

Policy Title: Compassionate Academic Withdrawal or Leave of Absence

Senior Team Member: Frank Gaytán, Vice President for Student Engagement

Division Responsible for Policy: Student Engagement

Effective Date: January 13, 2025

Contact(s): Elizabeth Fedec, Assistant Vice President and Dean of Students

Minority Impact Statement: This policy does not have a disproportionate or unique impact on minority persons.

Who Should Read the Policy: All students, administrators, faculty, and staff members.

Policy review cycle: Every 3 years, or as needed.

POLICY

Reason for Policy:

North Park University recognizes that students may experience extraordinary circumstances in which a serious and significant personal situation prevents them from continuing in their classes and functioning as a student. A compassionate withdrawal allows students to request time away from the university without academic penalty and provides the student an opportunity to address personal situations when the regular university withdrawal or leave of absence process is not appropriate.

Scope:

Any current and active North Park University student enrolled full-time or part-time.

Policy Elements:

An extraordinary personal situation which occurred during current academic term, not related to the student's own personal physical or mental health, must have prevented the student from meeting the academic and social demands of their course(s) in the current academic term.

Examples:

- Care of a seriously ill child or spouse;
- Becoming the primary caregiver for another family member with a serious health condition;
- Death in the student's immediate family;
- Being a victim of a serious crime (e.g., assault, domestic violence, etc.); or
- Natural disaster, including house fire
- Suddenly experiencing homelessness

Complete Withdrawal: Compassionate Withdrawal requests are granted for complete withdrawal from all courses in a term. Requests for withdrawal of single courses will not be considered under this policy and for any circumstances. Withdrawal from quad classes is determined on a case-by-case basis.

Deadlines: Compassionate Withdrawal requests must be submitted by the last date of the current term. Compassionate Withdrawal requests and documentation submitted after the semester will not be considered, except in extraordinary circumstances. In such circumstances, additional documentation and information may be required.

Refunds: Tuition, housing, and board refunds for students who are approved for a Compassionate Withdrawal are subject to the guidelines found in the catalog and housing agreement. Compassionate Withdrawal does not guarantee a refund and/or backdating the date of the withdrawal.

Subsequent Requests: Second Compassionate Withdrawal or Academic Leave within any 12-month period will be reviewed with greater scrutiny.

Timeline: Compassionate Withdrawal is only considered between the last date to withdrawal from semester long or B quad classes and the end of the semester. Prior to the last date to withdrawal, students should be taking a Leave of Absence or Withdrawal.

Definitions:

Current and active student refers to an individual who is enrolled full-time or part-time for the current or subsequent semester. Students must be enrolled in credit-bearing courses and actively participating in academic coursework and activities.

Academic Leave: Students may interrupt their education at North Park University for a period of no more than two consecutive terms.

Withdrawal: A student is completely removed from all of their class credits with no intent of returning to the University.

Procedures:

Procedure to request a Compassionate Withdrawal

Students may begin the Compassionate Withdrawal process by contacting the Dean of Students and/or Student Care Coordinator and providing the following information:

- Write a personal statement, which explains in their own words, the extraordinary circumstances in which a serious and significant personal situation prevents them from continuing in their classes and functioning as a student. The personal statement should include:
 - The general nature of the student's circumstances
 - The last date the student was able to attend class
 - Why/how the student was prevented from completing coursework; and
 - The date of the student's anticipated return to class(es)
- Provide sufficient supporting documentation that provides evidence for the need of a compassionate withdrawal. All requests require some form of supporting documentation. For example, a Compassionate Withdrawal request made to care for a seriously-ill child or other family member may require a physician's letter. Other examples of documentation may include police reports, obituaries, legal documents, restraining orders, airline ticket receipts, newspaper clippings, etc.
- Student must indicate if they are looking to withdrawal from the University or take a leave of absence.

The Dean of Students or their designee will contact the student with the result of their request. If a Compassionate Withdrawal request is approved, the student will be notified and withdrawn from all current classes. If a request is denied, the student will be provided with information for academic, mental health, and personal support services available on campus and directed to consult with their academic advisor and current instructors to determine other options.

The Dean of Students or designee will handle requests for a Compassionate Withdrawal for traditional undergraduate students. Requests for a Compassionate Withdrawal from students in other academic programs will be handled by the respective academic dean or designee. For traditional undergraduate students, the Dean of Students or their designee will confer the Compassionate Withdrawal and LOA committee to review the student's information and make a determination on request.

Compassionate Withdrawal and LOA Committee is made up of members from Student Accounts, Financial Aid, Student Care, Registrar's Office, Dean of Students, Residence Life and Housing (if a resident student), International Affairs (if an international student), Access Specialist (if appropriate), Athletics (if an athlete).

Procedure for Re-Enrollment after a Compassionate Withdrawal

Students who take a Compassionate Leave of Absence and return within two semesters, may register for the upcoming semester through Self Service functions.

Students who take a Compassionate Leave of Absence but are gone for more than 2 semesters must follow the process for Readmission.

Students who take a Compassionate Withdrawal but decide to return to the University at a later date must follow the process for Readmission.

Forms:

Readmission Application

Related Laws, Regulations, Statutes, and Policies:

North Park University Withdrawal Policy and Leave of Absence Policy

North Park University Medical Withdrawal Policy

North Park University Readmission Process

North Park University Refund Policy

North Park University Housing Agreement

Stakeholder review:

- Dean of Student Team: September 17, 2024; June 20, 2025
- Wellness Team: September 24, 2024; June 20, 2025
- Registrar: November 11, 2024; May 30, 2025
- VP for Student Engagement: December 18, 2024; July 10, 2025
- Financial Aid: January 3, 2025; May 30, 2025

Document History:

- Initial draft: September 2024
- Updated draft: January 2025
- Last Reviewed: June 2025
- Next Review: June 2028, or as necessary