

Joint Faculty Senate/Provost Task Force on Attendance Policy

Mid-Year Report – 2022-2023

Membership:

Chair(s): Samantha Prins & Melanie Shoffner

Members: Hollie Hall, Brent Lewis, Michael O’Fallon, Jenn Phillips, Wren Stevens, Kathy Ott
Walter, Meg Sander

Charge:

This joint Faculty Senate/Provost task force is comprised of two Faculty Senate representatives, two academic administrators, and four ex-officio members.

The Attendance Policy Task Force will

- Review the current JMU student attendance policies ([Undergraduate Catalog](#), [Faculty Handbook](#), III.A.17)
- Review the report from the 2018-19 Provost’s Excused Absence Policy Task Force, charged with reviewing JMU’s current policies and practices related to student absences and developing a policy for standardizing absences and excused absences
- Consider the impact of JMU’s move to the Sun Belt athletic conference
- Consider the impact of pandemic-related learning on current attitudes and expectations of faculty and students
- Consult with key stakeholders across campus, as relevant
- Identify concerns and make recommendations

Summary of Current Year’s Activity:

Task Force members initially explored the various reasons motivating the establishment of the task force and known issues regarding the need for an excused absence policy. Conversations were informed by researching attendance policies at other institutions, including those in the Sun Belt Conference; existing documentation at JMU regarding attendance; and the results of the 2018-2019 task force. Stakeholder groups were identified as were pertinent issues to be considered, particularly those that may have arisen since the work completed in 2018-2019, e.g., COVID-19, R2/national status, Sun Belt Conference move.

The committee has produced a rough draft of an excused absence policy with two main components:

- activities instructors are required to excuse versus activities instructors are encouraged to excuse
- appeal process for excused absence, with direction for reasonable alternatives

Future Work:

The committee is continuing discussion at the beginning of spring semester 2023 to define the appeal processes, refine excused activities, and clarify the concept of reasonable alternatives related to excused absences. We anticipate requesting AUH, Dean, and faculty feedback on these items. We hope to conclude our work by mid-spring.