NOTICE OF INTENT: To Change Faculty Administrative Manual to More Clearly Define Faculty Obligations with Regard to Class Attendance Policy.

With specific changes to FAM Administration section

Article VIII. FACULTY INTERACTION WITH STUDENTS
A. Faculty Responsibility to Students
9. Class Attendance:

**INTENT:** The change will clarify instructors’ responsibility to recognize instances where students are asked to be official representatives of the College of Charleston as excused absences. It also requires faculty to state in course syllabi a policy for making “reasonable accommodations” to make up work missed for excused absences.

The Student Affairs and Athletics Committee has indicated its acceptance of these changes. The 2013-14 Academic Standards committee expressed no concerns with the changes but the 2014-15 Academic Standards Committee has a unanimous reservation about these changes that they feel should be brought to the attention of the senate. The original concerns of the 2014-15 Academic Standards committee, which they want to share with the senate, are as follows:

The Faculty Committee on Academic Standards (FCAS) has reviewed the FAM proposed change on excused absences. We have the following concerns:

1. **A.9, 1st paragraph:** This paragraph should start with a statement of recognition of the faculty’s discretionary right to decide attendance policies. Furthermore, the language “... will recognize absences ...” is too prescriptive because it impinges on the faculty’s academic freedom without consultation with the faculty. We suggest “... are asked to consider absences ...” or similar language.

2. **A.9, 2nd paragraph:** If the language does not change per #1 above, then insert a phrase that indicates that “in all other cases” faculty have discretion in setting their own attendance policy. Also change “two weeks prior to the scheduled absence” to “one week prior to the scheduled absence” to keep the wording consistent with the SNAP notification procedure.

3. **Some definitions are needed to inform this document:**
   1. college-sponsored activities - including a representative listing. On the one hand, these likely include athletic events and academic meetings and conferences, for example. On the other hand, do they include SGA club meetings on and/or off campus?
   2. who is the final arbiter of the definition in 3.a above?

In general, our feeling is that since you posit in your email that this section of the FAM is administrative only and does not require faculty approval, it then follows that any change to this document cannot constrain faculty rights.

The statements herein should not be construed as an endorsement of this change to FAM, but merely our observations and concerns.
For these changes a single strike through text is a deletion from existing language, underlined text is new language. While not required, since this section of the FAM is under administrative control, a vote in favor of this change would indicate to the administration, faculty senate agreement to the change.

A. Faculty Responsibilities to Students

9. Class Attendance

Because class attendance is a crucial part of any course, students are expected to attend all classes and laboratory meetings of each course in which they enroll. Instructors maintain the authority to determine how absences will be addressed, which should be detailed in their attendance policies. Participation in college-sponsored activities, where students are official representatives of the College of Charleston, may result in absence(s). Instructors will recognize absences in which students are official representatives of the College of Charleston (such as intercollegiate academic or athletic team competition, or academic program sanctioned research presentation or artistic performance) as excused.

During the first week of classes, instructors will announce and distribute their attendance policies, including criteria to be used in determining excused absences. The professor determines whether absences are excused or unexcused, whether make up work will be permitted, and for the purposes of participation grades, in-class assignments, and laboratories. Regarding formal graded work (such as exams, presentations, papers), instructors will make “reasonable accommodations” when a student misses class for an event at which s/he is an official representative of the College of Charleston. Examples of reasonable accommodations might include: rescheduling an exam, altering presentation times, or flexibility in assignment submission dates. Students are required to submit documentation of their College representation-related commitment from the appropriate College authority at least one week prior to the scheduled absence in order to be eligible for reasonable accommodations by the instructor. Regardless of any accommodation granted, students are responsible for satisfying all academic objectives, requirements, and prerequisites as defined by the instructor and the College.

Instructors ascertain whether both excused and unexcused absences count in determining the basis for a grade of “WA”, which stands for “withdrawn excessive absences” and is equivalent to a failing grade. If attendance is used for grading purposes, the professor is responsible for keeping accurate attendance records. Each student, whether absent or not, is responsible for all information disseminated in the course. If a student has more than the maximum allowed absences; as
defined in the course syllabus, the professor may instruct the registrar to record a grade of assign a “WA.” for the student. Instructors are required to submit an electronic “WA” form (located in MyCharleston faculty tab) The grade of “WA” is a failing grade. The procedure for assignment of this grade requires that the professor provide written notification to the Registrar on or before the last meeting day of the class. The Registrar will then send a courtesy copy of the notice an email notification to the student. The student is responsible for keeping personal addresses and contact information current through the Office of the Registrar. All students, whether absent or not, are responsible for all information disseminated in the course.

If students who participate in athletics competitions or other college-sponsored events want to be assured that they are in compliance with the faculty member’s attendance policy, they must provide written notification to all course instructors of dates and times when regularly scheduled classes and labs will be missed.