

Should faculty dictate students' rights?

A task force of faculty members is attempting to reconstruct the current procedure used when a student files a complaint against a faculty member. According to some members, the

Problems outside the purview of student's rights should be discussed with your instructor. Examples of such problems could include, but are not limited to: use of



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Editor-in-Chief

From the Editor's desk...

purpose of the change is to rewrite the *Incident Resolution* form to revise the complaint process when the content is of a controversial topic—when ideological or religious conflicts occur, or when there is an objection to the use of offensive language by an instructor. When the idea of reconstructing this procedure was first announced, the idea was to set up a separate form to better filter student complaints—in simpler words, to determine which complaints were valid. The proposed procedure is an informal one with no option to formally appeal actions taken as a result of the complaint.

Last week, Jackie Flowers, social science instructor and "point woman" of the group, released what she calls a rough draft of the new process.

Current student rights include the freedom of expression in the classroom and the protection against improper academic evaluation.

An added paragraph to the existing form reads as follows:

topics."—What does this mean?

Essentially, this means that a student only has the right to "discuss" any objections with the instructor, on his own or with the department chair. Students would have the right to file a complaint only if the instructor directly attacked him or if he felt like his grade was inaccurate.

This also means that an instructor can essentially say anything in class and face no repercussions unless he or she directly attacks a student's freedom of expression.

This answers the nation-wide debate of academic freedom for this campus in one fell swoop.

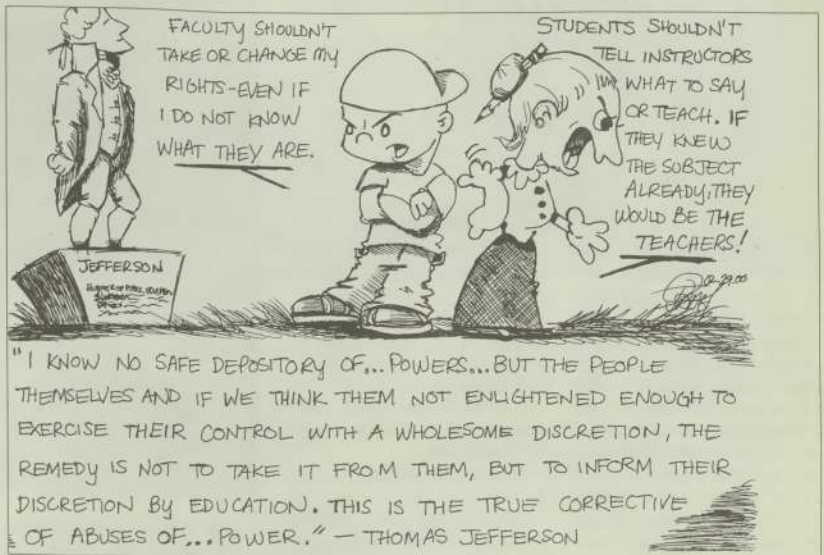
Instructors would be given free reign and the only thing that a student could do would be to discuss a problem with the instructor.

Is this the direction? Is this the purpose?

While the recent controversy surrounding Dr. Donald Epstein's Judaic Studies class has spawned this

offensive language; ideological and/or religious conflicts; controversial topics.

"Controversial



change, the direction of this task force seems to be one of misdirection.

In an open meeting between task force members, invited faculty members and students on Monday night, much of the discussion reflected not so much a feeling of advocating for students' rights as it did of faculty members' rights.

If, indeed, the purpose is to create a better system, I applaud their efforts. If, however, the purpose is anything but to improve the process, then what the hell do these people think they're doing?

Why are faculty members deciding what faculty can and cannot say and what students can and cannot complain about?

Faculty members' rights seemed to be a key part of this debate early this week. If anything, the "Epstein Controversy" has instilled feelings of fear in the minds of some staff members.

It's appalling that this task force feels that it has the right to determine students' rights.

Yesterday, the issue was brought up during President's Council—a meeting of association presidents,

faculty members and college administrators.

College President John Keyser attempted to look at things from the perspective of a student.

"I almost get the impression," noted Keyser, "that we need to take student rights away to protect faculty rights."

ASG President James Gould is the only official student representative on President's Council and the only student present at the meeting yesterday other than Print reporters.

How much of a voice do students have on students' rights?

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