MEMO  Draft  
May, 2010  

RE: Proposed policy regarding use of students for teaching functions  

At the April 8th Curriculum Council meeting we had a lengthy discussion of the April 8th draft of the proposed policy regarding use of students for teaching functions. From the information we have been provided we saw no evidence that any faculty member, student or administrator knowingly acted in an unethical or inappropriate way. We believe the concern raised by Kent Kuo regarding students acting as the There are two main issues that need to be addressed:  
• Access to Banner  
• Appropriate roles for students in the teaching process  

Each of these issues have major implications for how we do our work and employment for our students.  

**Banner Access:**  
We believe the entire system of permissions and controls related to Banner access need to be reviewed and revised as appropriate. It is important that we meet both the letter and the spirit of FERPA while not adversely affecting the cost and quality of the education we provide. Issues of concern include but are not limited to:  
• What level of access to Banner information is appropriate for those teaching a class? Should someone have access to a student’s entire transcript simply because that student is in their class? Is there a legitimate need to know what other classes a student has taken and their grades in those classes or is automatically providing that information to all who teach a class inappropriate and possibly a violation of FERPA.  
• Those whose primary role is student work both as teaching assistants and in advising and departmental offices across campus. Severe restrictions on the kind of tasks students can perform due to lack of any access to Banner could have major impacts on both costs of providing, and thus the quality, of education and employment opportunities for students. In addition, many full time employees of the university take classes thus making them students, some in pursuit of a degree some simply to continue their life long learning. We even encourage this practice by providing a tuition reduction for staff.  

**Recommendation:** Internal control is important. Because the range of backgrounds needed to do a comprehensive review of the Banner access policies and practices is beyond that of any current committee, a task force is needed to perform this review. The group charged with this task should include teaching faculty, advisors, office managers, Banner support personnel, someone
with an ethics background, someone with broad computer science background, and someone with a working knowledge of FERPA.

**Roles for students in the teaching process:**
While there has been an increase in the number of sections that list an undergraduate as a faculty member the vast majority of these show zero responsibility. This does not represent bad practice on the part of the faculty or departments in assigning unsupervised teaching roles to undergraduates but that the method provided for giving TAs access to Blackboard to enter grades was to code them as instructors with zero responsibility. Now that another more appropriate method has been provided that issue should self correct.

From the data it is unclear whether more students are acting as graders for classes or whether the increase is simply due to more faculty members using blackboard to post grades for students and thus more faculty requesting that their TA have access to enter grades. There are no sections where an undergraduate is listed as having 100% responsibility for a graded class. In addition, simply because a student did the data entry for the final grade it does not mean that the student actually determined the grade.

Lack of computer skills is decreasing as faculty members retire and are replaced by younger people who grew up using computers. However, there are still faculty members who may prefer to ask their assistant to do the technical computer aspects of the grading process. Even if the faculty member has the skills, in large classes the faculty member may prefer to have their assistant (office workers or TAs) do the clerical process of actually entering grades. This raises the question of whether it is appropriate in these times where we are being asked to do more with less that we require labor being paid around $50 per hour to do a task that can easily be done by labor being paid around $10 per hour. Even though we tend to think of faculty time as being in unlimited supply at a fixed cost, there is a steep opportunity cost for faculty time. We should separate the issue of whether it is appropriate for TAs to determine grades and whether it is appropriate for TAs or office personnel to enter grades under the supervision of the primary faculty member for a class. Technical fixes are possible. We could require that grades entered by assistants be reviewed by the faculty member and allow a place in the file to show that the grade has been reviewed before those grades are posted.

Following are the recommendations of the Curriculum Council for revision of the policies regarding instructor of record.

