



Memo To: Jim Bean, Ken Doxie, and Russ Tomlin

Memo From: Peter B Gilkey

Memo Date: 5 November 2009

Memo Subject: Feedback to the FPC

Dear Jim, Ken, and Russ:

I am perusing the report of the 2008/9 FPC for the first time today. The Chair of the FPC wrote in that report: “The chair met with Russ Tomlin (Vice Provost for Academic Affairs) and Ken Doxsee (Associate Vice Provost for Academic Affairs) three times. The remaining FPC members had no direct guidance from or meetings with the Provost, Vice Provost, or Associate Vice Provost regarding the deliberations, including, but not limited to, ways in which they might prefer that university and departmental standards be interpreted and the degree of due diligence desired ... The Provost did not advise the FPC of his decisions on these cases, nor did he share his letters to the candidates with the chair of the FPC, as has been customary in past years. We believe this oversight constitutes a breakdown in the overall integrity of the process. We urge the Provost to reconsider this practice next year”.

Several years ago, I chaired the FPC. During that time, Provost Moseley and Vice Provost Davis met monthly with the committee. The focus of the discussions was to provide feedback on the reports of the committee and did not attempt alter or influence their decisions in any way. The discussions provided the FPC with “ways in which they might prefer that university and departmental standards be interpreted and the degree of due diligence desired” and helped the FPC to write more useful reports. When our recommendations differed from decisions reported by the Provost, the discussions focused on what he had seen in the cases that we had missed and visa versa to help us in subsequent work. The discussion took place in an atmosphere of mutual respect between professionals to improve the product and was on a “need to know” basis -- it was crucial to our work and was not in violation of University regulations or policies at that time.

Professor Stahl has a motion pending before the Senate dealing with the 2008/9 FPC report. I should be most grateful if you could possibly write a brief letter to the President of the Senate explaining your reasoning behind the change in policy outlined above by the Chair of the 2008/9 FPC that the President of the Senate could post on the web and thereby transmit to the full Senate to inform their considerations. I should also be most grateful if in addition you could perhaps copy such a letter to the FPC to inform them of the change in policy and the reasons behind it.

Respectfully Submitted

Peter B Gilkey  
Professor of Mathematics