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May 18, 2007

Dr. Charles Walcott  
Dean of the University Faculty  
315 Day Hall

Dear Dr. Walcott,

As requested, this is the annual report of the Committee on Academic Freedom and Professional Status of the Faculty (AFPS) for the academic year 2006-2007. There were two items considered by the AFPS during this period. It has been my pleasure to serve the University Faculty on this important committee at a critical time.

First, in a letter dated November 15, 2006, the University Faculty Committee directed the AFPS to entertain a portion of the complaint of a faculty member in the College of Arts and Sciences against the dean of that college to provide "a decision only on whether the penalty imposed was in line with precedent in cases where a Faculty member was found in violation of the Policy on Romantic and Sexual Relationships between Students and Staff (Appendix D, Policy 6.4)." The AFPS reached the conclusion that the penalty imposed was within the range of penalties imposed for violation of this policy, as judged by precedent and by comparison to the guidelines for suspension or dismissal that were in place at that time.

In its role as the final committee to review faculty grievances, the AFPS is hampered in its capacity to investigate misconduct cases and their penalties because the office of the Dean of the Faculty and the AFPS do not have access to pertinent information. For example, the case above was determined on the basis of word of mouth information from administrators to the Dean of the Faculty and then to the AFPS. To our knowledge there is no list of misconduct cases with charges and outcomes that is available to the Dean of the Faculty. Furthermore, we were informed that data on previous cases are not kept in a central location, such that a determination of previous misconduct cases vs. severity of penalty might readily be determined. If the AFPS is expected to provide a fair determination in such cases as to whether misconduct has occurred and/or whether a penalty exceeds precedent, the AFPS needs access to the written records that will allow it to examine the pertinent evidence and reach a fair determination.

Second, in February 2007 the AFPS began working closely with previous members, particularly the former AFPS Chair Dr. Peter Stein, and the Dean of the Faculty to reach a compromise with the administration on the Job-Related Faculty Misconduct Policy (aka the Suspension Policy) that was passed by the Faculty Senate in September 2006. After much negotiation, a compromise was reached. A Resolution to adopt the compromise, replacing the September 2006 Faculty Senate policy, was presented to the Faculty Senate at the May 2007 meeting. However, a vote could not be taken due to the lack of a quorum. It is my understanding that the UFC has since approved this compromise, acting in behalf of the Faculty Senate, and that it will be presented to the Board of Trustees at their May 2007 meeting.

Sincerely,

Vicki N. Meyers-Wallen, VMD, PhD, Dipl. ACT  
Chair, Committee on Academic Freedom and Professional Status of the Faculty