

## **Fitchburg State University**

### **Medical and /or Mental Health Withdrawal Policy**

This document defines the processes to provide a thoughtful and effective institutional response in assisting students experiencing a medical or mental health difficulty to withdraw from the university. Should a university student's medical or mental health difficulties significantly effect successful fulfillment of their educational requirements, the student may receive a Medical/Mental Health Withdrawal for the current semester. Most commonly, a voluntary withdrawal request is initiated by the student and/or family/legal guardian. However there may be situations where it may be appropriate to institute an involuntary withdrawal from the university.

#### **Voluntary Withdrawal**

Preferably and most typically a voluntary medical/mental health withdrawal occurs as a result of the student's initiative. In such cases, the student petitions the Dean of Student and Academic Life [or designee] for a withdrawal from the university. In special circumstances, the petition can be discussed and initiated by a parent or legal guardian. Appropriate supporting documentation or recommendation to support the request is submitted and commonly includes an opinion provided by a qualified medical or mental health professional. The opinion should speak to the nature of the medical or mental health impairment, the academic or other limitations imposed and the appropriateness of the withdrawal from the university. The Dean of Student and Academic Life [or designee] reviews the student petition with supporting documentation and makes a determination. All materials and information are kept private and confidential within university regulations and applicable legislation or regulations.

A student who is granted the petition to withdraw from a current attended semester based on medical or mental health reasons will:

- Receive grades of "W" on their transcript for all coursework in progress for the term of withdrawal.
- Be able to apply for re-admission to the university when the medical or mental health difficulties have been resolved or mitigated and are no longer an impediment.
- Based on the timing of the petition during the term and consistent with the policies outlined in the university catalog and/or University Housing Agreement, be assessed tuition, fees and other costs according to the established policies.
- Be able to appeal for an adjustment in assessed costs based on their supporting documentation. The written appeal and supporting documentation is forwarded to the Dean for Enrollment Management for review and determination.

Students retain the right to appeal the decision of the Dean by submitting a written appeal in a timely manner.

## **Involuntary Withdrawal**

As a general guideline, the policies and procedures articulated in the Student Code of Conduct are the preferred method for processing cases of student misconduct without regard to whether there may be a medical or mental health disorder present. The procedures identified are to be used in certain extraordinary situations when it is determined that the existing student conduct procedures are not applicable. The determination will be made by the Dean of Student and Academic Life in consultation with the Incident Response Team and others as appropriate.

The Dean of Student and Academic Life [or designee] may initiate an involuntary medical/ mental health withdrawal when a student's behavior, for reasons related to a medical or mental health problem, presents the following:

- A serious risk of physical harm to the student as manifested by evidence of threats of suicide, or attempts at suicide or other serious bodily harm; and/or
- A serious risk of physical harm to other members of the campus community including, but not limited to, evidence of threatening, assaultive, homicidal or other violent behavior; and/or
- A serious risk of becoming physically impaired or injured resulting from significantly impaired judgment that would severely limit or not allow the student to live independently or provide for his or her own welfare in the campus community; and/or
- Significantly obstructing or disrupting the ability of other members of the campus community to participate in the teaching, educational, residential, and administrative or other activities and opportunities offered by the university.

If it is determined that the student presents an immediate threat to the campus community as above, an immediate interim restriction may be issued by the Dean of Student and Academic Life which may include removal from all campus facilities. The interim restriction remains in effect pending a final determination regarding withdrawal or other actions. Barring an extreme circumstance where the safety of the student and/or the campus community is in question, the student is entitled to appeal the determination, within 5 days of the determination, and present evidence and information regarding the circumstances prompting the interim restriction and pending withdrawal determination. The Dean of Student and Academic Life, or designee, will render a final determination regarding the withdrawal action. Students who are involuntarily withdrawn from the university will receive written notification of the withdrawal.

A student who is involuntarily withdrawn from a current attended semester based on medical or mental health reasons will:

- Receive grades of "W" on their transcript for all coursework in progress for the term of withdrawal.
- Be able to apply for re-admission to the university when the medical or mental health difficulties have been resolved or mitigated and are no longer an impediment.
- Based on the timing of the petition during the term and consistent with the policies outlined in the university catalog and/or University Housing Agreement, be assessed tuition, fees and other costs according to the established policies.

- Be able to appeal for an adjustment in assessed costs based on their supporting documentation. The written appeal and supporting documentation is forwarded to the Dean for Enrollment Management for review and determination.

**Return after Withdrawal**

The student may formally request to be re-admitted to the university at a future date by applying for readmission through the office of the Registrar following the identified timelines and procedure. As for all students, when a student withdraws for medical or mental health reasons, voluntarily or involuntarily, the withdrawal remains in effect until such time as formal readmission application is made. Additionally, the student may be required to present information and evidence that the difficulties that prompted the withdrawal have been resolved or mitigated and no longer present a threat or interferes with successful fulfillment of educational requirements and are no longer an impediment. The Dean of Student and Academic Life, in considering readmission to the university, may request additional documentation from appropriate medical or mental health professionals regarding the student's readiness to return to active study and living at the university. All materials and information are kept private and confidential within university regulations and applicable legislation or regulations. As appropriate, the Dean may provide the student with written conditions to be met for continued attendance at the university. They may include, but are not restricted to, conforming to and allowing substantiation of follow-up prescribed by an outside provider, limitations on reoccurrences of circumstances originally presented, contact with appropriate offices on campus and demonstration of successful academic performance.