

To: VPSA
Office Held: SGA
Issue: Excused Absence – Menstruation Leave

Problem Statement

According to Women Concern Organization, around 80% of females experience period pain¹ that could be described to be “*bad as having a heart attack*”². Because of the latter, AUI female students are obliged to take unexcused absences because of the unbearable pain which eventually hinders their academic performance.

In this case, female's period pain is seen as less important and invalid by health workers compared to other injuries. Since AUI is positioning itself as a university that promotes Gender Equality and Women Empowerment through institutions such as Hillary Clinton Women's Empowerment Center (HCWEC) and initiatives such as No Violence Alliance (NOVA), it is its responsibility to ensure a favorable environment for AUI's female students. The neglect of such a reproductive right is incorporating more bias into the university system against women.

Current policy

There is no policy about this. It is not even enlisted in the excused absence criteria.

Suggested Policy:

We suggest allowing AUI female students one absence per cycle which will make it a total of 3 or 4 absences per semester. If a female student gets an absence, she shall get her second one until the next cycle, counting from the day she took it.

We expect from students to fill a form at the health center and then submit to their respective professors either by email or during their office hours to excuse their absences.

We believe that such policy goes hand in hand with AUI's institutional values which promotes a favorable environment for development of equity and social responsibility³.

Major Obstacles/Implementation Challenges

After implementing such policy, one can think what to do in case of falsification. Well, if they lie about their period, they won't be granted an absence until their next cycle. Also 3 or 4 absences will not be exceeding the absence limit established by the university.

One might think that those unexcused absences could be used for such purposes. Most of AUI professors grade attendance and they might take off points in case of unexcused absences. Therefore, taking off points because of period is only asserting the huge bias against female AUI students and the way their reproductive rights are not taken into consideration.

In addition to this, other universities in Asian countries such as Hanyang University in Seoul, South Korea, did implement such policy and it is functioning properly.

¹ <https://www.womens-health-concern.org/help-and-advice/factsheets/period-pain/>

² <https://feminisminindia.com/2019/09/20/need-menstrual-leave-policy-india/>

³ [http://www.aui.ma/institutional-brochure\(2018\).pdf](http://www.aui.ma/institutional-brochure(2018).pdf)