

**David Eckhardt, Syllabus Best Practices Group, Resolutions**  
**Faculty Senate**  
**Meeting 9**  
**April 4, 2017**

Professor Eckhardt presented two draft resolutions to the Senate for a vote (full text follows). Both resolutions passed with one abstention.

First resolution

*WHEREAS, at leading research universities the faculty, in their role as subject-matter experts, have primary responsibility for determining what will be taught and the details of the teaching process; and*

*WHEREAS, at leading research universities the academic department has historically defined and overseen the curriculum of each academic discipline; and*

*WHEREAS, on August 22, 2016, Provost Farnam Jahanian strongly encouraged faculty to include in their syllabi a statement on student wellness developed by the Task Force on the CMU Experience; and*

*WHEREAS, the Committee on Academic Affairs of the Undergraduate Student Senate, on December 6, 2016, issued a “Course Information White Paper” reporting a widespread absence of readily accessible information about course content and policies; and*

*WHEREAS, timely access to detailed course information may “reduce unnecessary stress in the academic environment,” which is among the goals of CMU’s Strategic Plan 2025; and*

*WHEREAS ensuring timely access to detailed course information is part of CMU's responsibility to provide an inclusive learning environment, including the ability of students to plan how to complete assigned coursework;*

*THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Faculty Senate calls on every instructor to issue a syllabus document for each course offering, no later than the day the course first meets or formally begins, and to consider for inclusion each of the following items:*

- *learning objectives;*
- *statement of course motivation/scope/purpose, and/or relevance of course material;*
- *prior knowledge assumed/required;*
- *list of key learning resources, e.g., textbooks;*
- *summary of course activities (e.g., lecture/recitation/lab/project/presentation);*
- *expected semester schedule;*
- *description of assessment structure (e.g., exams/projects/essays, and grade assignment approach);*
- *contact mechanisms for members of the course staff;*

- *attendance policy;*
- *course-specific academic integrity policies, including collaboration and plagiarism;*
- *policy on late work and extenuating circumstances, such as illness;*
- *reference to the University's policy on accommodations; and*
- *statement encouraging student wellness;*

*AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Faculty Senate calls on instructors to provide students with timely notice of any necessary deviations from previously published syllabi;*

*AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Faculty Senate calls on each department head to establish processes or infrastructure as necessary to encourage the widespread availability of course syllabi for that department.*

#### Second resolution

*WHEREAS, the Committee on Academic Affairs of the Undergraduate Student Senate, on December 6, 2016, issued a “Course Information White Paper” reporting a widespread absence of readily accessible information about course content and policies;*

*THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Faculty Senate thanks the Committee on Academic Affairs of the Undergraduate Student Senate, viz., Sushain K. Cherivirala, Christina Ou, Anubhav Jaiswal, Benjamin Johnson-Staub, Devin Gund, Sasha Volodin, and Kelly Kim, for their extensive and timely efforts.*