

## Provost

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**From:** Provost  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 13, 2021 10:55 AM  
**To:** Provost  
**Cc:** FACULTY GROUP; ADJUNCTS GROUP  
**Subject:** Traveling for Breaks & Holidays, Office Hours and Provost's Excuses

Dear Students,

As we begin the Spring 2021 semester, I would like to remind you of our revised academic calendar and related attendance requirements. Attending class is a crucial component of academic success. Consequently, we require attendance for each class at Belmont. Students should expect to show their “green dot” from their COVID Symptom Tracker, indicating that they are symptom free, when they arrive at each in-person class meeting. We expect students that are living on-campus or in Nashville will be attending required in-person and HyFlex class meetings on campus this Spring, as determined by their course instructor. We understand that there are occasions that may arise requiring a student to be absent from class, however travel arrangements that conflict with your scheduled classes and exams should not be one of these occasions. In addition, we want to be clear that enrollment in a HyFlex section is not meant to allow students to elect to be in-person whenever they wish, but rather to allow students who are studying at a distance for the entire semester, or who must be absent from a scheduled class meeting due to an illness or University-sponsored activity, to still participate in the course.

Your semester schedule for the spring 2021 term is outlined in each of your course syllabi and the final exam schedule is posted on the Belmont University website (<http://www.belmont.edu/registrar/exam-schedules.html>). These schedules provide you with ample time to make travel arrangements that do not conflict with course requirements or exams. Please be advised that exams, especially final exams, cannot be moved for travel for personal reasons and we recommend that you make travel arrangements accordingly.

### Office Hours

I hold office hours during the semester as a way to be more accessible to the campus community and allow for individual, personal conversations with faculty, students and staff. During the spring semester, I will hold office hours weekly on Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 11:00am-Noon and Thursdays from 2:00-3:00pm in my office in Barbara Massey Hall, Room 235, though most meetings will be held via ZOOM for this semester.

These times are aimed at providing students, faculty or staff who have questions, comments or thoughts to share to spend a few minutes with me directly. To ensure that I am able to devote full attention to each of these conversations, we ask that those wishing to take advantage of these opportunities please contact Traci Hardy ([traci.hardy@Belmont.edu](mailto:traci.hardy@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, then you are encouraged to schedule a longer appointment at another time by contacting Traci Hardy directly. I look forward to seeing many of you during open office hours.

### Provost-Excused Absences

Finally, over the past few semesters we have seen an increase in the number of students seeking Provost's excuses for reasons that typically do not fall within the purview of a Provost-excused absence. In an attempt to alleviate confusion, we offer additional information about the purpose of Provost's excuses below.

There are various reasons why a student may need to be absent from class, and a Provost's excuse is **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, thus students do not request these types of excuses directly. Please note that internship activities, travel for family events, or participation in activities that are not University-sanctioned events but which conflict with class attendance **do not qualify** for a Provost's excused absence from class. Internship obligations should be scheduled around your class schedule.

We encourage students who will be absent for any reason to review the class attendance policy outlined in the course syllabus and discuss the absence directly with their professor. When absences are the result of a family emergency or long-term medical illness or issue, students are encouraged to contact the Dean of Students office (615.460.6407) for assistance with notifying professors. When a Provost's excuse is not presented, faculty may use their discretion to excuse any absence(s) as they deem appropriate.

We hope that this helps to clarify the types of absences that may be Provost-excused. As always, please contact us should you have any questions about this, or any other University policy.

Wishing you much success in the spring 2021 semester.

Sincerely,

Thomas D. Burns, Ph.D.  
Provost