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Université d'Ottawa
Faculté des sciences

Cabinet du doyen

University of Ottawa
Faculty of Science

Office of the Dean

November 20, 2007

Professor Denis G. Rancourt
Department of Physics
INTRA

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Dear Professor Rancourt,

A new course was approved by Senate for the fall of 2006, namely, SCII101/1501: Science in Society/ La science dans la société. The English course description reads as follows:

The course critically examines the role of science and scientists in society and the responsibility of citizens having to deal with the complex socio-economic, environmental, political, and ethical issues raised by advances in science and technology. The grading system is S/NS.

This course was part of your teaching workload for the fall of 2006.

We met on August 27, 2007 after I asked you to attend an informal meeting under article 39 of the collective agreement to address my concerns regarding your teaching of the course. At the meeting you advised me that you had no further information to provide on this issue.

On December 1, 2006 I wrote to you that the speakers and topics shown on the Web site that you maintained for the course (www.alternativevoices.ca) as well as the summary reports and the requirements for the course did not respect the content and approved description as the description does not reflect any discussions on the role of science in our society.

I again wrote to you on March 19 2007, again voicing my concerns for the content of the course and the subjects presented by the conference speakers in light of the approved course description.

The APUO collective agreement specifies under articles 21.1.2b and 21.1.3a the conditions under which a member teaches the courses assigned to him or her. In my letter of March 19, I asked that you demonstrate that you had, in fact, respected the course description.

On June 18, 2007, you sent me a letter that included references to e-mail exchanges and a telephone conversation, in particular, an e-mail dated December 5, 2006, where you ascribe the website to be "...an unofficial and incomplete web site maintained by volunteer students...".

Your description of the course in that letter, the themes of work groups organized in the course, and your statement regarding your interactions with the groups and the attention to science-society failed to satisfy me that the subject matter of the course was being provided to students.

Your description of the reasons for the speakers, and their relationship with the approved course description did not provide me with the information I needed to determine that they were satisfactory to the course content.

Your failure to respond to questions on the course at our meeting of August 27 did not provide me with additional information that would change my concerns. The maintenance of a web site that provided a tremendous amount of details on the course contents, the presenters, the work required from the students, that you failed to clarify, as person responsible for the course, provided a very public course description that did not satisfy the Senate approved course content.

Because of these reasons, I have no choice but to provide you with this written reprimand that will be in your file, as per article 39.4.2.2 of the collective agreement.

Any further incidents of this nature may lead to further discipline up to and including dismissal.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. Lalonde', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the left.

André E. Lalonde
Dean
Faculty of Science