

The Council on Teaching (COT) proposes to make changes to the University Operations Manual, Part III., Chapter 15.2, as described below. These proposals grew out of discussions on the part of COT about expectations for faculty office hours and the role and usage of electronics communications in student-faculty interactions. In addition, the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (CLAS) has forwarded some suggested changes to COT that would modernize Chapter 15.2 and remove an anachronism.

The proposed changes are, as follows:

- In order to clarify the requirements for faculty to hold official office hours, while accommodating those faculty in non-traditional teaching roles, COT proposes to add the following section:

“15.2.h. Faculty are expected to hold regularly scheduled office hours and otherwise be reasonably available for appointments with students. Faculty teaching on-line courses or those not located on campus, may use electronic communications to facilitate student contact.”

- As many courses now have the syllabus available in electronic format (that is, accessible on line), either exclusively or as an alternative to the traditional paper copy, COT proposes the following change to 15.2.j. (Note: this section, which describes the requirements for a course syllabus and its contents, would now be section 15.2.k. under the COT proposal):

“In order that students can make knowledgeable choices about whether to take a particular course, it is the faculty member's responsibility to provide, on the first day of class, a course syllabus, in either electronic or paper format, containing the following information:”

- To acknowledge the increased use of electronic communications, specifically E-mail, COT proposes to define faculty/instructor contact information in terms of an official University E-mail address and a telephone number. A qualifier would be added to recognize that some teaching assistants do not have access to a telephone. The proposed changes to 15.2.j.(1) are:

“(1) the instructor's name, office, office hours, and contact information (a valid uiowa.edu E-mail address and a telephone number, if available (if the instructor is a teaching assistant, the syllabus should also include the course supervisor's name, office, office hours, and contact information);”

- As the University no longer offers a printed version of the General Catalog and course information is now available on line, COT proposes the following change to 15.2j.(10);

“(10) any changes in information about the course from that which appears in official University notices, such as the General Catalog or ISIS.”

- Electronic communications, particularly E-mail, have become increasingly important in facilitating instruction and, in many cases, have replaced traditional faculty-student contacts, such as office hours. However, potential problems can arise based on differing expectations about the method and frequency of communications that will be employed by a faculty member in a particular course. In addition, the potential anonymity of electronic communications raises issues of confidentiality and security (such as the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)). In recognition of these issues, COT proposes to add the following section to 15.2.j.:

“(11) Faculty should consider discussing what forms of electronic communications, if any, will be employed for student communications and the expectations for typical response times. Students may be reminded that, according to University policy, they are responsible for all official correspondence sent to their standard University of Iowa E-mail address (@uiowa.edu). Privacy considerations (such as federal law) may apply when using an address other than the standard University E-mail address. The University provides guidance for acceptable etiquette when utilizing electronic communication technologies.”

- COT also notes a misspelling in the Operations Manual such that item (5) of 15.2.j. should read:

“(5) expectations for attendance, assignments, and examinations;”

The following pages contain an amended version of the relevant section of the Operations Manual, with the proposed changes highlighted.

Faculty members may also be interested in the following links:

- The official University policy on E-mail:
<http://www.uiowa.edu/~vpss/policies/iv/c.shtml#main>
- Top ten tips from the E-communications review:
<http://www.uiowa.edu/ecommunications/topten/index.shtml>

PART III. HUMAN RESOURCES DIVISION II STANDARDS AND ETHICS

CHAPTER 15: PROFESSIONAL ETHICS AND ACADEMIC RESPONSIBILITY

(President 5/73; Board of Regents amendment 1/19/94)

15.1 General

15.2 Responsibilities to Students

15.3 Responsibilities to Scholarship

15.4 Responsibilities to Colleagues

15.5 Responsibilities to the Institution

15.6 Responsibilities to the Community

15.1 GENERAL.

The basic functions of the University are the advancement and dissemination of knowledge, the development of critical intelligence, and the education of citizens and professional workers for the society of which the University is a part.

The indispensable condition for the successful discharge of these functions is an atmosphere of intellectual freedom. Unless he or she is free to pursue the quest for knowledge and understanding, wherever it may lead, and to report and discuss the findings, whatever they may be, the University faculty member cannot properly perform his or her work. As a participant in an enterprise that depends upon freedom for its health and integrity, the faculty member has a special interest in promoting conditions of free inquiry and furthering public understanding of academic freedom.

Freedom entails responsibilities. It is incumbent upon the faculty member to accept the responsibilities which are concomitant with the freedom he or she needs. Those responsibilities are: 1) to students, 2) to scholarship, 3) to colleagues, 4) to the University, and 5) to the larger community which the University serves. To make these responsibilities operational, it is necessary that ethical and professional standards be adopted to guide faculty members in their conduct and that effective mechanisms be established to monitor and enforce compliance with these standards.

