

## **Classroom Policies for Flu Season 09-10 9-21-09**

Portland State University is committed to maintaining the safest possible environment to promote the health and well-being of its students, faculty, and staff. H1N1 flu is being reported at many colleges and universities across the country and it is likely that there will be an epidemic of H1N1 in addition to the usual seasonal flu. The H1N1 virus will affect younger people to a much greater extent than seasonal flu, but everyone is at risk. We all have a responsibility to help prevent the spread of flu and faculty can play a particularly important role. Everyone should review **Preparing for the Flu**. This is an exceptional resource document by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. <http://www.flu.gov/professional/school/higheredtoolkit.html>

Here are some policies that, if followed, can help control the epidemic.

- A. Students will not be penalized for illness-related absences and will be provided with opportunity to make up missed assignments.
- B. Faculty will not require a physician's note for student absences. If faculty are concerned that student absences might not be justified they should contact the Dean of Students.
- C. Faculty are responsible for communicating basic information available from Student Health and Counseling Services (SHAC) regarding prevention and control of flu to their class on, at least, a weekly basis. Information and recommendations will be updated regularly on the SHAC site <http://www.shac.pdx.edu/>.
- D. Faculty have the authority and responsibility to require a student who is exhibiting clear symptoms of the flu to leave the classroom and not return until they are without a fever for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications.\* According to the Centers for Disease Control flu symptoms include fever (usually high), headache, tiredness (can be extreme), cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, and body aches.
- E. Faculty should provide alternative means of communication with flu-affected students so that the student may continue contact with the course. Examples include use of email or websites. OIT is developing additional tools that can be found on their website <http://oit.pdx.edu/> that will be useful to faculty in helping ill students maintain contact with the class.

over

- F. Faculty must stay home and use their sick leave if they have flu symptoms and not return to work until they are without a fever for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications.\* Faculty should work with their chair, in advance, to identify other faculty or graduate students who may be able to cover their classes.
  
- G. Faculty should work to create a classroom environment, when possible, that minimizes flu transmission. Examples include not passing out paper that might be handed from one student to another, when possible asking students to leave empty chairs or desks between them.
  
- H. In the event of a campus shut down PSU will issue specific guidelines, policies, and procedures regarding matters such as course completion, grading, and financial aid that might not be covered by existing policies.

\* CDC guidance recommends that, based on current flu conditions, faculty, students, and staff with flu-like illness should stay in their home, dormitory, or residence hall until at least 24 hours after they no longer have a fever (100 degrees Fahrenheit or 38 degrees Celsius) or signs of a fever (have chills, feel very warm, have a flushed appearance, or are sweating). This should be determined without the use of fever-reducing medications (any medicine that contains ibuprofen or acetaminophen).