

**THE UNIVERSITY OF ST. THOMAS**  
**Behavioral Leave of Absence and Readmission**  
**Policy and Procedures (Non-Discipline)**

**I. POLICY**

**A.** This policy applies in situations in which a student's behavior indicates a direct threat to the health and/or safety of self or others. The university reserves the right to remove a student by requesting or requiring a student to take a leave of absence [may also be referred to as leave] from the university for reasons pertaining to the student's behavior. In addition, disciplinary action may be taken under other university policies and procedures.

This policy is to be invoked in extraordinary circumstances at the discretion of the appropriate Dean where the normal disciplinary system may not apply or is not appropriate. This policy does not replace existing academic performance or discipline-based withdrawal or dismissal policies maintained by academic units or the Dean of Students Office.

The university authorizes the Dean of Students (DOS) in conjunction with the appropriate Dean to remove a student by requesting or requiring that the individual take a leave of absence from the university. The DOS and Dean may choose to delegate all or parts of this responsibility to an appropriate designee. Further, the DOS and Dean may appoint a designee to oversee the individual student cases. The case file will be maintained in the Dean of Students Office.

**B.** Students who take a leave of absence from the university under this policy may be considered for readmission following a determination by the DOS in conjunction with the Dean that the behavior requiring withdrawal is, for the most part, eliminated demonstrating that the student is ready to return to school. The determination of readmission is made in conjunction with the Leave of Absence Team (the Team) which will be appointed by the DOS and Dean in accordance with the requirements of each individual case. In making the determination on readmission, the Team will consider information from campus professionals and relevant materials submitted by the petitioning student which demonstrates that the conditions that caused the withdrawal no longer exist or are being managed.

**C.** The complex nature of each student situation may call for the Team to take on different configurations, depending on the situation. The Team membership may include representatives from the office of the Academic Dean of a College/School, Office of the Dean of Students, Academic Counseling, Enhancement Program Disability Services, Residence Life, Health Services, Personal Counseling, Public Safety, and the Business Office – Student Accounts. Other members can be added at the discretion of the DOS in conjunction with the Dean.

**II. PROCEDURES AND TYPES OF LEAVE OF ABSENCE**

**A. Interim Leave of Absence**

1. If a student's behavior poses an immediate and direct threat to themselves or others, the DOS in conjunction with the Dean may put the student on a leave of absence or restrict the student's

access to the university campus, university housing, services, and activities, as appropriate, for an interim period before a final determination of the matter.

2. In such cases, reasonable attempt will be made by the DOS and/or Dean to meet with the student and discuss options before deciding on a leave of absence. If the student is to be put on leave, the decision will be communicated in writing to the student, the Dean of the student's academic unit, and other units as appropriate within the university.

3. The interim leave and/or restricted access will remain in effect until a final decision has been made pursuant to the procedures below or other applicable university procedures, unless, prior to a final decision, the DOS, in conjunction with the Dean, determines that the reasons for imposing the leave no longer exist.

## **B. Involuntary Leave of Absence**

Leave of absence under this policy may be considered when the university has substantial evidence that a student's behavior indicates a direct threat to the health and/or safety of self or others.

An individual within the university community wishing to explore the appropriateness of a leave of absence or wanting to initiate a leave should contact either the Office of the Dean of a College/School/Department, the Associate Dean for Academic Counseling, or the Dean of Students. When circumstances merit, the DOS in conjunction with the Dean will:

1. arrange for an appropriate review process including receiving, investigating, and examining appropriate records and documentation; and/or
2. provide an opportunity for the student to meet with the DOS or Dean to discuss options regarding a leave of absence; and/or
3. seek the recommendation of the Leave of Absence Team and/or
4. contact the student's family, or designated emergency contact, if appropriate; and/or
5. document the findings of the review process and any relevant recommendations; and/or
6. provide written notice to the student of the leave; and/or
7. describe requirements for re-admission; and/or
8. provide written notice of opportunity for conditions of re-admission.

The student may be restricted from campus and/or university services and activities during a leave of absence.

## **C. Voluntary Leave of Absence**

If the student wishes to pursue a leave of absence, the DOS or Dean will:

1. counsel the student to discuss options regarding a leave; which, under this policy is at the discretion of the DOS in conjunction with the Dean; and/or
2. consult with the student's academic unit and other units as appropriate; and/or
3. discuss the circumstances with the student's family or designated emergency contact person, as appropriate; and/or
4. refer the student to appropriate resources for evaluation or treatment; and/or

5. provide the student with written documentation confirming the student's decision to take voluntary leave of absence in accordance with university policy for withdrawal if applicable; and/or
6. provide documentation to return – requirements for re-admission, if any.

#### **D. Return to Classes and/or Readmission**

A student removed from the university under this policy and wishing to return to classes or be considered for readmission may petition the Dean of the Academic department in question, or Academic Counseling, or the Dean of Students according to written conditions for readmission. The student will provide documentation of behavioral change, and must provide satisfactory documentation that the student is qualified and ready to resume academic work and has complied with any other conditions of return or re-admission. It is within the university's sole discretion to place additional conditions on a student returned from a leave of absence.

1. The Dean in conjunction with the DOS will:
  - a. consult with the Team; and/or
  - b. contact the student's family or designated contact, if appropriate; and/or
  - c. receive, investigate, and examine relevant documentation fulfilling petition requirements; and/or
  - d. provide an opportunity for the student to meet with the Dean or DOS to discuss resumption of classes or readmission.
2. The Dean **and/or** DOS will:
  - a. initiate the resumption or readmission process; and/or
  - b. when appropriate, provide the student with written conditions for continued attendance, which may include a behavioral contract, and inform any relevant administrators in the implementation of the student's readmission; or
  - c. deny the student's request for return or readmission and specify when and if the student request for return or readmission will be considered; and/or
  - d. notify the student's academic unit and other units as appropriate of the decision regarding readmission.
3. Decisions regarding a student's return to classes or re-admission are made at the discretion of the DOS or appropriate Dean.

#### **E. Effect on Academic Status**

In the event of a leave of absence pursuant to this policy, the university policies for withdrawal from courses and for receiving tuition refunds will normally apply.

#### **F. Effect on Housing Status**

In consultation with the Director of Residence Life, if the student has been living in the residence halls, university policy for contract cancellation and fee refund will normally apply.

## **G. Appeal**

The student has the right to appeal in writing to the **Vice President for Student Affairs** regarding any of the completed actions and/or decisions made throughout this policy. A written appeal must be delivered to the DOS or appropriate Dean within three class/business-days of receiving written confirmation of the outcome of any deliberation conducted for the welfare of the student and/or the university. The Vice President for Student Affairs has full and final authority in decisions relating to this policy.

Adapted with permission from policy developed by  
The University of Michigan, 2003