



TO: SUNY University Faculty Senate

FROM: Student Life Committee

RE: Attendance Policy Accommodation for United States Military Drills and Training

DATE: 177th Plenary at SUNY Delhi, October 19-21, 2017

RATIONALE

WHEREAS SUNY Colleges and Universities have adopted various attendance policies; and

WHEREAS professors, lecturers, and instructors typically have attendance policies detailed on their syllabi in which the definitions of excused and unexcused absences are explained, including information about when excessive excused absences may not be able to be fully accommodated due to the parameters of the course; and

WHEREAS attendance policies apply to all students, including students within the United States Military community¹, who are held to the same standards as other students relative to classroom attendance policies; and

WHEREAS, currently, attendance at United States Military drills and training sessions while concurrently enrolled at a SUNY institution, and being absent from courses are not explicitly accommodated excuses, and as a result, many students within the United States Military community must either miss mandatory training and drills, or accept unexcused absences which have a likely deleterious effect on the student's achievement in the class; and

WHEREAS SUNY has recently placed an increased emphasis on student completion; and

WHEREAS The State of New York has passed the New York State Patriot Plan², which entitles United States Military students to request a leave of absence for periods of United States Military service that preserves their educational status and financial resources.

RESOLUTION

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the University Faculty Senate requests that SUNY Chancellor and Board of Trustees adopt a policy that calls for United States Military obligations, including drills and trainings, to be treated as excused absences according to campus policies; and

BE IT RESOLVED that the UFS encourages SUNY to adopt a policy that any United States Military obligation that cannot be fully accommodated due to the nature of a course or the length of obligation be eligible for a non-penalizing United States Military withdrawal from at least that course, preserving their educational status and financial resources; and

BE IT RESOLVED that this resolution be disseminated to campus governance leaders for discussion and potential endorsement on individual campuses.

BACKGROUND

The UFS Student Life Committee overwhelmingly supports the spirit of the SA United States Military Affairs and Rules Committees resolution 1617-SC02 brought forward to the SUNY Student Assembly and to the attention of the University Faculty Senate. The Student Life Committee agreed that support of the United States Military community is required. We believe that an adjustment in attendance policies to accommodate students within the United States Military community is immediately needed. However, we realize that some lengths of absence are not accommodatable and therefore also suggest that a non-penalizing United States Military withdrawal policy be enacted and that both of these be extended to include drills and training.

¹ Many SUNY students are United States Military, to include Active, Reserve, Guard, and Individual Ready Reserve, many of which must attend various drills and training.

² New York Patriot Plan III. Education Benefits. Educational Leave of Absence to Perform United States Military Duty. 26 March 2016. [accessed 5 October 2017] <https://dmna.ny.gov/benefits/patriot/>

³ SUNY Student Assembly. Resolution 1617-SC02 “Attendance Policy Accommodation for Veteran Drills and Training”
<http://sunysa.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/1617-SC02-Attendance-Policy-Accomodation-f or-Veteran-Drills-and-Training.pdf>