

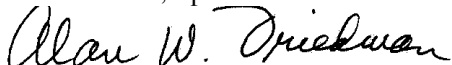
DOCUMENTS OF THE GENERAL FACULTY

RESOLUTION TO GATHER BEST PRACTICES ON TACKLING DIFFICULT DIALOGUES AND TRAUMA-INFORMED PEDAGOGY IN CLASSROOMS

Student Government Representative Ian McEntee (Policy Coordinator) submitted the following resolution on behalf of Student Government and the Senate of College Councils

If no objection is filed with the Office of the General Faculty by the date specified below, the legislation will be held to have been approved by the Faculty Council. If an objection is filed within the prescribed period, the objection, with reasons, must be signed by a member of the Faculty Council.

To be counted, a protest must be received in the Office of the General Faculty by May 3, 2019.



Alan W. Friedman, Secretary
General Faculty and Faculty Council
The University of Texas at Austin

Arthur J. Thaman and Wilhelmina Doré Thaman Professor of English and Comparative Literature

RESOLUTION TO GATHER BEST PRACTICES ON TACKLING DIFFICULT DIALOGUES AND TRAUMA-INFORMED PEDAGOGY IN CLASSROOMS

In the Fall of 2018, Student Government and the Senate of College Councils unanimously passed J.R. 1: A Resolution in Support of Course Content Disclosures in Regards to Sexual Assault on Syllabi. After much conversation between the authors of this resolution and members of Faculty Council, alternative methods of implementation and further discussions of this topic were needed. At its core, trauma-informed pedagogy was needed to ensure best practices to preserve an academic space while also allowing for protection of vulnerable students' mental health.

The Humanities Institute currently offers seminars on "teaching students the skills they need to participate in constructive dialogue about controversial and potential divisive issues,"¹ but these seminars are mostly part of the "First-Year Signature Course" program for incoming students, thus not available to the full university. Since difficult topics are a part of and relevant to some courses' curricula, these topics should not be censored nor shamed for being used in class.

In Fall 2018, a guidebook named "Texas Well-being: Promoting Well-being in UT Learning Environments" was created through consultation with the Counseling and Mental Health Center (CMHC) and the Faculty Innovation Center to "help faculty make small shifts in teaching that could make a major different in students' mental health and well-being." One page of this guidebook is dedicated to "Trauma Informed Pedagogy," however, more research on best practices is needed to fully discern how to tackle difficult dialogues across the University in classroom settings.

Therefore, we recommend that the Faculty Council authorize the creation of a task force charged to gather best practices on discussing difficult dialogues and trauma-informed pedagogy in classrooms. The exact composition of this task force is left up to the Faculty Council Chair. However, we must include equal representation from undergraduate and graduate students. Members of faculty and staff may outnumber students, but student representation will be required on this task force.

The task force will work closely with the Counseling and Mental Health Center, the Faculty Innovation Center, and other appropriate entities. The task force will (1) present the gathered data to Faculty Council via a guidebook, akin to the "Texas Well-being" guidebook,² to be disseminated amongst faculty and staff and (2) have the discretion to recommend rule changes or other ideas if the data supports the need to.

¹ <https://liberalarts.utexas.edu/humanitiesinstitute/courses/About.php>

² <http://users.ece.utexas.edu/~bevans/temp/WBLEGuidebookDigital.pdf>