

BACKGROUND

The Office of the Senate Council received a call in March 2006 from a former [specified department] student who stated he was following up on a Fall 2004 communication with this office regarding his experiences in [course identification removed]. There being no record here of his attempt, he sent me what he said was sent originally. Below is a synopsis of his concern.

ISSUE

At the time of the problem, the student was a senior with 100 credit hours in three [College name removed] areas. With eight weeks left in the semester, the instructor for [course identification removed] left due to illness. The original syllabus required homework and weekly quizzes with the allowance that one quiz grade could be dropped. There were no tests and no final exam; the syllabus also contained a percentage structure for grading. Two different instructors each agreed to teach half of the remaining classes.

The student stated that the first new instructor handed out a syllabus requiring a test and a final exam. The quizzes stopped and there was no allowance to drop one quiz grade. The homework continued as before. The student requested the "drop grade" for the quizzes be restored, to which the new instructor agreed.

In bringing his concerns to the Ombud, the student was told the changes to the syllabus could not be addressed due to the special circumstances. The Ombud did require the new instructors to adhere to the original instructor's percentage grade structure. An extension of the add/drop date was offered for students in this class. The student opted to remain in the course for a variety of reasons.

The student details a variety of "new instructor" pedagogical issues (few examples offered, incomplete examples, inconsistency in the use of traditional [academic field] symbols and poor handwriting) and states, "...it becomes obvious...that the new instructor is purposely making learning very difficult." The student states he asked the instructor to write more clearly, but the instructor did not oblige.

The second new instructor, according to the student, "...is even worse than the first....For some reason he is refusing to teach and present the material in a way that can be comprehended." Upon arrival of the second new instructor, it was announced that the test during finals week was not a final because the test would be taken in only one hour. The student goes on to say that in conversation with other students, he discovers that "no one is learning anything and everyone is having great difficulty with the material in the class." The student states he was treated in an unprofessional manner on a previous occasion when he went to see the second instructor in his office, so the student decided "not to waste...time in

attempting to get help.” The student looked to the TA for assistance but says the TA was unable to work the problems and was not helpful.

At the end of the class, the student opted not to appeal his final grade of C out of a fear of retribution from the second instructor, who was a high-ranking individual in [College name removed]. The Assistant Dean stated nothing could be done about the replacement instructors due to the circumstances and a difficulty in finding someone to take over [course identification removed].

ACTION

The student’s purpose in communication with us is to propose a new rule to address the situation he was in. He offers two possible rules, both very similar:

- If a new instructor takes over a class, under no circumstances is the syllabus and general class format to be changes; or
- If a new instructor takes over a class they must, to the best of their ability, continue with the original general format and syllabus of the class.