

Recommendation # 1

Amend Undergraduate Attendance Policy to include Religious Observance Absences Policy

- Author(s): Senator Estefania Elizondo, Senator Murphy Quill
- Sponsor(s): Senator Manjee, Senator Barelli, Senator Baker, Senator Schmidt, Peter Setter, Senator McCarthy, Senator Stolz, Senator Rynerson, Senator Evans
- Whereas: Marquette University Student Government (MUSG) seeks to actively address and identify student concerns; and,
- Whereas: Marquette University's Mission Statement read, "Marquette University is a Catholic, Jesuit University dedicated to serving God by serving our students and... the promotion of a life of faith...;"¹ and,
- Whereas: As a faith based institution, Marquette seeks to be inclusive to other faiths and promotes religious diversity as it reads in Marquette Mission Statement on Faith, "Precisely because Catholicism at its best seeks to be inclusive, we are open to all who share our mission and seek the truth about God and the world, and we are firmly committed to academic freedom as the necessary precondition for that search. We welcome and benefit enormously from the diversity of seekers within our ranks, even as we freely choose and celebrate our own Catholic identity;"² and,
- Whereas: The Director for Campus Ministry at Marquette states in a letter explaining Campus Ministry on the Marquette website states, "We are also challenged by the Catholic Jesuit tradition to meet people of all faiths to seek understanding for mutual friendship and benefit. The questions you hold, who you are, and how you know God are important to us. So from wherever you come, I hope you find your way to Campus Ministry. Welcome to the Marquette Community;" and,
- Whereas: It is one of Marquette's goals is to become a more diverse and inclusive institution as it reads in Marquette's Statement on Human Dignity and Diversity, "Through our admissions and employment policies and practices, our curricular and co-curricular offerings, and our welcoming and caring campus environment, Marquette seeks to become a more diverse and inclusive academic community dedicated to the promotion of justice"³, and;
- Whereas: Marquette's *Report of a Comprehensive Evaluation Visit to Marquette University* Marquette specifically encouraged Marquette to focus and bring further attention on its diversity and inclusivity on campus since, as stated in the document,

¹ <http://www.marquette.edu/about/mission/php>

² <http://www.marquette.edu/about/mission/php>

³ <http://www.marquette.edu/diversity/statement.shtml>

“there lack a comprehensive and intentional plan to actually achieve diversity;”⁴ and,

Whereas: Other nationally recognized Jesuit Universities such as Boston College⁵, Fordham University⁶, and Georgetown University⁷, all have Undergraduate Academic Attendance Regulations and Policies that accommodate students religious observance absences and are recognized as excused absences; and,

Whereas: The Marquette University Employee Manual for both faculty and non-faculty already includes a religious activity and accommodation clause found in section 8, page 65, which reads:

Marquette University, as a Catholic institution rooted in the Jesuit educational tradition, is committed to supporting the faith life of employees, students and all other members of the Marquette community...It also respects the rights of all individuals in the practice of their religious faith...While operating requirements of all university departments must be met, appropriate arrangements to allow employees to take time off to fulfill faith commitments will be made whenever possible;”⁸ and,

Whereas: Marquette University’s Undergraduate Attendance Policy does not include a student’s religious observance as an excused absence.

Therefore: Let it be recommended that the Office of the Provost establish a policy allowing excused absences for observances of major religious holidays provided that the student contacts the faculty member within one week of receiving the syllabus; and,

Furthermore: That the policy holds students fully accountable for making up any work missed due to a religious observance; and,

Furthermore: Let it be recommended that the amendments to the Undergraduate Attendance Policy be implemented for the 2014-2015 academic year in order to keep the right to religious observance in other faiths of the students as a top priority; and,

Furthermore: Let the amendments be implemented in a transparent and timely manner that includes student representation.

⁴ <http://www.marquette.edu/accreditation/documents/HLCReportBrief.pdf>

⁵ <http://www.bc.edu/publications/ucatalog/policy.shtml#religious>

⁶ [http://faculty.fordham.edu/ajofriedman/2811-F07/readings/Student%20\(FCRH\).pdf](http://faculty.fordham.edu/ajofriedman/2811-F07/readings/Student%20(FCRH).pdf)

⁷ <http://campusministry.georgetown.edu/document/1242799694431/Religious+Holy+Days+2013-14.pdf>

⁸ http://www.marquette.edu/mucentral/registrar/policy_attendanceundergraduateclasses.html