MEMORANDUM

TO: President Ray M. Bowen

SUBJECT: Guidelines: Undergraduate Career Management/Professional Development Courses (FS.17.75)

At its regular meeting on December 13, 1999, the Faculty Senate approved the attached proposed guidelines for new undergraduate Career Management/Professional Development courses from the Academic Affairs Committee and submits them to you for your approval.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Please inform me of your action on this proposal.

Thomas E. Wehrly
Speaker, 1999-2000

Attachment

cc: Dr. Ronald G. Douglas, Executive Vice President & Provost
Dr. Janis P. Stout, Dean of Faculties & Associate Provost
Dr. Kenn Harding, Chair, Academic Affairs Committee
Ms. Linda F. Lacey, Director of Academic Support Services

Approved:

Ray M. Bowen, President

Date 1/7/2000
Proposed guidelines for new undergraduate “Career Management/Professional Development” courses

Background: Texas A&M University currently offers a number of undergraduate courses for academic credit that primarily focus on career management, professional development, or closely related topics. The proper place of these courses in a Research I university has been a subject of debate for the past two years in the Faculty Senate. On one hand, such courses may have little academic content, which may be a problem in that these courses typically have high class averages and therefore contribute to grade point ratio inflation. On the other hand, the need for students to develop skills related to successful career management within their respective disciplines is generally recognized. “Career” courses may serve this need.

Proposal: This committee proposes that all new undergraduate “career” courses approved by the Faculty Senate must meet the following criteria.

1. The course must have significant academic content, as reflected by subject matter, reading assignments, writing and other performance expectations, and testing and grading standards. The academic material will be the vehicle for the development of discipline-directed career management skills. Examples of appropriate subject matter are reading and critical interpretation of professional documents, written and oral presentation of discipline-related materials, analysis of trends within applied and/or theoretical aspects of the discipline, and interactions with professionals. The course should help the student build skills essential for advancement in the discipline, such as discipline-specific theory and application in speaking, writing, analysis of information, computer usage, organization, and professional networking. Courses such as those that focus primarily on personal career development, survey of professions, orientation to professions, and similar topics will not be considered.

2. The course should be graded in order to recognize and sustain its academic content and encourage student achievement.

3. The number of credit hours will be commensurate with classroom and laboratory total contact hours and must be justified by the course academic content and demands made of the students.

4. The instructor of record must have a faculty appointment or Graduate Assistant Lecturer (GAL) appointment.

Approved by Academic Affairs on November 15, 1999
Approved by the Faculty Senate on December 13, 1999