

MEDICAL WITHDRAWAL POLICY

Introduction

Southern Nazarene University cares deeply about the physical and mental health of its students. As a result, SNU is committed to offering excellent services to all students out of both the counseling and health center. At times however, a student may experience such extreme medical or psychological conditions that the ability to function successfully or safely in the role of a student is significantly impaired. Students are encouraged to prioritize their health and safety and take steps towards recovery, even if academic progress must be delayed. The University is committed to supporting necessary student initiated self care plans, and/or may initiate actions necessary that consider the welfare of the individual student and the University community.

When a student demonstrates conduct that violates SNU Community Standards or other policies, that conduct will be addressed through the appropriate disciplinary processes. This Policy is not intended to be disciplinary in nature. Students may voluntarily withdraw from SNU at any time during his/her matriculation at SNU. However, situations as described below may arise when the University determines on an individualized, case-by-case basis that a student may qualify for a voluntary medical withdrawal or may need to be involuntarily withdrawn from the University. This Policy outlines the criteria and procedures for a student to request and receive a voluntary medical withdrawal and for when and how a student may be withdrawn from the University for medical reasons or for demonstrating behavior that creates a direct threat to the safety or health of the student or others or that unreasonably disrupts the normal education processes and orderly operation of the University. There may be situations in which this Policy and the Community Standards and/or other SNU policies are applicable.

Voluntary Medical Withdrawal

Students are encouraged to request a voluntary medical withdrawal when they believe their physical or mental health problems are preventing successful engagement, and completion of, academic course work; when safety is in question; or when the demands of university life are interfering with the ability to recover from, or adjust to a significant physical or mental health challenge. Typically, chronic medical or mental health problems are not issues that qualify a student for a voluntary medical withdrawal unless there is a documented escalation of symptoms and/or adverse behavioral outcomes.

Students interested in pursuing a voluntary medical withdrawal may wish to discuss this option with providers at the Health Center or the Counseling Center, or they may independently initiate the process through the Director of the Counseling Center with or without support from their program of study. If a voluntary medical withdrawal is approved, the person is no longer considered a student and must immediately leave campus and, if applicable, officially check out of on campus housing.

Students who make this choice will be required to follow the reentry procedures listed below. These students may also be required to meet with the director of the Health Center or the Counseling Center upon reentry to ensure that they are aware of on campus and community services available to address their needs.

Grades and Completion of Academic Work

An approved voluntary medical withdrawal during the final forty percent of the academic term will be deemed medically excused and grades of "I" (Incomplete) for one or more courses may be granted but only with the approval of the faculty member(s) and the appropriate form completed for each course. It is the responsibility of the student to contact individual instructors

to arrange for the timely completion of course work. If the student does not complete work in a course in the time agreed upon with professor, the grade of "I" will be changed to the replacement grade indicated on the Incomplete "I" Grade Form. When completion of the semester requirements and a grade of "I" are not deemed feasible, the designation grade of "AI" (Administrative Incomplete) may be approved by the Chief Academic Officer which will allow the student to retake the courses at a future time.

Refunds of Tuition

All tuition actually paid by the student (total tuition less any grants, scholarships, refunds, and loan adjustments) for courses not completed during the term in which the approved voluntary medical withdrawal occurs is credited for the next academic term in which the student re-enrolls at SNU. University fees, room and board charges are prorated from the date of checkout during the first sixty percent of the academic term. No refunds of university fees, room and board charges will be given for students who are granted a voluntary medical withdrawal during the final forty percent of the academic term. A student is only eligible for this financial arrangement one time in his or her academic career.

Financial Aid Implications

It is the responsibility of the student to contact the Financial Aid Office individually to discuss the financial aid implications of a voluntary medical withdrawal.

Laptop

It is the responsibility of the student to contact the Laptop Office individually to discuss the financial implications and/or necessary return of SNU owned laptops based on a voluntary medical withdrawal.

Financial Hardship

Every effort will be made to consider a student's financial situation and insurance coverage in making referrals for treatment or evaluation. Students who may need additional financial assistance or other consideration in meeting the requirements should contact the Counseling Center Director.

Advantages of Taking a Conditional Health Withdrawal

- a) The time away from the University will allow the student to focus on his/her health condition without the additional responsibilities associated with being a student.
- b) The student can seek the most appropriate professional treatment and resources without the constraints imposed by remaining enrolled at the University.
- c) The student is given special academic and grade dispensation.
- d) The student is given special financial dispensation.

Criteria for an Involuntary Withdrawal

A student may be involuntarily withdrawn from SNU if the University determines on an individualized, case-by-case basis, in accordance with the procedures listed below, that the student:

- a) Demonstrates behavior or possesses a condition that is unreasonably disruptive to the normal education processes and orderly operation of the University;
- b) Demonstrates behavior or possesses a condition that endangers him/herself, or that creates a direct threat that the student may endanger him/herself, or;
- c) Demonstrates behavior or possesses a condition that endangers others, or that creates a direct threat that the student may endanger others.

