MEMO

Date: December 23, 2020

To: Faculty Academic Policy and Standards Committee

From: Student Equity Audit Working Group:

Crystal Eddins, Africana Studies (FAPSC Representative)

Mira Frisch, Music (FAPSC Representative)

Oscar Lansen, History (FAPSC Representative)

Susan McCarter, Social Work (Faculty Council Committee Representative)

Matt Parrow, Biological Sciences (CLAS Committee Representative)

Lisa Walker, Undergraduate Education (ex-officio)

Leslie Zenk, Academic Affairs

Re: UNC Charlotte Academic Policy: Classroom Attendance

The Student Equity Audit Working Group, a working group of FAPSC, is charged with the examination of policies that could have differential impacts on low income,

first generation students, and/or students of color. The impact of the pandemic makes this

assessment a pressing concern. With these considerations in mind, we propose the following changes to the Classroom Attendance policy. Professors Eddins, Frisch and Lansen are available to discuss further rationale with FAPSC as needed prior to consideration by FEC and Faculty Council.

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# UNC CHARLOTTE ACADEMIC POLICY: COURSE ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION

### I. Introduction

Course attendance and/or participation is one of the most important factors in a student's academic success and therefore may be used by instructors to determine part of a student's grade for a particular course. Participation can take many different forms based on course format and pedagogy. For certain methodologies and learning environments, e.g. labs, rehearsals, hands-on lessons, interactive lectures, and clinical experiences amongst others, attendance may be a necessary requirement. Participation can also include student contributions to course discussions, forums, group work, assignments, and other course related activities.

### II. Policy Statement

Instructors determine their course policies (including attendance and participation) as long as such policies do not conflict with University policies. Such policies should be pedagogically appropriate. In general, students are expected to attend all scheduled sessions in the courses for which they are registered, participate fully in the learning process, demonstrate respectful behavior while interacting with instructors and peers, and complete all of the course requirements. Instructors may outline additional and more specific standards in the course syllabus, especially when attendance and/or participation are part of the grading criteria for the course.

#### University-Sanctioned Activities

University-sanctioned events or activities are considered excused absences. A University-sanctioned event or activity is one in which a student formally represents the University to external constituencies in athletic or academic activities. This policy does not supersede individual program attendance and/or participation requirements that are aligned with accreditation or licensure.

#### **Student Responsibilities**

1. Notification
   1. A student must inform the instructor of any absence as soon as possible. For any excused absence, a student must inform the instructor no later than the last day of the add/drop period, except when newly added or unforeseen circumstances occur (e.g., a playoff event).
   2. Notification/Documentation of planned excused absences must be made in writing and delivered by the student electronically or in a face-to-face meeting with the instructor of each class that the student is requesting an excused absence.
2. Student experiences that cannot be made up should be discussed with the instructor at the onset of the course to ensure that continued enrollment is feasible while the opportunity to drop the class exists.
3. Students are responsible for fulfilling any course requirements that occur during the time they are absent from class.
4. Students are expected to maintain satisfactory progress in the course.

#### **Instructor Responsibilities**

1. Instructors should utilize best practices with regards to course attendance and participation including but not limited to:
   1. Prioritizing active participation in and engagement with the educational process over course attendance as a measure of student involvement.
   2. Establish rules of engagement in the syllabus, clarify the course instruction format as in-person, online (synchronous or asynchronous), or a hybrid of in-person and online, and identify multiple ways in which students can demonstrate satisfactory participation. In hybrid or entirely online courses, for example, this could include camera usage, chat boxes, online forums, etc.
   3. If the course has a policy regarding a limited number of allowed absences, University-sanctioned activities should not count against that limit. In addition, students cannot be required to utilize a “drop” option for work missed afforded to all students due to a University-sanctioned event.
   4. If a student has a valid University-excused absence, they are entitled to make up missed work for full credit in whatever manner the instructor deems appropriate.
2. If student responsibilities are met, the instructor will honor valid University-excused absences that are not already included in other individual instructor excused absences policies,.
3. The instructor may impose appropriate academic penalties if the student fails to satisfactorily complete the alternate assignment or examination within a reasonable timeframe.
4. Required activities outside of class hours that are used for graded participation must be stated in the syllabus. If the required activity falls on a specific date/time, the instructor must provide an alternative assignment, unless the activity is foundational to the course (e.g., a theater performance produced by the class). Such foundational class activities should be included in the course “Notes” in the Banner Schedule. If the activity is one that can be completed over the course of the term and is not limited to a specific date/time, no alternative assignment is required.
5. Additional absences from class may be excused by the instructor. Whenever possible, students are expected to seek the permission of the instructor prior to any absences. Examples of valid reasons for consideration of absences include:
   1. Documented illness
   2. Serious personal or family emergencies
   3. Court-imposed legal obligations such as subpoenas or jury duty
   4. Military obligations
   5. Academic and/or extracurricular activities
   6. Religious observances; absences for religious holidays fall under [University Policy 409: Religious Accommodation for Students](http://legal.uncc.edu/policies/up-409)
   7. Documented quarantining for in-person classes

If students believe they have been penalized or unjustly treated because of participation in a University-authorized activity, they can appeal using the following sequence of appeal to (1) the instructor, (2) unit chairperson and (3) the appropriate college dean or designee (college offering the course). The decision of the dean is considered final.

### III. Definitions

* **Syllabus –** A course outline typically provided on the first day of class by the instructor that describes course requirements, topics to be covered, required reading, grading criteria, faculty expectations, deadlines, exam dates, class attendance requirements, and other relevant course information.
* **University-Sanctioned Activities** - A University-sanctioned event or activity shall be one in which a student represents the University to external constituencies in academic or extracurricular activities including but not limited to University clubs, organizations, athletics, music ensemble tours, teams, and conferences.