

FACULTY MEETING
April 30, 2010

COMMITTEE ON ACADEMIC STANDING
MOTION 3 -Introduction of the Grade of “L” for Medical and Personal Leaves

Motion:

CAS moves that a grade of “L” be introduced for courses affected when students are granted medical and personal leaves and moves that the Skidmore College Catalog be amended as follows:

New Language (to be inserted on p.49 of the College Catalog after the entry for WF)

L, Leave : A student who is approved for a medical or personal leave during the semester is assigned a grade of L for all classes that semester for which a grade has not been recorded by the Registrar’s Office at the start of the leave. No credit is given for courses assigned an L.

Rationale:

In Fall 2009, the Faculty engaged in a conversation about College policy regarding Withdrawals and Medical and Personal Leaves. CAS brought a statement about and led a conversation regarding these issues at the December 2009 Faculty Meeting. As a result of that meeting, and other conversations with the chairs of CEPP and CAFR, CAS would like to introduce a new grade that would accommodate those students who leave Skidmore during the semester on a Medical or Personal Leave. Introducing the “L” would end the confusion that currently ensues when students are granted Medical or Personal Leaves, wherein students are awarded a grade of “W” for the courses they are enrolled in at the time of the leave. This results in students having more than the allowed two Ws on their transcript and causes confusion about the two-W limit for other students. A comparison with peer schools indicates that many have some discrete form of grade assigned when Medical and Personal Leaves are granted, and the Skidmore Registrar’s Office believes this will make the situation regarding leaves and withdrawals much clearer.

In response to other concerns raised in Fall 2009, CAS has also amended its Operating Code to reflect more clearly: the distinction between Medical and Personal Leaves; the strict standard of evidence required for Medical Leaves; the variety of campus offices involved in decisions about Medical and Personal Leaves (CAS, OAA, Counseling Center, Campus Safety, Residence Life, Student Academic Services, Health Services, Dean of Students Office); balancing the need for timely and open communication with

faculty during the process of granting a leave with the need to respect FERPA guidelines and students' privacy; and the strict standards for return from Medical Leave.

Implementation: If approved, the College Catalog and CAS Operating Code will be revised to reflect the adoption of the "L" grade.

The Catalog copy would be amended as follows:

Old Language: (page 47 of the College Catalog)

Personal Leaves of Absence without academic credit and for personal reasons may be granted through the Office of Academic Advising with the approval of the Committee on Academic Standing. Application should be made in writing to the Office of Academic Advising well in advance of the anticipated leave.

Medical Leaves of Absence may be granted through the Office of Academic Advising with the approval of the Committee on Academic Standing, upon receipt of the student's application and a statement by either a personal physician or the Skidmore physician. Before returning to the college, the student must submit a *Return from Medical Leave* application. The re-entry plan includes information from both the student and the physician and must be approved by the Committee on Academic Standing well in advance of the first day of classes. All medical and therapeutic assessments must be provided by appropriate professionals not related to the student or his or her family.

New Language:

Personal Leaves of Absence without academic credit and for personal reasons may be granted through the Office of Academic Advising with the approval of the Committee on Academic Standing. Application should be made in writing to the Office of Academic Advising well in advance of the anticipated leave. If approved for a personal leave of absence, a student is assigned a grade of L for all classes that semester for which a grade has not been recorded by the Registrar's Office at the start of the leave. No credit is given for courses assigned an L.

Medical Leaves of Absence may be granted through the Office of Academic Advising in consultation with other campus offices and with the approval of the Committee on Academic Standing, upon receipt of the student's application, and a statement by either a personal physician or the Skidmore physician. If approved for a medical leave of absence, a student is assigned a grade of L for all classes that semester for which a grade has not been recorded by the Registrar's Office at the start of the leave. No credit is given for courses assigned an L. Before returning to the college, the student must submit a *Return from Medical Leave* application. The re-entry plan includes information from both the student and the physician and must be approved by the Committee on Academic Standing well in advance of the first day of classes. All medical and therapeutic assessments must be provided by appropriate professionals not related to the student or his or her family.