Leave Guide to Support Students

• Interactive, co-authored and edited to capture a range of experiences and needs
• Emphasis on defining, finding, and accessing PACE
• Accessible for and customizable for any institution of higher education
• Designed to complement other services and operate independently as needed

Leave Guide to Support Leadership, Faculty, & Staff

• Developed based on decades of student, staff- and faculty input; co-edited to capture a range of campus climates, realities, strengths, and limitations
• Emphasis on establishing key community members and practices to support the development of leave of absence resources
• Accessible for and customizable for any institution of higher education

Non-Negotiable Principles & Values

• Personhood: acknowledgement of individual experiences, feelings, goals, and needs
• Equity: full access free from bias
• Inclusion: involvement for those who might otherwise be marginalized
• Choice: agency to decide and engage in line with values
Before a Leave

• Engage students in collaborative decision-making about taking a leave; help students identify options
• Train & support staff/faculty to engage students in conversations about leave
• Provide accessible "learn-from-anywhere" options, especially in mental health program and hospital settings, to avoid leaves and interruptions
• Demonstrate parity across all types of leaves of absence

More to Consider Before a Leave

• Provide clear, concise checklist of steps needed to return
• Use empowering, choice-oriented language in policies with a clear commitment to student health & well-being
• Inform and evaluate policies using diagnostic tools, student input, and consultation with affiliate, "sister", & consortium colleges/universities
• Invite offices of general counsel, affirmative action and equal opportunity, and access and disability to strategically examine policies for weaknesses and barriers
• Streamline "request to leave" process & paperwork

During the Leave

• Ensure fiscal resources at your college/university for programming to support students on leave
• Establish a case manager/management team to oversee student & family outreach, engagement, & assistance
• Provide virtual & in-person academic, mental health, & social opportunities that promote health-promoting leaves (PACE: People, Academics, Care, & Engagement)
• Expand access to campus resources during a period of leave
• Direct students to "Taking a Leave of Absence: Guide for College Students"
More to Consider During the Leave

• Create equitable leave durations durations for LOA that do not discriminate between leave categories
• Offer workshops or “how to” videos that support and inform students on leave about managing wellness, accessing resources and supports, and returning
• Shift the culture of taking leaves with meaningful messaging and campaigns (e.g. “Once a tiger, always a tiger.”)
• Increase “length of leave” and leave options for international students

Returning from Leaves

• Develop & disseminate an accessible “Return from Leave Checklist” for students
• Post clear guidance around procedures, processes, timelines and deadlines students must follow to return from a leave successfully
• Provide opportunities for students to demonstrate their individualized readiness to return through a variety of experiences

More to Consider Re Return from Leaves

• Facilitate peer mentoring and social support for students returning by students who’ve taken a leave
• Elevate and celebrate student stories that demonstrate successful returns
• Provide coaching and workshops (e.g. LEAD BU) that support reintegration and retention and foster authentic belonging
• Allow for reduced course loads in the first semester returning
Let’s Collaborate!

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