

Memorandum



DATE:

September 17, 1990

TO: Gordon DiRenzo, Chair
Committee on Faculty Welfare
and Privileges
Faculty Senate

FROM: Linda S. Gottfredson *Lg*
Educational Studies

RE: Complaint Regarding Sociology Department's Withdrawal of
Cross-Listing for EDS258

I hereby file a complaint against Frank Scarpitti, chair of the Department of Sociology, for his decision to implement the Sociology Department's recommendation that the cross-listing of EDS258 (Sociological Foundations of Education) be withdrawn. As documented below (and in the attached series of memos), there is considerable evidence that the stated reason ("variability in sociological content" across the different sections) is not the true one, and that the withdrawal is actually rooted in ideological or political objections to my teaching a section of the course. Being based on ideological or political rather than valid curricular grounds, the withdrawal violates my academic freedom.

Evidence of Abridgement of Academic Freedom

Several weeks after the accusations against the Pioneer Fund were publicized in the news media and led to considerable adverse publicity about my own Pioneer-funded work, Jim Crouse (an instructor in another section of EDS258 and an adjunct professor in the Sociology Department) informed me that some members of the Sociology Department wanted to withdraw their department's cross-listing of EDS258 because they objected to my research. I wrote to Dr. Scarpitti on December 7, sending materials and offering to speak with members of his department about either my section of EDS258 or the Pioneer Fund. He thanked me in a December 20 memo for the Pioneer Fund materials I had sent. He did not dispute my understanding that his department was considering withdrawing cross-listing of EDS258 because of my involvement. On January 23 he wrote to request copies of my publications "[a]s a result of [faculty review of those earlier materials] and the publicity surrounding the [Pioneer Fund]."

A little over a month later, on March 5, the chair of the Sociology Department's Undergraduate Policy committee (Sally Bould) wrote my department chair (Victor Martuza) to request the syllabi and student ratings for the different sections of EDS258



in at least the four most recent semesters. The stated reason was that "[t]he Undergraduate Policy Committee would like to review the cross listing of this course." When I spoke to Dr. Martuza about his telephone conversation with Dr. Bould, he indicated that she acknowledged obliquely that I or my work was the real reason for the review when he posed that question directly.

On May 14 I wrote to Dr. Bould saying that I had learned that "there was sentiment in the Sociology Department for discontinuing the cross-listing of EDS258 because I teach a section of that course" and that she had requested materials from Vic Martuza. I then requested copies of any materials circulated to members of the Sociology Department. Her May 21 reply did not dispute my characterization of the sentiment in her department.

I wrote to Dr. Bould again on May 29 asking to be apprised of the Sociology Department's decision. Dr. Scarpitti's June 1 reply to me quoted minutes from the department meeting to the effect that the Undergraduate Policy committee had recommended continuing the cross-listing but the faculty had voted to discontinue it because of "variability in the sociological content of the course offerings."

Had the real issue been quality or uniformity of course offerings, one would have expected some collegial discussion about possibilities for making the course more appropriate or more uniform. The Sociology Department has offered no such recourse, and instead has summarily withdrawn the cross-listing with only the barest pretense of a valid curricular reason.

Relief Sought

I request that the Committee on Faculty Welfare and Privileges censure Dr. Scarpitti for violating my academic freedom and that of the other EDS258 instructors. I also request that the committee recommend to the Provost that he require Dr. Scarpitti to reinstate the cross-listing and to apologize to the instructors of EDS258 for abridging their academic freedom.

cc: Maxine Colm
Frank Murray
Vic Martuza
George Cicala

Attachments

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- December 7 Letter from me to Chair Scarpitti in which I report my understanding that his Department is considering withdrawing the cross-listing because I teach a section of it and offer to speak with his faculty
- December 20 Memo from Chair Scarpitti acknowledging receipt of the Pioneer-related materials I enclosed with my December 7 memo

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- January 23 Memo from Chair Scarpitti to me requesting reprints of my publications
- January 25 My memo transmitting those materials and another offer to speak with his faculty
- March 5 Memo from Sally Bould (chair of Sociology's Undergraduate Policy Committee) requesting syllabi and course evaluations for all sections of EDS258
- March 29 Memo from EDS Chair Martuza to Sally Bould providing the requested materials
- May 14 My memo to Bould reporting my understanding of her committee's involvement in the cross-listing issue and requesting copies of any report to the faculty
- May 21 Memo from Bould to me stating that Martuza's materials had been circulated to the faculty but that there was no report
- May 29 My memo to Bould requesting the results of her department's decision about the cross-listing
- June 1 Memo from Chair Scarpitti to me reporting that the Policy Committee had recommended keeping the cross-listing but that the faculty had nonetheless voted to withdraw it