Decision-Making Authority and the Creation of Course Materials: Roles and Methods

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Sacred Ground in Higher Education

Our nation is deeply committed to safeguarding academic freedom, which is of transcendent value to all of us and not merely to the teachers concerned. That freedom is therefore a special concern of the First Amendment.... The classroom is peculiarly the “marketplace of ideas.” The nation’s future depends upon leaders trained through wide exposure to that robust exchange of ideas which discovers truth ....

Sacred Ground in Higher Education

Institutional Academic Freedom:

Institutionally, largely though the chief academic officer, academic freedom refers to an institution’s ability to determine who teaches what, to whom, by what method, as well as the prerogative to judge the work of faculty.

Sacred Ground in Higher Education

The faculty has primary responsibility for such fundamental areas as curriculum, subject matter and methods of instruction, research, faculty status, and those aspects of student life which relate to the educational process.

AAUP Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities (1966)
Research Context

- Large, midwestern, public, research university
- Three cases focusing on course development for online instruction
- Larger study on copyright ownership of course materials and decision making in terms of creation, evaluation, and distribution
- Particular attention paid to models of production that involved managerial v. individual oversight
Interview Questions

- Who had decision-making authority in the creation of curricular materials?
- Who had decision-making authority over the evaluation of these curricular materials?
- Who had decision-making authority about the distribution of these curricular materials?
The Cases

• Case 1 - Course part of a larger series of online course offerings. Team: lecturer, editor, instructional designer, programmer, work coordinator, director of online education

• Case 2 - Course meets requirement for variety of masters-level programs in the university. Team: lecturer and instructional designer

• Case 3 - Course provides instructional opportunity for students at other institutions. Team: professor and departmental staff member
Stark & Lattuca’s
Elements of Academic Plans
Cases x S&L
Small Group Discussions

• To what degree do these models reflect practices at your own institution?

• What roles and methods of decision-making do instructional designers/technologists use at your institution?

• Is there an ideal decision-making model for your institution? What would it be?
General Discussion
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