

Faculty Senate Student Relations Committee Summary of Recommendations

Gifts from Students

Issue: Some students come from a culture of giving where it is respectful to provide gifts to professors to show gratitude. Some students are giving gifts to faculty of a value or at times during the quarter that make the faculty member uncomfortable. Refusing the gift may insult the student. The Student Relations Committee has been asked to examine the issue and

- a) determine if there is University policy concerning faculty accepting gifts from students;
- b) reiterate that gifts from students to faculty are neither required nor expected for any reason under any circumstances; and
- c) provide some sort of guidelines for either declining the gift without insulting the student or determine what to do if it is difficult to refuse the gift.

Context: There are University policies dealing with gifts from vendors but nothing specifically about receiving gifts from students.

It was agreed that most gifts are simply a show of gratitude and there is no appearance of impropriety. The faculty members appreciate the gesture and the student is able to show respect. Faculty members are not required to either accept or decline any gift from students. It is completely the decision of the faculty member.

However in the instances where there may be some ambiguity or the situation presents an appearance of impropriety, or at times during the quarter (E.G. MID-TERMS OR FINALS) that make the faculty member uncomfortable, here are some rough guidelines.

Proposed Suggestions:

1. Add a statement to the syllabus concerning your policy toward the giving and receiving of gifts.
 - a. E.g. Daniels College of Business – “Because of possible perceptions of undue influence, it is not appropriate for a student to give a gift to a faculty member while the student is still enrolled in the faculty member’s class, including through the grading period. In general, Daniels discourages the giving of gifts between students and faculty.”
2. Suggest that the student wait to present a gift after the quarter is over and grades submitted if possible.
3. Address the issue of gifts at new student orientations.
4. Suggest that faculty should speak with a supervisor regarding any departmental policies that may address gifts from students.
5. If a gift is accepted but the faculty member feels there may ambiguity or an appearance of impropriety report the gift to a supervisor or discuss the reasons for the ambiguity with someone who can provide reasonable advice.

6. Remind students of the honor code to the effect of: the DU Honor Code expects students to conduct themselves with honesty and integrity in all phases of their time at DU. This includes when considering gifts or other items outside of the day to day class experience.

Current University policies regarding gifts:

- http://www.du.edu/bfa/policy/Gifts_and_Gratuities.pdf
- http://www.du.edu/bfa/policy/Conflicts_interest.pdf