

REQUEST TO AWARD A BACCALAUREATE DEGREE TO A CRITICALLY ILL STUDENT

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Board of Governors approve a request for an exception to statutes 2.43.62.030 and 2.43.62.040, and award the Bachelor of Liberal Arts and Sciences, with a Major in Psychology, to a critically ill student, effective Winter term, 2020.

Applicable Code

2.43.62.020 It may be requested of the University occasionally that academic recognition be bestowed posthumously to a deceased student who did not complete degree requirements and who did not meet the prescribed criteria for an honorary degree. In such a circumstance, the University may, upon request of the family of the subject student and upon approval of the appropriate faculty, confer a degree, if the deceased student had met the requirements as set forth below.

2.43.62.030 Similarly, it may be requested of the University occasionally that academic recognition be bestowed upon a critically ill student who, according to the best available medical advice, has no significant probability of being able to resume studies toward an earned degree. In such an instance, the University, may, upon request of the family of the subject student and upon approval of the appropriate faculty, confer a Certificate of Academic Achievement in commencement ceremonies, if the student has met the requirements as set forth below.

2.43.62.040 **BACCALAUREATE STUDENTS:** To be eligible for these University recognitions, a deceased or critically ill student who, at the time of termination of study, was pursuing a Bachelor Degree, shall have met a minimum of 90 percent of the requirements in each published category: general education, departmental, collegiate, University.

Background

Bri'Jon Moore is a WSU student originally from Canton, MI. She has been working on her degree requirements at Wayne State University since fall 2016 and has successfully completed 104 semester hours. Despite having earned less than 120-degree credits, she has complete most degree requirements, including overall GPA (2.93), completion of all general education and college group requirements (100%), and 24 out of 37 credits (65%) required by the major. She was working to complete her remaining major requirements as her health permitted but was recently moved into hospice care (January 23, 2020). Bri'Jon will not have an opportunity to complete the remaining credits required by the major.

Attached is a statement from Dr. Rajen Mody, Bri'Jon's physician from C.S. Mott Children's Hospital, received via email on January 23, 2020. This statement provides context about Bri'Jon's condition and confirms that she will be unable to complete her degree requirements.

Submitted by: Keith E. Whitfield, Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs

By requiring a 90% completion threshold in department requirements, the statute effectively limits the possibility of awarding the degree under the statute to students who have completed the vast majority of their degree requirements and have department-level support for the awarding of a degree. In addition, by only allowing a Certificate of Academic Achievement for critically ill students, rather than the granting of a bachelor's degree, the statute effectively limits the possibility of presenting a degree to a student like Bri'Jon Moore while they are still able to appreciate the achievement. While Ms. Moore has not yet met the requirement of statutes 2.43.62.030 and 2.43.62.040, it should be noted that she worked diligently to complete her degree requirements in the time she had and should be recognized for her achievements at this university.

Approvals

This request is supported by the Chair and Associate Chair of the Department of Psychology, the Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, and the Provost.