

April 5, 2013

Barbara D'Ambrosia
Chair, Committee on Academic Policy
John Carroll University

Dear Barbara,

I'm writing to you on behalf of the Executive Committee of John Carroll's chapter of the American Association of University Professors. We have discussed the proposed changes to the university's core curriculum, and have unanimously agreed that several provisions would or could violate AAUP principles of shared governance and academic freedom, and for these reasons ask the Committee on Academic Policies to recommend that the proposal not be accepted.

First, the proposed administrative structure of the core removes oversight and assessment from an elected faculty committee to a committee composed primarily of appointed faculty. Furthermore, while the current structure requires the Director of the core to report directly to the Faculty, the proposed structure mandates that the Director report to the Dean of CAS. Additionally, the proposed structure gives the core committee the power to adjust its own structure and composition (by making some members ex officio) and gives the Dean of CAS the power to appoint members to vacant elected positions on the committee or its subcommittees. We think these changes in the administration of the core curriculum would constitute a major departure from the principle stated in the Faculty Council constitution that "Faculty shall have primary responsibility for recommendations on policy in such fundamental areas as curriculum..." The election of faculty to governance bodies is a fundamental principle of shared governance.

Second, we are concerned that the proposal may violate principles of academic freedom in at least two instances: one, the mandate that Philosophy 101 courses include a component on ethics, and two, that the faculty role in advising be more "intentional." The first we think is a matter for Philosophy faculty to determine; the second we think needs a good deal more discussion and clarification about the "intent" to be served. In the cover letter that accompanied the proposal it is stated that, "The proposed core will require a different advising model, one that will emphasize career and vocation discernment." As student advising is an integral part of teaching, stipulations about how faculty approach advising need to be just as cognizant of principles of academic freedom as are those related to teaching or to research.

We urge the Committee to fulfill its charge to review, evaluate, and make a recommendation on the proposal, and to provide faculty a final report which includes "a concise statement of the problem; recommendations...; alternatives considered; results expected; communications provisions; and details necessary to support the recommendations" (FC Constitution, XI, H). While we have restricted ourselves in this letter to certain precise points that we think contradict AAUP principles, we believe that

CAP and Faculty Council, as the elected representatives of the faculty, have a broader responsibility to consider the substantive merits of the proposal.

Thanks very much for your attention to this letter, for all that you have already done to engage faculty in discussion of the proposal, and for the considerable remaining efforts required.

Signed,

Bob Kolesar (HS), President

Sheri Young, Vice-President

Patrick Mooney, Secretary

Dwight Hahn

Bob Kolesar (MT)

Brenda Wirkus

Cc: Anne Kugler, Chair, Faculty Council