Emergency Interim Removal

If a student's behavior or condition presents an immediate, severe and direct threat to him or herself or others (by evidencing a likelihood of harm to him or herself or others), or is substantially disrupting the learning or working environment of others, the Vice President for Student Development or designee (if such Officer is not immediately available) may direct an emergency interim removal of the student that restricts the student's access to the College's campus or residence hall, as appropriate, for an interim period before a final determination of the matter.

Except as permitted above, before determining whether to require an emergency interim removal, the Vice President for Student Development or designee shall take the following steps:

- a) exercise all reasonable efforts to meet with the student; and
- b) in that meeting, offer the student the opportunity to be evaluated at the college's expense by a qualified, licensed mental health professional, who may be an employee of SNU or on retainer to SNU. Whenever possible, that professional shall have had no prior contact with the student. The professional shall assess whether the student's behavior or condition presents an immediate, severe and direct threat to him or herself or others or presents a significant risk to repeat behavior that substantially disrupts the learning or working environment of others, and, if so, whether the student's behavior may be the result of a medical issue. That professional shall present his or her findings to the Vice President for Student Development or designee, who shall determine based on those findings and other evidence available whether emergency interim removal under these procedures is appropriate.
- c) If the student refuses to meet, and/or refuses to undergo such assessment or to keep a scheduled appointment, the Vice President for Student Development or designee may require emergency interim removal without a meeting and/or mental health assessment if he or she reasonably concludes on the basis of the available evidence that the student's behavior or condition evidences an immediate, severe and direct threat of harm to the student or others or is substantially disrupting the working or learning environment of others and presents a significant risk to continue that substantial disruption.
- d) The emergency interim removal from the College and/or residence hall shall remain in effect until a final decision has been made pursuant to the procedures below, unless, before a final decision is made, the Vice President for Student Development or designee determines that the reasons for imposing the interim removal no longer exist.

Involuntary Withdrawal Process

If it becomes evident (through observed behavior or condition or by report(s) from faculty, staff or students) that a withdrawal from the university may be in the best interest of a student and the university and the student do not agree, then the following procedures will be engaged:

- a) The Vice President for Student Development, or designee, will collect all available information obtained from incident reports, conversations with students, faculty and staff, and the expert opinions of appropriate medical professionals.
- b) Notice of the involuntary withdrawal hearing and the time and place of the hearing shall be personally delivered or sent by the Vice President for Student Development or designee to the student at the address appearing on the records of the College, by overnight or certified mail, by regular mail, and, for students who have a college e-mail address, to that e-mail address. Notice of at least five business days shall be given to the student in advance of the hearing unless the student consents to an earlier hearing. The notice shall contain (i) a statement of the reasons involuntary withdrawal is sought,

and (ii) a statement that the student has a right to present his or her side of the story, to present witnesses and evidence on his or her behalf, and to have legal counsel or an advisor present at the student's expense.

- c) The Vice President for Student Development, or designee, will seek, if appropriate and feasible, the cooperation and involvement of parents or guardians of the student. The decision to notify a student's family members will be weighed carefully against the student's privacy rights. The student's parents or guardians may be contacted without the expressed consent of the student if it is perceived necessary to protect the welfare of the student or other individuals.
- d) If reasonably possible, the Vice President for Student Development, or designee, will meet with the student, giving notice to the student of the meeting, and providing an opportunity for the student (and his/her family or legal counsel if the student has a signed waiver indicating permission to share information) to review all information collected on the matter to date as well as to provide evidence to the contrary and/or to make suggestions for reasonable accommodation(s) short of involuntary withdrawal from the university.
- e) The Vice President for Student Development, or designee, will ask the student to provide recently available medical evidence if available. If not available, the Vice President for Student Development or designee, may invoke an Emergency Interim Removal (see above) so that a medical or psychological evaluation and assessment can be completed. Students who are on medical leave for any health reason are temporarily not allowed to participate in any University activities, attend classes, reside in or visit on campus student housing, and may not be on campus except to attend a meeting or hearing related to his/her case. The student must be assessed by an appropriate professional: a licensed psychologist or psychiatrist if evaluating mental health concerns or a licensed physician if the evaluation is regarding other medical concerns. Further, all providers must be unrelated to the student and must have specialty/credentials appropriate for the condition of concern. The off-campus health care professional will be asked to provide a written evaluation of the student's current health status, the nature of the treatment, and provide recommendations regarding: a) the student's readiness to return to the academic and co-curricular demands of university life; b) the student's readiness to live in the on-campus residential community; c) ongoing treatment, academic accommodations or testing needs; and d) any conditions or restrictions that the University should impose.
- f) If, after conversation, the student maintains that he/she would like to remain enrolled, the Vice President for Student Development, or designee, will consult with appropriate medical professionals regarding the evidence presented by the student. Failure by the student to sign the Consent to Share Information form so that medical/clinical professionals may be consulted will result in the involuntary withdrawal from the university as SNU will have insufficient evidence to render an individualized determination. The Vice President for Student Development, or designee, will also consult with other University officials as appropriate.
- g) The Vice President for Student Development, or designee, will then convene a committee comprised of the Director of the Student Counseling Center, the Director of the Student Health Center, the Director of Disability Services, and a representative of the faculty to review collected information and evidence presented by the student. The committee will engage in a determination on an individualized, case-by-case basis and will apply the direct threat analysis, taking into consideration the nature, duration and severity of the risk and the likelihood, imminence and nature of the future harmful conduct, either to the student or to others in the university community.

