Responsibility for Single Section Courses; Section 5.2, chapter 3 of the University Manual

University of Rhode Island Faculty Senate

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TO: President Francis H. Horn

FROM: Chairman of the Faculty Senate

1. The Attached BILL, titled "Responsibility for Single Section Courses; Section 5.2, chapter 3 of the University Manual," is forwarded for your consideration.

2. The original and two copies for your use are included.

3. This BILL was adopted by vote of the Faculty Senate on May 22, 1967.

4. After considering this bill, will you please indicate your approval or disapproval. Return the original or forward it to the Board of Trustees, completing the appropriate endorsement below.

5. In accordance with Section 8, paragraph 2 of the Senate's By-Laws, this bill will become effective on [date], three weeks after Senate approval, unless: (1) specific dates for implementation are written into the bill; (2) you return it disapproved; (3) you forward it to the Board of Trustees for their approval; or (4) the University Faculty petitions for a referendum. If the bill is forwarded to the Board of Trustees, it will not become effective until approved by the Board.

   [Signature] /s/

Chairman of the Faculty Senate

ENDORSEMENT

TO: Chairman of the Faculty Senate

FROM: President of the University

1. Returned.

2. Approved X. Disapproved ________

3. (If approved) In my opinion, transmittal to the Board of Trustees is not necessary.

   [Signature] /s/

President

Form approved 11/65
ALTERNATE ENDORSEMENT 1.

TO: Chairman of the Board of Trustees.
FROM: The University President
1. Forwarded.
2. Approved.

__________________________  ________________________________/s/  
(date)                             President

ENDORSEMENT 2.

TO: Chairman of the Faculty Senate
FROM: Chairman of the Board of Trustees, via the University President.
1. Forwarded.

__________________________  ________________________________/s/  
(date)                             (Office)

ENDORSEMENT 3.

TO: Chairman of the Faculty Senate
FROM: The University President
1. Forwarded from the Chairman of the Board of Trustees.

__________________________  ________________________________/s/  
(date)                             President

Original received and forwarded to the Secretary of the Senate and Registrar for filing in the Archives of the University.

__________________________  ________________________________/s/  
(date)                             Chairman of the Faculty Senate
The Faculty Senate approves the recommendations that the first sentence of Section 5.21 courses, chapter 3 of the University Manual be changed to read as follows:

5.21 Courses

The content, textbook, over-all conduct, and method of presentation of single section courses are the responsibility of the instructors (remainder of paragraph to remain unchanged).

Comment: For supporting remarks see attached report.
Special Committee on Section 5.2], Chapter 3 of the University Manual

Report and Recommendation to the Faculty Senate

The specific charge to the committee was as follows: "to study and make recommendations regarding Section 5.2], Chapter 3, page 36 of the University Manual (this section deals with the responsibility for the conduct of academic courses).

Recommendation:

The committee recommends the following changes in Section 5.2], Chapter 3, page 36 of the University Manual. All changes are in the first sentence of this section. In the second line of sentence one, delete the word "jointly"; and in the third line delete the phrase, "and department chairmen." The emended sentence now reads as follows: "The content, textbook, over-all conduct, and method of presentation of single section courses are the responsibility of the instructors."

COMMENTS:

The original section requires that the department chairman shall participate in determining the selection of the content and the methodology of presentation of every single section course. This obviously places an excessive burden on the department chairman. Further, it could conceivably create a conflict concerning academic freedom in the classroom that could not easily be resolved. To avoid such unnecessary conflict, it is the recommendation of the committee that the above emendations be incorporated into section 5.2], It is a primary assumption of any university that the instructor is professionally competent to make the appropriate decision relative to the text, content, and method of presentation for his course.

Prof. D. Batroukha
Prof. R. Gerraughty
Prof. E. Rayack
Prof. M. Goldman, Chairman
Professor William R. Ferrante  
Wales Hall  
Campus  

Dear Bill:

I'm returning to you all the bills, #172-180, except for #179, which I need to give some further study to. This deals with the powers of the Athletic Council in connection with the appointment of coaches. I think some changes have been made from the original proposal, with which I had no quarrel, but I need to examine this more closely and perhaps discuss it with some of my colleagues.

I have, incidentally, signed bill #180, but I do so with some hesitation. Fundamentally, I am in agreement with the intent of the action, which is to underscore the responsibility of the instructor, in terms of a course which he presents; on the other hand, I'm not sure that even under the broadest possible interpretation of academic freedom is the instructor completely beyond the influence or control of the departmental chairman. I agree that "it is a primary assumption of any university that the instructor is professionally competent to make the appropriate decision relative to the text, content, and method of presentation for his course;" on the other hand, the history of higher education demonstrates that the assumption isn't always carried out. Some faculty members who are professionally competent when they obtain tenure and continue to be so for some time, lose a good deal of their competence later on and need to be brought back into line in terms of the nature of the course. What do we do, for example, when a course is expected to cover certain basic materials and the instructor, in spite of what the title and catalog description of the course says, goes ahead and does something quite different? Under this new principle, which I have approved, nothing really can be done.

On the other hand, I'm not sure how the thing might be resolved to protect the interests of the students and the University, as well as of the instructor. This is why I have signed it, and trust that no difficulties will arise under its implementation.

Cordially yours,

Francis H. Horn
President

cc: Professor John Kupa

Enclosures