



Date: November 4, 2021

To: Talia Bettcher, Chair Academic Senate

From: Mauricio Castillo, Chair Educational Policy Committee

CC: R. Roquemore, M. Hawley, M. Garcia, C. Cobb, C. Pugh

Subject: EPC Memo 21-02: Proposed Modification - Continuing Student Status Policy – Chapter V of the Faculty Handbook

The Continuing Student Status policy includes the opportunity for students to petition for a leave of absence to avoid being discontinued if they do not attend for more than the allowed number of semesters. This allows them to stay on the catalog they were on upon admission and prevents them from having to re-apply after absence which is helpful to many students. However, there are also many students who miss more than a semester and lose matriculation as they didn't understand they needed to request the leave of absence in advance. Each year there are students requesting "retroactive" leaves of absence giving reasons such as they didn't know they had to petition in advance, or that the same reasons they resulted in the need to stop attending were the same stressors that made it too difficult to submit petitions or plan ahead.

The proposed changes to this policy do not include any modifications to the definition of continuing student status. The proposed changes are to allow students to petition to return to continuing student status after an absence and when they are more ready to do so, instead of petitioning in advance when they are often not sure how much time they might need (up to a maximum of four semesters for undergraduates). This proposed modification makes it easier for students to return if they do not exceed the limits of non-enrollment. It also makes it one less stressor to consider when deciding not to enroll for more than a semester.

Questions to consider:

- Q) Without a leave of absence, won't the student lose continuing student status?
- A) Yes, but as long as the student remains within the maximum allowed for non-enrollment, they can easily regain continuing student status including catalog rights.



- Q) Won't this have a negative impact on Financial Aid?
- A) No. Students are not eligible to receive funds during terms for which they do not enroll even if they had an approved leave.
- Q) Will discontinued students have to start paying back loans? Won't this negatively impact graduate students who rely on loans?
- A) There is no difference whether on "leave" or discontinued for the purposes of loans. The 6-month grace period begins when a given student drops below half-time, drops to zero units, non-attendance, or completes his/her degree program. The Records Office reports enrollment data to the National Clearinghouse for all terms. Lenders/loan holders obtain enrollment information from the National Clearinghouse database. If the student doesn't re-enroll in at least six units at a college/university before the 6-month grace period is expired, the repayment begins.

The following changes are proposed:

Lines 5-6: The option to request to return from an educational leave is added as an option to re-applying for admission.

Lines 14: Remove reference to leave of absence.

Lines 18-19: Remove reference to leave of absence.

Line 22: Remove reference to leave of absence.

Line 23 - 28: Remove subheading reference to leave of absence. Add new subheading and language with emphasis on returning and reference to educational leave.

Line 29: Change language to emphasize a request to return from educational leave rather than petition to take a leave.

Lines 35-36: Change language to emphasize a request to return from educational leave rather than petition to take a leave.

Lines 38-39: Change language to emphasize a request to return from educational leave rather than petition to take a leave.

Line 39-40: Added language stating that graduate student petitions require the approval of the grad dean.

Line 42: Added "educational" to leave.

1 Continuing Student Status

2 (Senate: 3/16/68, 8/14/74, 11/19/19; President: 4/3/68, 8/29/74, 1/13/20)

3 This policy defines the “Continuing Student Status” for undergraduate and graduate students. A
 4 student who has lost continuing student status must reapply to the university, and shall be held to
 5 the catalog requirements in effect at the time of readmission **OR MUST BE ELIGIBLE TO**
 6 **PETITION TO RETURN FROM AN EDUCATIONAL LEAVE AS DEFINED BELOW.** For the
 7 purposes of this policy, only fall and spring terms are considered semesters, while winter and
 8 summer terms are not. Enrollment in winter or summer terms does not count towards maintaining
 9 continuing student status, and lack of enrollment in winter or summer terms does not interrupt
 10 continuous enrollment. If a student withdraws from all classes in a given semester, that semester
 11 will not count towards maintaining continuing student status.

12 Students who are enrolled in consecutive semesters will maintain continuing student status.

13 Undergraduate students will maintain continuing student status if they are absent for one semester
 14 as long as they enroll in the following semester. Unless a leave of absence is granted,
 15 Undergraduate students will lose continuing student status if they are absent for two consecutive
 16 semesters.

17 Graduate students who have not Advanced to Candidacy will maintain continuing student status if
 18 they are absent for one semester as long as they enroll in the following semester. Unless a leave of
 19 absence is granted, Graduate students who have not Advanced to Candidacy will lose continuing
 20 student status if they are absent for two consecutive semesters. Graduate students who have
 21 Advanced to Candidacy will lose continuing student status if they are absent for one semester
 22 without an approved leave of absence (i.e., any break in continuous enrollment).

23 Leaves of Absence RETURN FROM EDUCATIONAL LEAVES

24 A PETITION TO RETURN FROM AN EDUCATIONAL LEAVE IS ONLY AVAILABLE TO
 25 STUDENTS IN GOOD STANDING WHO HAVE LOST CONTINUING STUDENT STATUS
 26 DUE ONLY TO ABSENCE NOT EXCEEDING THE ALLOWANCE INDICATED BELOW.
 27 STUDENTS NOT ELIGIBLE TO RETURN FROM EDUCATIONAL LEAVE MUST RE-
 28 APPLY FOR ADMISSION THROUGH THE FORMAL CSU APPLICATION PROCESS.

29 Students may petition for a TO RETURN FROM AN EDUCATIONAL leave of absence for such
 30 reasons as professional or academic opportunities, like travel or study abroad; employment related
 31 to educational goals and major fields of study or participation in field study or research projects;
 32 medical reasons, including pregnancy, major surgery, and other health-related circumstances;
 33 financial reasons, such as the necessity to work for a specified period to resume study with
 34 adequate resources; or other extenuating life circumstances.

35 Undergraduate students may request a RETURN FROM AN EDUCATIONAL leave of
36 FOLLOWING absence for two, three, or four consecutive semesters, and are allowed a maximum
37 of four semesters of leave in their undergraduate career.

38 Graduate students may request a RETURN FROM AN EDUCATIONAL leave of FOLLOWING
39 absence for up to two consecutive semesters, subject to renewal. GRADUATE PETITIONS TO
40 RETURN REQUIRE THE APPROVAL OF THE COLLEGE GRADUATE DEAN.

41 For both undergraduate and graduate students, if a student has already been absent for one
42 semester, that semester will be counted as part of the EDUCATIONAL leave.