Fossum v. Student Council  
Cite As: 1995 ASM SJ 1*

Decision of the ASM Student Judiciary  
in the matter of  

A complaint regarding the ASM Student Council attendance policy.

The complaint forwarded by Student Council Member Martin T Fossum and heard by Student Judiciary Members Coleman Cannon and Hal N Schwartz has been decided in the following manner:

The Student Judiciary addressed Martin Fossum’s complaint in a public hearing held March 29, 1995. Mr. Fossum spoke to his complaint that, because of increased academic obligations on the part of graduate and professional students, the Student Council should adjust the attendance policy for ASM Student Council meetings to allow such students greater flexibility. Elizabeth Barron, Vice-Chair of the Student Council also spoke briefly about the policy and Mr. Fossum’s attendance and excuse records.

It is the opinion of the Student Judiciary Committee that the attendance policy should not be amended for this purpose. Although it is obvious that graduate students possess a more rigorous academic burden in most cases than do undergraduate students, it seems unnecessary to provide them with greater opportunity for absence. The nature of graduate education is challenging and it is expected that students of such a caliber will rise to the task of doing more, sometimes with less time.

In addition, it seems apparent that the current policy as well as the newly proposed policy, in addition to Ms. Barron’s admitted leniency in excusing council members from attendance, all provide more than ample opportunity to attend to other obligations without jeopardizing one’s standing on the Student Council. Although Mr. Fossum presented compelling testimony as to why he is often unable to attend meetings (e.g., last minute scheduling of mandatory attendance at evening lectures, exam grading, etc.), it remains a fact that he never sought prior approval from the Vice-Chair for his absences and never discussed them with her after the fact. Ms. Barron made it quite clear that all written requests are examined fairly.

Finally, it must be understood that Mr. Fossum’s complaint addressed only the attendance policy itself with no reference made to his personal attendance record and the potential for removal as a result of his point accumulation. Should Mr. Fossum desire to address his possible removal separately, it would be necessary to file a further complaint outlining these concerns.

The decision was unanimously agreed upon.  
The decision was opposed by .  
No decision was made.

* Editor’s Note – This case predates the official numbering system. Pursuant to the Order Revising Citation Formats, 2004 SJ Ord. 3, it has been designated 1995 ASM SJ 1.