
please ask Prof McGlennon to help me

From: David Dessler

Sent: Wednesday, October 28, 2015 7:53:54 AM

To:

Subject: please ask Prof McGlennon to help me

Dear Class,

Okay, here's where we stand. You have completed the quizzes and the midterm. And you have received grades for the research paper and the final exam. All your grades are in.

But you still have work to do. You must do the work necessary to reach the course objectives.

I have news. I would like to take a leave and let someone else take over the class. This is because I have extra time now that my divorce settlement is over. I would like to watch TV. Play guitar. Watch my video collection of terrifying Neil Armstrong crashes. That occupies three weeks. I could take apart and rebuild my Volvo. And I am planning a city-wide celebration of my divorce settlement in Richmond. It will be a three-day festival with a final concert featuring Taylor Swift, U2, Paul McCartney, Black Eyed Peas, the last ten winners of American Idol, a reunion of the Rolling Stones, and Katy Perry. Though ticket holders have been guaranteed that Katy Perry will not be allowed on stage until they have gone home. The City of Richmond expects 17 million people to attend. This celebration has been a long time coming.

Tell Prof McGlennon that I am arranging for my own research leave, and I do not need help there. I am in discussions with the Provost. This is true, by the way. Emphasize to Prof McGlennon that there is only one way to help, and it is this: to develop by Friday a plan for finishing the class that is better than the plan I will submit on Friday.

Let him know that on Friday, I will be giving you a course plan with the following:

- a clear statement of course goals
- a schedule of readings and topics through the last day of classes
- assignments that, along with the readings, promise to enable you to reach the stated goals

Ask that he produce a course plan from whoever might take over from me in the department.

Say that you will evaluate the two plans. Every student can make his or her own choice. No one is forced to take any professor.

Make clear you will pick the course plan that you find best.

I am honest, I would like some time off, and I am serious, I can get it. So I need your help. I need Prof McGlennon to provide you with a course plan that you find better than mine. I know you will pick the one that is best. Let Prof McGlennon know that you will not let me have free time for nothing if you think I can teach you the most.

Tell him that I told you I would really like his help, and therefore I would like for him to work as hard as possible on a plan that is better than mine. Tell him I do not want to teach if I don't have to. Of course not. But I am able to do so, of course, and it is my job to do so, that too, and your classes were assigned to me at the beginning of the semester, which lasts through mid-May. How inconvenient.

You might add that I have given you some idea of my course plan in my last email, and that I believe it is a good one. Therefore I really do need his help. Because I know the class is going to pick the option that leaves them best prepared for all future IR-related Government classes.

I am asking for your help here. Tell Prof McGlennon I would like his help. And tell him I told you that nothing can help me but developing a course plan for you that is better than mine. He can help me only by convincing you of how much he can do for you.

Of course, you need write nothing unless you wish to, and you may write something quite different from what is here. You can tell him, for example, that Prof Dessler told you he is submitting a course plan by Friday, but you don't want to have Prof Dessler as a teacher anymore, but you do need a course plan, so you would like at least something from him.

This is something you can discuss today when you meet, if you see any advantage of doing so. If you do make this request, please remember you are then obligated to give any submission from Prof McGlennon a fair hearing. Do not make the request if you know you will not accept it. But to protect yourselves, you should make a request for some type of plan from him. After all, what if I don't submit one. I could walk away and go on leave and you will then have only the plan that Prof McGlennon offers.

One simple way to make the request would be to say that Prof Dessler says he is submitting his course plan for the rest of the semester, as described above, and you would very much like to see any alternative plan from him. You don't have to put it in the form of a request for help, for example.

As you can see, there are many iterations. But I hope the point is clear. I believe many of you have confidence I can do a good job. But if someone comes along with a plan that is better, this is about you, take it. You would be better off. And I would get a vacation. But I will not take it, because I do not deserve it, after all this is my job, and I do like it if I am stuck with it, unless you tell me you have a better option.

You could end by saying something like: You don't care who teaches. This is not a contest between teachers or people. You just want to learn the most you can. That is what matters.

Thanks. Reactions welcome, and any news updates that you have would help too. Assume I know nothing about what you are experiencing. I do not want news for the sake of news, unless you want to send it. But do think of what you believe I should know if I am to help you.

Prof Dessler