- h) The Committee will render a decision and present that decision to the student in writing. Should the decision be to withdraw the student involuntarily, appropriate conditions for return will be contained within the withdrawal letter.
- i) Should the student choose to appeal the Committee's decision, s/he will make such appeal to the Vice President for Student Development, within 10 calendar days of the date of the withdrawal letter. If the Vice President for Student Development was the officer that coordinated the involuntary withdrawal panel and process, the President of the University, or their designee, will be the appeal officer. The decision of the appeal officer will be final and will be communicated within 72 hours. The bases overturning a decision of the Committee are limited to the following: (i) clearly erroneous factual findings; (ii) procedural irregularities; (iii) newly available evidence that would have affected the outcome; (iv) the remedy and/or conditions on re-entry were unreasonable or inappropriate.

Grades and Completion of Academic Work

For all involuntary medical withdrawals, the student will receive 'W's (withdrawals) on their academic transcript with notation on the transcript of having left for medical reasons. No "I's (Incompletes) will be granted.

Refunds of Tuition

All tuition actually paid by the student (total tuition less any grants, scholarships, refunds, and loan adjustments) will be refunded based on the normal University tuition refund policy. University fees, room and board charges are prorated from the date of checkout during the first sixty percent of the academic term. No refunds of university fees, room and board charges will be given for students during the final forty percent of the academic term.

Financial Aid Implications

It is the responsibility of the student to contact the Financial Aid Office individually to discuss the implications of an involuntary medical withdrawal on his or her financial aid.

Laptop

It is the responsibility of the student to contact the Laptop Office individually to discuss the financial implications and/or necessary return of SNU owned laptops based on a involuntary medical withdrawal.

Financial Hardship

Every effort will be made to consider a student's financial situation and insurance coverage in making referrals for treatment or evaluation. Students who may need additional financial assistance or other consideration in meeting the requirements should contact the Counseling Center Director.

Re-Entry Procedures

Prior to returning to or enrolling at the University, a student who has withdrawn, voluntarily or involuntarily, must submit a written plan that identifies how the student will resume his/her status at the University. The plan must respond to the condition that gave rise to the need for the student's withdrawal (i.e., need for ongoing medical or psychological care, ability to maintain a standard of responsibility and self care; ability to assume class participation) and clearly demonstrate full compliance with any re-entry requirements made at the time of withdrawal. If the student will reside in the residence halls, the plan must also state how the student will transition back into this community.

The Vice President for Student Development, or their designee, will review the student's plan to determine on an individualized, case-by-case basis whether or not the student's request to re-enroll at that time shall be granted or denied by taking into consideration all of the relevant factors and information presented. The decision of the Vice President for Student Development, or their designee, is final.

Special Notes

- a) Copies of the decisions made regarding either voluntary or involuntary leaves will be maintained in the student's files. Original documentation from the student's medical records and outside evaluators will be maintained in a confidential file in either the Counseling center or the Health center.
- b) There may be occasions in which SNU requires, and may pay for, an additional evaluations and/or assessments.
- c) SNU reserves the right to require the student to comply with a treatment plan recommended by the outside and/or SNU healthcare/mental health professional as a condition of returning to, or remaining in, the campus community. Review and monitoring of the student's required treatment plan may be assigned to a University designee. Failure to comply with requirements may result in the University issuing an involuntary medical leave.
- d) If a student was living on campus prior to the emergency, approval for return to the University usually includes approval to return to housing. However, a student's on campus housing status may be restricted if the student's behavior or condition poses a health or safety threat to him/herself or others.
- e) If a student was required to complete specific treatment (e.g., eating disorder or substance abuse treatment), the student must provide documentation regarding the completion of this requirement.

Deviations from Established Procedures

Reasonable deviations from this policy will not invalidate a decision or proceeding unless significant prejudice to a student may result.