

# PURDUE STUDENT SENATE

## RESOLUTION 18-25

### *“Grief Absence Policy for Students (GAPS) Reform”*

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Agenda Date(s): 10/31/2018  
Assigned to: University and Academic Affairs  
Recommendations:  
Action(s): Bring to Senate Floor  
President Pro Tempore: Spencer Henderson  
Student Senate President: Olivia Keller  
Student Body President: Aaron Banks

*WHEREAS*, Purdue University’s Grief Absence Policy for Students (GAPS) allows students:

- A) Three days (over five calendar days) of excused absence following the death of a spouse, parent, child, sibling, grandparent, grandchild, or “corresponding in-law or step-relative”
- B) Three days (over five calendar days) of excused absence following the death of an uncle, aunt, niece, nephew, or first cousin living in the same home as the student
- C) One day of excused absence following the death of an uncle, aunt, niece, nephew, or first cousin
- D) An opportunity to petition for grief absence in the event of the death of a relative or friend not mentioned explicitly in the policy; and

*WHEREAS*, Purdue’s GAPS allows students:

- A) One extra day of excused absence for those who live between 150 and 300 miles from campus
- B) Two extra days of excused absence for those who live more than 300 miles from campus but still within the continental United States, and
- C) Four extra days of excused absence for those who live outside of the continental United States; and

*WHEREAS*, According to the text of the policy, GAPS is intended to allow students to attend funeral services for deceased family members, but does not expressly allow students recovery time following the emotional burden of loss; and

*WHEREAS*, Students should be given adequate time to process a loss as well as attend services; and

*WHEREAS*, GAPS does not allow for students to petition for additional grief absence beyond the three to seven (depending on a student’s distance from campus) days already given; and

*WHEREAS*, Under the Military Absence Policy for Students, students are given fifteen days of excused absence per semester (with no more than ten taken consecutively) to fulfill military obligations, which demonstrates that students are able to successfully complete a semester following extended absence; and

*WHEREAS*, In the event of the impending death of a relative or friend, a student should be granted excused absence in order to prepare for the situation in whatever way the student deems appropriate; and

*WHEREAS*, The excused absence granted to students under GAPS is completely optional, and it is up to each individual student whether or not to use the full time given; and

*WHEREAS*, If GAPS is reformed, Purdue would become one of the first universities in the United States to adopt a comprehensive policy for student grief absence, thereby demonstrating Purdue’s commitment to the emotional wellbeing of its students and setting an example for other universities to follow;

**Therefore, be it RESOLVED,**

that Purdue’s Grief Absence Policy for Students be amended to extend the amount of excused absence granted to students by two days in all of the aforementioned scenarios; and

**Therefore, be it FURTHER RESOLVED**

that GAPS be amended to enable students to petition the Office of the Dean of Students for up to (but no more than) ten consecutive academic calendar days of excused grief absence; and

**Therefore, be it FURTHER RESOLVED**

that, when considering a student’s petition for additional excused absence, the Office of the Dean of Students consider only the impact of the loss on the student and not the specific relationship (e.g. “second-cousin” or “friend”) that the student shared with the deceased; and

**Therefore, be it FURTHER RESOLVED**

that GAPS be amended to allow students to petition the Office of the Dean of Students for excused absence in the event of the impending death of a relative or close friend; and

(that Purdue Student Government deliver this resolution to Purdue Graduate Student Government for consideration as a joint resolution.)

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Student Body President

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Student Senate President