

Student Government Association

AUGUSTANA COLLEGE

Letter from Augustana College's Student Government Association

August 26, 2021

Faculty Council,

To begin, we hope you all have had an exceptional summer break, as we know it was very well deserved.

Throughout summer, Student Government Association has joined faculty members in planning the upcoming academic year through being active in Augie Strong. This committee has given us the opportunity to guide new campus COVID policies but also share the perspective of a student during these times. Therefore, we write to you to advocate for the student body as well as pass on concerns we have heard from students of all backgrounds.

Current Guidance from the Illinois Department of Public Health and the Center for Disease Control leads us to believe we will be experiencing a different year, but simply a new sort of different. Therefore, while it is easy to revert attendance policies to the way they stood at the start of Spring 2020, we kindly ask you to revisit your attendance policy and accommodate it to what our new normal will be. Unfortunately, as we are all aware, the pandemic is not over, and we should not treat it as such.

Faculty, we want to make it clear that students see and value your hard work and dedication throughout the pandemic. Thank you for your ongoing efforts to enhance our education despite it including long hours and extra work. We continue to appreciate you. By no means do students want our faculty to feel overworked or unappreciated. We understand that the nature of the pandemic added extra stressors to your profession, and did not come with extra benefits. Despite this obstacle, the faculty team persevered to give all students the best education possible.

Although we are writing this letter asking for leniency, our faculty's mental health is also a priority of ours. For this reason, below we have listed a list of ideas that both faculty and students would feel comfortable compromising on. Our hope is to prevent students from feeling overwhelmed and professors from overworked. We hope you consider these suggestions.

- A. Student Government Strongly recommends that Faculty continue incorporating technology into the classroom, especially through recording their live classes for students who are unable to attend in-person for these reasons.
 - a. Faculty will still have access to recording equipment, and recording classes is a minimally invasive way to keep our classrooms accessible to students who may find themselves absent for any number of reasons. COVID-19 being one of the

most prevalent, but with enough advance notice or communication, they could also be made available for other reasons.

- b. We recognize that there are many reasons a student may need to review a lecture, and at times it may seem as if this resource is being used in place of attending live classes. A way to circumvent this concern would be to record lectures, but make them available to students upon request. This way the student may take responsibility for their studies.
- c. While recording lectures may seem like additional work on behalf of faculty members, the ability for professors to send a recording of classes to students who miss classes could prevent a pile-up of students during office hours.
- d. Student Government suggests for faculty to continue to offer a virtual option for office hours along with in-person meetings.

Overall, throughout this last academic year students felt most supported by their professors when they were given say on how their education would be delivered. Students also felt supported when faculty reassured them that fair accommodations would be made. We ask for this same fairness in the upcoming academic year. We would also like to recognize that although you vote as a Faculty Council, you teach as an individual professor, so you set the tone on how your individual class will be designed and executed.

Faculty, we want to make it clear that students see and value your hard work and dedication throughout the pandemic. Thank you for your ongoing efforts to enhance our education despite it including long hours and extra work. We continue to appreciate you. No matter what new obstacles or decisions this upcoming school year will bring, we are confident we will all get through this together.

Thank you,

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