

WHAT IS MY ROLE AS A UNIVERSITY PROFESSOR?

A university should not be viewed as a supermarket where customers come to pick out the goodies they want depending on tonight's menu. University professors are not grocery store clerks who run through the store doing price checks, bagging your groceries in paper or plastic (your choice), and dutifully carrying the groceries to the car. **At a university, the customer is not always right.** (Please note that I am not disparaging good supermarket service. I am talking about misconceptions you may have concerning what you should want and expect at a university.)

A university should be viewed as more similar to a gym or an athletic club where people attempt to increase their strength, flexibility, and fitness as well as to develop/enhance their skills. Like coaches and trainers, university faculties have invested years of their lives in the acquisition of knowledge, attempting to apply it, and learning how to teach this knowledge to others.

Like a coach, I do the athlete no good if I tell them its okay to bypass the drills because drills are not fun or comfortable.

Like a trainer, I do a disservice if I imply that the athlete can forgo treatment because the treatment may be associated with some discomfort or may have some unpleasant side effects.

Like a coach, I know that the way for you to grow stronger is to exert and stretch muscles and to go beyond what you accomplished in the past.

Like a trainer, I can't make you complete your exercises but that does mean that I should stop prescribing what I believe to be the best exercise regimen for your condition.

Like a coach, I recognize that your potential usually lies far above your current ability.

Like a trainer, I recognize that long term quality of life often requires effort, pain, struggle, and sacrifice in the short run.

Like a coach, I recognize that, while I may desire to have you like me, I do you a disservice if I lower my vision of what you may become in an attempt to curry favor.

Like a trainer, I value you but I have other "athletes" as well. If you refuse to follow my workout plans, I will not give up on you but I may devote more of my time to those who are working with me.

Like a coach, I recognize that your intrinsic value as an individual does not lie in the "scores" you achieve. However, I also recognize that your level of effort and your struggle to achieve affects your self-image in the long run.

Like a coach or trainer, I make mistakes, but I have been given the responsibility of directing this class. I will treat you with respect as a person, but I expect you to be committed to working, growing and becoming stronger. If this is not what you are committed to, or you feel that these expectations are unreasonable, I would suggest that you seriously reexamine your goals and objectives with respect to this class and/or consider whether your time might be more profitably spent elsewhere.

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