

Academic Standards Committee & Teaching and Learning Committee
Joint Statement on the Extension of Good Teaching Practices
November 30, 2022

The above committees were charged with making joint recommendations to Academic Senate by the November 30 meeting regarding the Teaching Policy Proposal created by the Office of Academic Affairs. Department senators were asked to submit feedback from their respective areas to both committee chairs by October 21; we received ample feedback from representative departments. We also received feedback from student government. From that collective faculty input, the committees assessed and documented the areas of concern where faculty were collectively in alignment and noted novel observations or concerns.

Consensus Indicated (Overall):

- The proposal needed alignment with the CBA; furthermore, it is beyond the scope of Senate to control teaching rights and responsibilities (CBA Article 27).
 - Language should not infringe upon the CBA (such as: will/must/required).
 - There are already policies and procedures in place regarding teaching rights and responsibilities (CBA Article 27), and dealing with negligent faculty (Corrective Action).
- Infringement on academic freedom is at issue.
 - Directive language stifles innovation and ignores best practices of diverse disciplines and courses driven by the distinctive and intrinsic nature of (the) subject(s). A one-size-fits-all approach to deadlines, course, and grading schemes infringes on and harms learning objectives and consequently student success and well-being.
 - Mandating an amount or percentage of a grade or assignment restricts best practices of specific disciplines and courses. Overwhelmingly, faculty response clearly demonstrated the need for choice and diversity in grade distribution (e.g., attendance/participation, final grades, papers) to meet the needs of the discipline and help students achieve the highest quality of student success in their courses.
 - Except for legal dates such as last day to withdraw from courses, mandating timing of grades or information restricts best practices of specific disciplines and courses. Overwhelmingly, faculty response clearly demonstrated the need for diversity in deadlines to achieve the highest quality of student success.
 - Requiring syllabi be posted 72 hours prior to class start infringes on teaching best practices and academic freedom. For instance, specific deadlines cannot be provided based on considerations such as course subject matter (e.g., current events-driven course work) or success of student learning (e.g., where class content or student characteristics may collectively require more time to learn material). Also, some faculty co-construct syllabi with students while other faculty receive very late class assignments. In addition, syllabi are already required to be submitted to Department Chairs to confirm alignment with College and YSU agreed-upon content. Final syllabi are completed in time for the semester start date.
- Best practices associated with faculty and student resources such as technology and equipment should not be driven by decisions made by IT or contracts with external agencies (i.e., Barnes & Noble). Not including faculty in these decisions disregards their expertise to make the best

decisions for learning and long-term student success. In recent cases it also limits student autonomy, which in the long term is harmful to post graduation success.

Questions of Concern:

- Comments from members of Administration and Student Government suggest that Extension of Good Teaching Practices may be a reaction to anecdotal evidence. Both quantitative and qualitative data regarding student complaints and concerns is required to accurately identify the nature of issues presented and undertake an accurate response to those data.
- The agents who brought this proposal forward need to address the following:
 - What will this be used for?
 - How and Who/or what joint body will enforce the content in an Extension of Good Teaching Practices?

Potential Solutions:

- Minimum expectations about teaching can be part of contract negotiation or MOUs and come from the faculty who are content and teaching experts in their subjects and who are informed by their direct classroom experience and the dynamic nature of student learning for YSU enrolled students.
- Codify the OEA Agreement as Academic Affairs Policy for Best Practices in Teaching (would apply to all teachers including Part Time, TA, VA, etc.)
- Aspects of the proposal that were largely amenable and considered best practices could be retained in a future iteration of the “Principles of Good Practice in Teaching” document (created by the Teaching and Learning Committee, supported by Academic Senate, and maintained by the Institute for Teaching and Learning).
 - Posting syllabi and grades on an LMS is a reasonable expectation.
 - Key elements of the Common Syllabus should be included in all syllabi, including course description, assignments, and point distribution. Syllabi by their nature can be tentative and allow flexibility for unforeseen opportunities to help students learn, but changes in syllabi should not harm students.
 - Students should receive regular and prompt feedback on their progress. The mechanisms for and details of this should be relegated to colleges and/or departments.
 - Responding to students outside of class should be timely (within reason) and policies for extra-classroom communication should be transparent to students.
- Colleges should consider a mechanism which may “in part” support best teaching practices while providing academic freedom and provide structure and guidelines.
 - E.g., establishment of College-level consultation through a Board that includes faculty and student representation to outline guiding principles which align with best teaching practices associated with the disciplines within the college.