


TO: Dr. Sylvia Shurbutt, President of the Faculty Senate

FROM: David L. Dunlop 

DATE: May 11, 2007

RE: Senate recommendations for amendment to Faculty Personnel policies relating to Promotion and Academic Ranks

I have received and reviewed the Senate's April recommendations relating to faculty Promotions and Academic Ranks, making certain revisions to the prior set of recommendations. These recommendations have also been reviewed by the Deans and the Vice President for Academic Affairs, and I have appreciated their input on these matters.

I remain unable to endorse the Senate's proposals relating to changes in the professional development criteria for promotion in rank. In some respects, I feel that the April proposals are even more problematic than the original proposal advanced by the Senate. It seems to me that the proposal invites not only a substantial weakening of the institutional expectation of scholarship by faculty, but also invites wide variations and even arbitrariness in the evaluation of individual applications.

I have also come to develop some concern about the Senate's proposals regarding "changes in criteria." I am completely sympathetic to the notion that our faculty should not be ambushed with changes in promotion or tenure criteria that they have not had a reasonable amount of time to prepare for, but I am concerned that the proposal goes beyond that and would stymie the University's need to adapt to changing conditions in the future.

I have generally not been inclined to process changes in Board policies such as the faculty personnel policies during the summer months, even if the changes are modest or endorsed by the Senate, because so many of the individual faculty are away extensively during the summer.

In this case I have decided against advancing any proposal to the Board of Governors at this time. This summer Dr. Shipley will have an opportunity to make a full review of the issues at hand and to make her own determination of what recommendations to take to the Board. I shall leave the matter to her good judgment.