

Letter Encouraging Professors to Allow Students to Submit Drafts of Papers

Drafted 18 November 1998

November 18, 1998

Dear [Dean X],

In conjunction with recommendations presented in the Fall 1998 Student Government report to Notre Dame's Board of Trustees, we would like to ask you to seriously consider the implementation of a policy in which professors would encourage their students to submit drafts of papers before the papers' due dates for the purposes of revision and feedback. Dean Eileen Kolman of the First Year of Studies stated earlier this semester that Notre Dame "has a long way to go to instill a culture of write and rewrite. It is our hope that professors will begin to ask for drafts before the final paper is due."

In order to create this "write and rewrite" culture, students of all grade levels must be urged to change their habits to allocate time for revising papers. In pursuit of this goal, we believe that professors should allow and encourage students to turn in drafts of papers well before their due dates. Thus, the fruits of feedback and constructive criticism could be incorporated into the papers' final drafts. Of course, if a policy such as this were to be implemented, responsibility would still lie with the student to seek available help. However, whether optional or mandatory, the opportunity to submit drafts for feedback would force students to think about and begin planning their papers well ahead of the time when they are due. Because writing papers in advance of due dates reduces pressure and anxiety, better writing and research skills would be cultivated. Students, therefore, would be constructively aided in learning how to submit well-written essays and papers. When students leave the University of Notre Dame, they ought to be prepared to write scholarly papers, essays, and books, which will be read and thoroughly criticized before the release of final products. Hence, the development of a "write and rewrite" culture at the undergraduate level will aid students in developing time management skills, writing confidence, and overall superior writing skills.

Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

The Student Union Senate

Submitted by the Student Senate Academic Affairs Committee

