, Grace Townsend

Non-voting members in attendance: Blair Alvarado, Lori Moore, Shelby Hearn

Guests in attendance: Ben Milam, Zelelam Amare, Beau Stuart, Tanya Baker, Jonathan Kotinek

Rule 14.2 – Degree Requirements

Discussion: no discussion/comments

Decision: Heather Klein moved to approve the requested rule change, seconded by Venesa Heidick, Motion to approve requested rule change, after adding the word “be” in the 5th sentence, passed. Rule 14.2 requested rule change will be forwarded to Faculty Senate.

Rule 7.2.2.6 – Attendance Specifically for College of Dentistry

Discussion: This is already covered in rule 7 that says the Dean/designee can provide permission. The issue is that students have unlimited excused absences if pursuing residency opportunities but only one absence when pursuing employment opportunities. The College of Dentistry supports rule change to give more than one excused absence for students seeking employment.

A College of Dentistry student guest explained the rationale for the rule change.

It was reiterated that faculty can allow more than one excused absence per semester, as long as this applies to all students in their classes, and that students can make up missed classwork. It was questioned if School of Dentistry faculty is not allowing that.

Beau Stuart explained the absence process at College of Dentistry:

Faculty do not issue excused/unexcused absences.

Students submit absence requests to Mr. Stuart. Students send everything to Mr. Stuart.

He determines if the absence is excused or unexcused.

Mr. Stuart notifies faculty that the student is out for an excused or unexcused absence. That’s all faculty is privy to.

He went on to explain that some students seeking residencies may go to 7 or 8 different interviews, the norm being one or two interviews, and it’s all excused. Not so with students seeking employment. They get only one excused absence. Also, a travel day is allowed for educational interviews. If rule is changed that could potentially come into play for employment interviews.

Further committee discussion: if unlimited absences are allowed for educational opportunities, the same should apply to employment opportunities, especially since the goal is to get a job. But is this issue better handled within the College of Dentistry instead of Faculty Senate where people who are not associated with College of Dentistry will be making decisions for College of Dentistry?

It’s a university rule and must go through the process. Again, there is an “out clause” in that the Dean can decide to give additional excused absences. Recommendation made that College of Dentistry faculty meet and decide what the norm will be for them. There is the ability to excuse more absences using the rules that are in place. Several committee members concurred.

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Dr. Harrell clarified that revisions to student rules and regulations do not have to go through Faculty Senate. If the Provost and President agree to a rule revision, it can bypass FS.

A suggestion was made to reference 7.2.2.10 at the end of 7.2.2.6 with a sentence such as "absences can be approved by a dean or designee per 7.2.2.10." This could inform students that there is an avenue for additional absences potentially to be approved.

Comment was made that interviews for graduate professional schools are mandatory/fixed by university school policy (cannot be rescheduled) as opposed to job interviews which are individually selected during the semester and can be scheduled at any time. Perhaps comparing two different issues? Also, if too much class is missed the student can be "no graded" or "withdrawn."

College of Dentistry student guest asked for clarification on 7.2.2.10. Dr. Harrell responded if there is a compelling reason the dean or dean's designee can allow for other absences.

This question was raised: Has there been a discussion with College of Dentistry faculty regarding this issue? This could potentially result in many absences for a few students that affect faculty/classes. The response from College of Dentistry was, "no discussion has been had."

It was pointed out that 7.3.1.2 allows faculty to approve an absence under all the different types outlined in 7.2 or as other reasons as deemed appropriate by the instructor. It does not need to go to the dean or dean designee, but it can. Travel days are only excused for religious holy days.

The question was asked about the frequency of this being an issue in one semester. The College of Dentistry student guest gave an example of him missing 3 days of class for an out of state interview. Two of the days (for travel) were unexcused. Students must have 95% attendance. If he goes to another interview, he will be below 95% attendance. The submitter went to the dean for this issue. The dean's response was "we follow student rule 7" and the two days remained unexcused.

Additional comments were made from several committee members on the College of Dentistry faculty needing to be a part of this discussion.

Mr. Stuart added that even if an absence is unexcused, the professor is still at liberty to allow the student to make up the missed work. While he admits there is a difference in the timing of interviewing for residencies as opposed to employment (which can happen at any point in the year), the Office of Student Affairs is in support of some sort of rule change, even as simple as adding a line to one of the parts of the rule.

Decision: Heather Klein moved to table requested rule change as written and send it back to the College of Dentistry for discussion amongst the faculty before it's reconsidered. Rob Rahm seconded. Motion to table passed.

Dr. Harrell will follow up with the submitter regarding discussion on this rule change request.

Rule 14.16.4 – Degree Requirements

Discussion: Concerns from committee because this doesn't guarantee students will get the honors minor, there isn't a good policy on overlap, could impact financial aid. Suggested verbiage: "...a third minor could be added, if it's the honors minor if that's what we're trying to do."

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Additional discussion on this being a way to help students out with financial aid eligibility. Heather Klein gave an example regarding getting certified to teach at the secondary education level through the Aggie Teach program for coursework only. Another new minor was approved for the clinical teaching credit hours just to make it financial aid eligible. Agreement amongst committee members that this is a bigger conversation with potential implications, and this could benefit other populations.

Concerns/comments expressed were:

- We should not be making academic decisions based on financial aid eligibility; this should not be sole justification.
- This has further reaching implications and multiple colleges would likely want to be involved in this conversation.
- improve the program first before making this rule change
- The rule is much broader than just minors for honors.
- Data management systems, etc. are not currently equipped to manage the addition of a third minor.
- There will need to be implementation and reporting on the state/federal level which is a fairly extensive timeline.

What broad university discussions have motivated this? If this is approved, it will affect about 15% of honors students who already have two minors.

Who needs to be involved in further discussions? Central Service units, Student Records Management System, those who get data feeds on curriculum, financial aid

Decision: move to return to submitter for greater discussions by Angie Hill Price, seconded by Venesa Heidick, motion passes with a show of hands.

Dr. Harrell will send correspondence to Dr. Tim Powers to inform him of this conversation.

Rule 20 – Academic Misconduct

Discussion: many grammatical edits made based on sub-committee feedback,

Continued discussion and concern on requiring the Aggie Code of Honor as a minimum syllabus requirement.

Rule submitter explained how inclusion of the Aggie Code of Honor on syllabi protects a student's right to file an appeal as well as the faculty's right to dictate what academic misconduct is in their class. Possibly add a sentence that states, "All students are held to the Aggie Code of Honor whether it explicitly shows up on an individual syllabus." Submitter stated that this minimum syllabus requirement has been in the rule since 2010.

It resided at the back of the rule and was moved to the front of the rule.

The committee decided on the following addition:

10.1.1.4.1 Omission of the minimum syllabus requirement of the Aggie Code of Honor on a syllabus does not constitute a reason for appeal.

A concern was voiced regarding faculty not allowed at appeals. Faculty could add context on the reason for the severity of the sanction. Discussion about the process for appeals. Submitter explained that all original persons in the hearing are invited to the appeal of separation, including the original panel. They provide context to what they heard from faculty and the student and why they made the decisions they did. Change made to 20.2.5 to include "...and the reporting party..." "...the decisions..."

20.2.7 part B number 4. Changed "learned" to "obtained through the process"

Dales Rice moves to approve Rule 20, seconded by Chris Cherry, motion passes by show of hands

Updating gender specific references (his/her to their/theirs) can be done via email as an editorial edit and won't go to committee.

The Rules & Regulations Committee will not meet on 1/3/25

Motion to adjourn by Angie Hill Price, no record of who seconded, motions carried