

Fulton School of Liberal Arts

Policy on Faculty Absence from Campus during fall and spring semesters

The Fulton School of Liberal Arts, effective fall semester 2011, instituted the following policies and procedures regarding faculty absence from campus during the semester, in this case defined as the period from the first day of classes through the last day of final exams.

During the semester, a faculty member's primary obligation is to support the teaching and learning process through regularly scheduled classes. The Code of Maryland (COMAR) regulates the number of hours courses are to meet in order for student to earn the credit hours for which they are registered, and faculty members share a responsibility to ensure that their courses meet those requirements – in addition, of course, to providing an appropriately challenging and stimulating academic experience.

Faculty members are responsible for notifying the department chair of any absence – either planned, or unanticipated, as in the case of illness – that affects normally scheduled classes. A chair in a similar position should designate an acting chair and notify the department and the dean's office.

While many scholarly and creative activities of professional benefit to the faculty member, and the University and its students by extension, may beckon during the semester, a priority for classroom instruction must weigh appropriately in any decision regarding participation in those activities. When a faculty member decides to participate in such activity, s/he must make every effort to ensure that course activities are moving forward and that students are actively engaged during his/her absence.

Such absences may be warranted: taking students to a scholarly conference at which the faculty members and students will be participating would be one possible case, as would presenting a paper at a scholarly conference of significant relevance to a faculty member's academic discipline and area of research. Indeed the Fulton School encourages and supports such activity through its grants program and other travel funds. However, activities requiring more than a week away from campus, or which in combination with other activities lead to being away from campus more than one week in any given semester, must be discussed with the chair, justified in writing by the faculty member and approved in writing by the chair and dean, prior to acceptance of the engagement. This can be done through informal discussion and documented through email. Faculty members seeking grant support for activities that take them over the one week limit must include this correspondence in their applications.