

Updates from the Provost

Provost

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To: FACULTY GROUP <faculty@belmont.edu>; ADJUNCTS GROUP <adjuncts@belmont.edu>;

To: Belmont Community
From: Dr. Thomas D. Burns, Provost
RE: Updates from the Provost

As we begin another year, and as our community continues to grow, I write with important information to share. Continuing endeavors started over the past few years, I hope to share information with you through the short “90 Seconds with the Provost” videos and the Provost Newsletter. In addition, I will also continue to hold office hours for the 2017-18 academic year on Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 11:00-Noon and Thursdays from 2:00-3:00pm in my office in Barbara Massey Hall, Room 235. I encourage you to stop by and share ideas and address concerns during these times. It is my hope that open office hours have been an avenue for individual, personal conversations with faculty and staff. To ensure that I am able to devote full attention to each of these conversations, I ask that those wishing to take advantage of these opportunities please contact Ms. Kim Carr (Kim.Carr@Belmont.edu or 615-460-6400) to schedule an appointment within these time slots. We anticipate that most of these initial conversations would be 10 – 15 minutes in length, though we also understand that many issues at the University might require additional time and discussion. As has always been the case, if a particular idea or conversation needs more time than could be accommodated within an office hours visit, you are encouraged to schedule a longer appointment at another time by contacting Ms. Carr directly. I look forward to seeing many of you during open office hours.

As a reminder, the final examination period runs from Wednesday, December 6th through Tuesday, December 13th. As stated on page 58 of the *2017-2018 Belmont University Faculty Handbook* (found [here](#)), each course must administer a final exam at the scheduled time during the final exam period.

2.16.5. Final Examinations - *Each professor is required to give a final examination during the scheduled final examination period. Final examinations should be administered as scheduled; no professor has the prerogative to change the time of administration. Exceptions to the final examination must be approved by the dean of the college in advance of the final examination period. Online and other courses not included in the final examination grid will follow the alternative time periods shown in the footnotes to the published final examination schedule. University activities other than examination may not be scheduled during the final examination period.*

Finally, over the past few semesters we have seen an increase in the number of students seeking Provost’s excuses, at the request of their instructors, for reasons that typically do not fall within the purview of a Provost-excused absence. When students inquire, we clarify the purpose of Provost’s excuses, however we thought it would also be helpful to provide this information to faculty as well.

There are various reasons why a student may need to be absent from class, and a Provost’s excuse is generally only provided for class absences that arise as a result of University-sanctioned activities (e.g. class activities, student organization competitions, faculty-sponsored conference attendance). The request for a Provost’s excuse must come from the sponsoring faculty or staff member. As stated in the **Faculty Handbook, Section 2.16.4:**

If a class absence is necessary because of an activity by another class or university organization, the sponsor of the activity will provide a detailed memorandum on the letterhead of the unit to the Provost at least two (2) weeks prior to the event. The memo will provide the names of students involved, the type of event, and the date range of the event. If approved, the Provost will countersign the memo, generating a Provost's Excuse, and the sponsor will provide copies to each student to present to their instructor as a Provost's Excused Absence with the allowance for the student to make up missed class work.

We encourage students who will be absent for any other reasons to discuss the absence directly with their professors. When absences are the result of a family emergency or long-term medical illness or issue, students are also directed to the Dean of Students office (615.460.6407) for assistance with notifying professors. For absences that do not fall within the purview of a Provost's excuse, faculty are encouraged to use their discretion to determine if an absence is excusable and work with students regarding missed class work.

The *Institutional Statement on Student Class Attendance* found in the Faculty Handbook is below for your reference and inclusion into course syllabi.

Institutional Statement on Student Class Attendance and Absences

Belmont University is committed to the idea that regular class attendance is essential to successful scholastic achievement. Absence is excused only in cases of illness or other legitimate cause. Attendance is checked from the first class meeting. Late registrants will have accrued some absences prior to formal registration in the course. In the case of excused absence from class, students have the right and responsibility to make up all class work missed.

We hope that this helps to alleviate any confusion that surrounds Provost's excuses. As always, please feel free to contact our office or your dean's office with any questions related to this or any other University policy.

With appreciation,

Thomas D. Burns
Provost