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Milo Rediger Writings & Addresses

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### When are Absences "Cuts?"

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## WHEN ARE ABSENCES "CUTS"?

by

Milo A. Rediger

In relation to a student's use of class "cuts" and a teacher's attitude toward them, both are really "on their honor." The policy statement which appears in both the catalog and the student handbook sets forth principles which represent the intention and the spirit of the regulations. The student who uses his "cuts" in accordance with the spirit and the stated intention of the system may exercise his independence and cultivate self-direction in an honorable manner. On the other hand, the student who abuses the system by consuming his "cuts" for mere vacations from classes because he "has them coming," may, even though he keeps within the "letter of the law," be undermining his honor by dissipating his expensive opportunities.

Teachers have agreed that, within this same context of spirit and intention, there will be no penalty for such absences beyond what the student misses by failing to be present for the class discussion and experience. But the same considerations which obligate the teacher to keep faith with this intent make it obligatory upon the student to use his cuts for the purposes indicated in the statement. I believe that no teacher will reduce a grade because a student has taken three cuts for a choir tour, field trips, church or educational conferences, job interviews, graduate school admission tests, approved athletic trips, et cetera. If, on the other hand, absences are taken in order to study for tests in other courses, to "sleep in" or for some other "irresponsible" reason, the teacher is not bound by the mechanics of the system any more than the student has been. The teacher will then evaluate the student on the basis of work done, attitudes manifested, evidences of growth and maturity, and whatever else may be included in the evaluation of responsible scholarship.

Accordingly, the serious student who takes cuts only when these intentions are fulfilled would do well to inform his teachers (my office assumes this responsibility relative to approved trips of college groups) of his reasons for the absence. This will assure him of the "honorable" consideration which the system is meant to provide.

Some have insisted upon a "looser" interpretation and application of the plan, but this is what vitiates its effectiveness and destroys its educational value.