Recommendation for Improved Student-Faculty Communication

Supported by the Student Senate and the Faculty Senate Student Affairs Committee

Rationale:
The University of Nebraska at Kearney is dedicated to being the premier undergraduate residential campus in the state of Nebraska. In order to achieve this goal, the Student Senate and Faculty Senate Student Affairs Committee have been considering ways to improve student-faculty communication and make better use of our available technological resources. After discussing the issues with students and faculty and surveying students\(^1\), we support the following recommendations, which we ask to be supported by the Faculty Senate and be sent to the Vice Chancellor of Academic and Student Affairs to be disseminated to the colleges, departments, and faculty.

Recommendations:

Timely Grading Feedback
The results from the Student Senate Blackboard Survey Report based on a survey of approximately 1,100 students distributed across campus indicated that, among other uses, students would like feedback on grades posted on Blackboard. After discussing the results with students and faculty, it became clear that students had a strong desire for timely feedback on grades. Providing students with a means to check and maintain up-to-date grading information will help them take responsibility for their own educational experience and achievement. Students keeping track of their grades will be able to confirm that assignment, quiz, and test scores are accurate, and that they are on track to succeed in their courses.

While Blackboard is one, very convenient means of providing feedback and the most easily accessible to students, students have indicated that other means of providing feedback on grades would be equally appropriate. We recommend the following:

- Faculty provide regular feedback to students on their grades and progress on approximately a quarterly basis or every 4 weeks in a 16 week semester.
- Faculty discuss with students at the start of the term how feedback on grades and progress will be given, so that students know to check Blackboard, meet with instructors, or use some other means of tracking their progress. Such information could be posted on Blackboard or included in the syllabus as well.

General Blackboard Use
Blackboard has become a primary way students access information about their courses. The aforementioned survey indicated that the majority of students check Blackboard six to seven times a week. Along with this pervasive use, it is important to note that Blackboard is purchased through Fund A student fees, so students are required to pay for access to Blackboard. The Student Senate Blackboard Survey Report as well as discussions with students and faculty indicate that students desire general access to course information by posting it on Blackboard.

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\(^1\) The Blackboard Survey Report was presented to the Faculty Senate and the Student Affairs Committee.
Students and faculty also recognize that instructors have the right to determine the best means of conveying information to their students and have the freedom to decide whether or not to use any technological resources. Faculty may also make information or resources available to students in class that they do not wish to share on Blackboard. Since Blackboard use is becoming more common across the campus, both students and faculty may benefit from a recommendation for a common set to practices. We recommend the following:

- Course syllabi and schedules should be made available on Blackboard.
- Assignment requirements should be made available on Blackboard.
- Handouts, readings, or other materials instructors are willing to share electronically should be made available on Blackboard.

On behalf of the student population, we appreciate the UNK faculty’s continued support and dedication to students’ academic accomplishments.

These recommendations were supported by a resolution of the Student Senate March 12, 2013.

These recommendations were endorsed by the Faculty Senate Student Affairs Committee with a virtual vote after being discussed in committee on March 12, 2013.
March 12, 2013

SENATE RESOLUTION 2013-05
Sponsored by Senator Zoellner and Senator Chacon

On behalf of President Deter and Vice-President Drudik

WHEREAS, the University of Nebraska at Kearney is dedicated to being the premier undergraduate residential campus in the state of Nebraska; and

WHEREAS, it is also a goal of the Associated Students of the University of Nebraska at Kearney and Senate Student Affairs Council to continually help improve students’ educational experience; and

WHEREAS, the Student Senate Blackboard Report indicated students would appreciate feedback on grades posted via Blackboard; and

WHEREAS students fees, cover a significant portion of the required cost; and

WHEREAS, Blackboard is one of many methods of providing accessible feedback to students and students have indicated any means of providing grading feedback would be equally appreciated; and

WHEREAS, the recommendation suggests, professors provide quarterly grade checks to keep students updated and provide contact information for questions;

THEREFORE, BE IT HIGHLY RESOLVED, members of Student Senate support the Executive Cabinet and Senate Student Affairs Committees’ Recommendation for Improved Student-Faculty Communication.