**Appropriate Roles for Students in the Teaching Process**

**Guiding Principles**

1. A clear record must be maintained to show that final class grades were determined by the instructor of record for a class.
2. The requirements of FERPA must be followed. Confidentiality of student records must be maintained.
3. Those who teach classes must be qualified to do so.
4. Processes and requirements should be designed to be as efficient as possible while still maintaining appropriate controls.
5. Opportunity costs exist for faculty time.
6. Ph.D. candidates are not peers to master’s candidates.
7. Experiential learning by teaching is important for Ph.D. candidates.

Policy

Instructor of Record:

The “Instructor of Record” will be designated for all courses at Oregon State University by the primary instructor indicator flag assigned to that course. The “Instructor of Record” for a course will have the following requirements and responsibilities with respect to the recording of grades for that course:

- The “Instructor of Record” will be responsible for the final determination, entry, and/or changing of all final grades associated with their course(s).
- The “Instructor of Record” may not be a peer to other students taking that course (e.g., undergraduate to undergraduate, graduate to graduate), except in cases where: 1) the instructor of record is teaching a lower level course that another peer happens to take (i.e., graduate TA acting as an instructor of record for an undergraduate course that happens to have a graduate student taking that course), or 2) an instructor of record is also simultaneously acting as a student pursuing either an undergraduate degree or graduate degree in another area that may be taught by another graduate TA, or 3) PhD candidates nearing the end of their programs may be qualified to teach masters level classes. All cases of graduate students teaching graduate classes must be formally approved by the Dean of the College.
- The “Instructor of Record” may not be an undergraduate student with responsibility for either credit bearing or non-credit bearing portions of a course (lectures, recitations, 0 credit laboratories, discussions, etc.) unless that student already has a bachelor’s degree (i.e. someone getting a second degree in another field).
- The “Instructor of Record” may not be an administrative staff member if they have no role in actually teaching the course (beginning in the Fall 2010). Emergency situations for an administrative staff to post grades for an individual course can be approved by a unit head each term. Those requests must be made to and approved by the Registrar.
- The “Instructor of Record” may not knowingly provide to others their user account identification/passwords as per the Acceptable Use of University Computing Resources Policy - (http://oregonstate.edu/helpdocs/index.php?q=onid/aup).
Graduate Teaching Assistants:

- Must complete the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act Online Tutorial following the process established by the Office of the Registrar.
- Must sign a FERPA Privacy & Confidentiality statement with the Office of the Registrar to be designated as a graduate teaching assistant recognized as a school official.
- Upon a graduate student’s completion of the Online FERPA tutorial and signing of the FERPA Privacy and Confidentiality statement with the Office of the Registrar, the graduate teaching assistant can be an “Instructor of Record” for an undergraduate course. Formal approval by the Dean of the College is required for any graduate student acting as an instructor of record for a graduate class.

Or, upon completion of the Online FERPA tutorial and signing of the FERPA Privacy and Confidentiality statement with the Office of the Registrar, the “Instructor of Record” can establish that graduate student as a teaching assistant using a course management system (i.e., Blackboard). Appropriate roles allowed to such graduate teaching assistants are as a “tutor”, “course builder”, and/or graduate teaching assistant with grading privileges for assignments and exams.

Undergraduate Teaching Assistants:

- Must complete the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act Online Tutorial following the process established by the Office of the Registrar.
- Must sign a FERPA Privacy & Confidentiality statement with the Office of the Registrar to be designated as an undergraduate teaching assistant recognized as a school official.
- Upon an undergraduate student’s completion of the Online FERPA tutorial and signing of the FERPA Privacy and Confidentiality statement with the Office of the Registrar, the “Instructor of Record” can establish that undergraduate student as a teaching assistant using a course management system (i.e., Blackboard). Appropriate roles allowed to such undergraduate teaching assistants are as a “tutor”, “course builder”, and/or undergraduate teaching assistant with grading privileges for assignments and exams.
- Undergraduate Teaching Assistants may not be an “Instructor of Record” or designated as a faculty member assigned to a course, and may not as a teaching assistant determine, enter, and/or change the final grade for other students.

Colleges or departments are free to adopt more restrictive policies.