15.2 RESPONSIBILITIES TO STUDENTS.

(Board of Regents amendment 1/19/94; Faculty Senate 12/95)

As a teacher, the faculty member has the responsibility for creating in his or her classroom or laboratory a climate that encourages the student's endeavors to learn. The faculty member should exemplify high scholarly standards and respect and foster the student's right to choose and pursue his or her own educational goals.

- a. The faculty member must make clear the objectives of the course or program, establish requirements, set standards of achievement, and evaluate the student's performance.
- b. The faculty member has the responsibility to meet classes as scheduled and, when circumstances prevent this, to arrange equivalent alternate instruction.
- c. The faculty member has the responsibility to teach courses in a manner that is consistent with the course description and credit published in the catalogue and with the announced objectives of the course. He or she must not intentionally interject into classes material or personal views that have no pedagogical relationship to the subject matter of the course.
- d. In order to facilitate student learning, faculty members should present the appropriate context for course content. While challenge is essential to good teaching, challenge is

ordinarily most effective when students are adequately prepared to deal with course materials. On controversial issues within the scope of the course a reasonable range of opinion should be presented. When the faculty member presents his or her own views on such issues, they should always be identified as such. Wherever values, judgments, or speculative opinions constitute part of the subject matter, they should be identified as such and should not be offered as fact.

- e. The faculty member owes to the student and the University a fair and impartial evaluation of the student's work. Such evaluation should be consistent with recognized standards and must not be influenced by irrelevancies such as religion, race, sex, or political views, or be based on the student's agreement with the teacher's opinion pertaining to matters of controversy within the discipline.
- f. Every student is entitled to the same intellectual freedom which the faculty member enjoys. The faculty member must respect that freedom. Restraints must not be imposed upon the student's search for or consideration of diverse or contrary opinion. More positively, the faculty member has an obligation to protect the student's freedom to learn, especially when that freedom is threatened by repressive or disruptive action. The classroom must remain a place where free and open discussion of all content and issues relevant to a course can take place. While students remain responsible for learning class material and completion of course requirements, faculty should respect reasonable decisions by students, based on their exercise of their own intellectual freedom, not to attend part or all of a particular class session.
- g. The faculty member has obligations as an intellectual guide and counselor to students. He or she has a responsibility to be available to students for private conferences. In advising students, every reasonable effort should be made to see that information given to them is accurate. The progress of students in achieving their academic goals should not be thwarted or retarded unreasonably because a faculty member has neglected his or her obligation as advisor and counselor.
- h. *Faculty/instructors are expected to hold regularly scheduled office hours and otherwise be reasonably available for appointments with students. Faculty teaching online courses or those not located on campus, may use electronic communications to facilitate student contact.*
- i. The faculty member should conduct himself or herself at all times so as to demonstrate respect for the student. He or she should always respect the confidence deriving from the faculty-student relationship.
- j. The faculty member must avoid exploitation of students for personal advantage. For example, in writings and oral presentations, due acknowledgment of their contributions to the work should be made.
- k. In order that students can make knowledgeable choices about whether to take a particular course, it is the faculty member's responsibility to provide, on the first day of class, a course syllabus, *in either electronic or paper format*, containing the following information:
 - (1) the instructor's name, office, office hours, and *contact information (a valid uiowa.edu E-mail address and a telephone number, if available)* (if the instructor is a teaching assistant, the syllabus should also include the course supervisor's name, office, office hours, and *contact information*);
 - (2) goals and objectives of the course;

- (3) course content and schedule of topics;
 - (4) list of readings and/or other anticipated course materials;
 - (5) expectations for attendance, assignments, and examinations;
 - (6) dates and times of any examinations scheduled outside of class time;
 - (7) grading procedures including whether plus/minus grading will be used;
 - (8) statement on the availability of accommodations for students with disabilities;
 - (9) resources for obtaining additional help, such as tutors or teaching assistants; and
 - (10) any changes in information about the course from that which appears in *official University notices, such as the General Catalog or ISIS*.
- l. Faculty should consider discussing what forms of electronic communications, if any, will be employed for student communications and the expectations for typical response times. Students may be reminded that, according to University policy, they are responsible for all official correspondence sent to their standard University of Iowa E-mail address (@uiowa.edu). Privacy considerations may apply when using addresses other than the standard University E-mail address. The University provides guidance for acceptable etiquette when utilizing electronic communication technologies.*
 - m. At the beginning of each course students should be informed of departmental and collegiate complaint procedures and services of the Office of the University Ombudsperson. Complaints should be initiated at the faculty or departmental level. If a complaint cannot be resolved at the departmental and/or collegiate level, students may file a formal complaint utilizing the procedure specified in II-29.7.*