

NDSU NORTH DAKOTA STATE UNIVERSITY

September 17, 2018

Dear NDSU Faculty,

Each year I send an email to faculty regarding the philosophy of Student Health Service (SHS) to not provide medical excuses for students missing classes. I have heard from many students that faculty are still requiring documentation from a healthcare provider if a student is out of class due to illness. As a result, some students are having to go to an off campus provider to get an excuse. This is not only an inconvenience to the student, but is also in most cases an unnecessary cost.

NDSU SHS does not provide students with excuses for class absences or tardiness due to illness or injury. The mission of the SHS includes educating students on appropriate health care consumerism. This reinforces the students' responsibility to communicate proactively and directly with faculty about conditions or issues that interfere with their class attendance. Providing medical excuses sends mixed messages to students about the appropriate use of health care resources. Many common illnesses and injuries do not require care by a medical professional. For example, sore throats, cold symptoms, or mild gastrointestinal illnesses are often best cared for by rest and self-care at home. Visiting the SHS solely to obtain documentation of illness uses valuable appointment time, and potentially exposes others to their illnesses.

We recognize faculty may find it difficult to determine when to excuse student absences. However, in most cases we are unable to determine if a student is too sick to attend class as this is very subjective. We encourage students to speed their own recovery and to refrain from spreading infections throughout the campus community by making mature decisions as to when they are too sick to attend class or go to work.

This notification is not intended to discourage you from referring students to utilize the SHS. We encourage faculty to continue to refer students to seek care at SHS when they have been acutely ill and require medical care. We also recognize that students are often unsure about when to come in for care. We encourage students with illness or injury to call SHS at 701-231-7331 and ask to speak with a nurse if he/she would like assistance in determining how to best care for an illness or injury. Students can also access the SHS web page at <https://www.ndsu.edu/studenthealthservice/> to schedule an appointment or review wellness education material. In addition, we have a program in which Healthy Herd Champion Peer Educators are out and about on campus working with students on a number of topics, including tips for common cold and flu. The SHS policy is consistent with recommendations from the American College Health Association and the policies of our peer institutions.

For more information, please refer to the recently updated Policy 333 Class Attendance Policy - <https://www.ndsu.edu/fileadmin/policy/333.pdf>. The Provost's Office is prepared to field faculty questions and student complaints through ndsu.provost@ndsu.edu/ 231-7131 and https://www.ndsu.edu/provost/administrative_units/academicaffairs/student_grievances/, respectively.

Please do not hesitate to contact me with questions or concerns.

Thank you for your support,



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