SOM OP: 40.09, Student Leave of Absence

PURPOSE: The purpose of this School of Medicine (SOM) Policy and Procedure is to describe procedure related to student leaves of absence from the School of Medicine curriculum.

REVIEW: This SOM Policy and Procedure will be reviewed on November 1 of each odd-numbered year by the Student Promotions and Professional Conduct Committee. The result of this review will be communicated to the Dean by November 30.

POLICY/PROCEDURE:

1. General. This policy is intended to define the different types of Leaves of Absence available to students in the School of Medicine and to describe the procedures necessary for approving requests for Leaves of Absence.


   a. Administrative Leaves of Absence: Reasons for administrative leave may include, but are not limited to: financial distress necessitating full-time employment; educational endeavor at another institution of higher education; and reasonable personal reasons.

   1) Student in Good Academic Standing: Administrative leaves of absence for periods not to exceed one academic year may be granted by the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs or Assistant Dean for Student Affairs upon written request by a medical student. The Associate Dean or designee will specify in writing the conditions for return and the student will indicate understanding by signing and returning a copy of the written letter.

   2) Student in Academic Difficulty: The request for leave of absence will be forwarded to the Student Promotions and Professional Conduct Committee for consideration and disposition. If the need for decision is urgent, the Student Promotions and Professional Conduct Executive Committee may make a joint decision. They will determine and present in writing the conditions for re-entry.

   3) A student assigned to a regional campus for clinical rotation will submit a written request for leave first to the Regional Campus Assistant Dean who will forward the request, together with his recommendation, to the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs. At the time the student wishes to return, he/she will submit a letter of intent to the Associate Dean.

   4) Need for an extended leave of absence beyond one year necessitates withdrawal of the student from the School of Medicine. Application for re-
admission shall be to the Admissions Committee in its regular process for consideration of applicants for medical school.

b. **Short Term Leaves-of Absence:**

1) Short term leaves of absence for acute illness or other emergency may be granted by the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs, or the appropriate Regional Campus Assistant Dean. The Office of Student Affairs will inform the appropriate departments of such leave. The student will be responsible for arranging to complete any missed work.

2) Requests for non-emergency short term leaves to delay the start of third year must be made in writing to the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs no later than April 15 of Year Two.

c. **Medical Leaves of Absence:**

1) Medical leaves of absence may be granted by the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs. Request for a medical leave must include a written statement from a physician that such a leave is indicated in the best interest of the student. The written request by the student and substantiating information from the physician will be considered by the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs.

2) **Student in Good Academic Standing:** The Associate Dean may grant a medical leave for a period of up to one academic year. S/he will notify the appropriate departments of the student’s leave and set the conditions for re-entry upon termination of the leave. Granting of the leave and conditions for re-entry will be furnished in writing to the student and a copy will be placed in the student’s Student Affairs file.

3) **Student in Academic Difficulty:** The Associate Dean for Academic Affairs will consult with the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs and the Chair and Chair-elect of the Student Promotions and Professional Conduct Committee, and they will either deliberate as a group or refer to the Student Promotions and Professional Conduct Committee the decision on granting of leave, duration of leave, and conditions for re-entry. Granting of the leave and conditions for re-entry will be furnished in writing to the student and a copy will be placed in his/her Student Affairs file.

4) Upon completion of a medical leave, the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs, and where applicable, the Chair and Chair-elect of the Student Promotions and Professional Conduct Committee, and/or the Student Promotions and Professional Conduct Committee itself will determine whether the criteria or conditions for re-entry have been met. They may require a written report from the student’s physician and/or may require an independent assessment of the student's condition by another physician of their designation.

5) If a student in poor academic standing requests a second medical leave of absence within two years of the first leave, the student must again produce a written request along with a written statement by a physician supporting the request. The leave may then be granted as per the procedure noted above for up to one year. However, granting of a second leave under these circumstances
will not guarantee that a student may return to the medical curriculum. At the
time the student wishes to return, the student will produce a written request
to do so along with a letter from an appropriate physician that supports that
request. The Student Promotions and Professional Conduct Committee will
then deliberate as to whether or not the student will be allowed to re-enter
the curriculum. This decision will be based on a review of the entire academic
record, history of medical leaves, and documentation of progress in treatment.
If a student is allowed to re-enter, the conditions for re-entry will be specified at
that time.

6) A request for an absence longer than one year will necessitate the withdrawal
of the student. The student will make application for readmission through the
regular admissions process.

3. Appeal for Denial of Leave.

a. In the event a student’s request for leave is denied, the student may submit a
written appeal to the Dean of the School of Medicine. The Dean may hear the matter
directly or he may appoint a three-member faculty committee to hear the matter and
make recommendations to him. The Dean’s decision will be final.

b. In the event a student on medical leave of absence is denied re-entry, the student
may appeal in writing to the Dean of the School of Medicine. The Dean may hear
the matter directly or he may appoint a three-member faculty committee to hear the
matter and make recommendations to him. The Dean’s decision will be final.