



Executive Summary

A.R. 2: In Support of the Creation of a Faculty Council Task Force to Tackle Difficult Dialogues in Class

In Fall of 2018, a joint resolution between Senate and Student Government was passed calling for course content disclosures in regards to sexual assault on syllabi across campus. Since then the authors of the original resolution have been attempting to implement this through Faculty Council. After much feedback and discussions, we needed to explore different methods of implementation. The Humanities Institute currently offers courses to tackle "Difficult Dialogues" on sensitive content topics, however these courses tend to only be offered as "First-Year Signature Courses." Since sensitive contents often play an important part in course material, best practices on how to discuss these issues need to be gathered and presented to faculty across the University. This legislation seeks to work with Faculty Council on creating a task force of students and faculty to gather best practices on presenting sensitive content and publishing the work in a guidebook.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Why is this necessary?

Following months of conversation with the Chair of Faculty Council and the Chair of Education Policy committee, we were asked to refocus our original path of implementation. This task force was something we had all agreed upon, but we were asked to present new legislation to SG to formalize this new path.

2. Who will serve on this proposed task force?

The exact composition of the task force will be left up to Faculty Council, however students and faculty will both be on this task force. Student input will be utilized in the data gathering.

A.R. 2

In Support of the Creation of a Faculty Council Task Force to Tackle Difficult Dialogues in Class

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Sponsors: SPEAKER JAKOB LUCAS (*Student Government Assembly*)

WHEREAS, Student Government serves as the official voice of students at the University of Texas at Austin; and,

WHEREAS, In the Fall of 2018, Student Government and Senate of College Councils unanimously passed JR 1, A Resolution in Support of Course Content Disclosures in Regards to Sexual Assault on Campus Syllabi¹; and,

WHEREAS, Since then, the authors of this resolution have been working with Faculty Council to implement this resolution; and,

WHEREAS, After much consultation with the Chair of Faculty Council and the Chair of the Education Policy Committee, we needed to discuss alternative methods of implementation; and,

WHEREAS, The Humanities Institute currently offers Difficult Dialogues seminars for undergraduates on "teaching students the skills they need to participate in constructive dialogue about controversial and potential divisive issues"²; and,

WHEREAS, These seminars are mostly part of the "First-Year Signature Course" program for incoming students, thus not available to the full university; and,

¹https://docs.google.com/document/d/1SrMEHgXPBKQUuLJPFJWKZSs1cTVuNfjWeilH_3pWj3s/edit?usp=sharing

²<https://liberalarts.utexas.edu/humanitiesinstitute/courses/About.php>

WHEREAS, Several UT courses incorporate sensitive content as a part of the course curriculum; and,

WHEREAS, Sensitive content is sometimes relevant to course materials and therefore should not be censored, but best practices on the discussion of these materials is unknown amongst some faculty members; and,

WHEREAS, In Fall 2018, a guidebook³ named "Texas Well-Being; Promoting Well-being in UT Learning Environments" was created through consultation with the CMHC and the Faculty Innovation Center to "help faculty make small shifts in teaching that could make a major different in students' mental health and well-being;" and,

WHEREAS, This guidebook provided a menu of best practices to tailor teaching strategies based on research done at the University; and,

WHEREAS, One page of this guidebook is dedicated to "Trauma Informed Pedagogy" however, more research on best practices is needed to fully discern how to tackle difficult dialogues across the University in classroom settings; therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED, Student Government recommends working with Faculty Council on the creation of this task force to gather data on best practices on discussing difficult topics in class; therefore,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, The exact composition of this task force will be set by Faculty Council, but will have both student and faculty representation; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, This task force will create a guidebook on these best practices akin to the "Texas Well-Being" guidebook⁴ and move forward with any other methods they seem fit; therefore,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That a copy of this resolution be sent to the Daily Texan, President Gregory Fennes, *President of the University of Texas at Austin*, Dr. Maurie McInnis, *Executive Vice President and Provost*, Dr. Soncia Reagins-Lilly, *Vice President for Student Affairs and Dean of Students*, Chad Fulton, *Faculty Innovation Center*, Dr. Charlotte Canning, *Chair of Faculty Council* and Dr. Christine Julien, *Chair of Education Policy Committee*.

³ <http://users.ece.utexas.edu/~bevans/temp/WBLEGuidebookDigital.pdf>

⁴ <http://users.ece.utexas.edu/~bevans/temp/WBLEGuidebookDigital.pdf>