

October 17, 2002

Mr. Lewis Collens, President
Illinois Institute of Technology
3300 South Federal Street
Chicago, Illinois 60616-3793

Dear President Collens:

I am writing in my role as Chair of the University Faculty Council (UFC) to address the role that you have proposed for an invigorated Council of Deans vis-à-vis the matter of decisions regarding faculty promotions and tenure. It is the view of the UFC, as formulated at our meeting held on October 9, 2002, that the involvement of the Council of Deans in these matters raises problems that are best resolved by excluding it from the promotion and tenure process.

This matter initially came to my attention by virtue of an e-mail memorandum sent to me by Mary Anne Smith, General Counsel, on June 25, 2002, to which was appended a draft of the proposal in question. By the terms of this draft proposal you suggested that "[o]n an interim basis ... the council of deans and directors [that already exists] should assume the review responsibilities of the [as-yet undesignated] provost." You went on to amplify on this proposition: "These responsibilities include: promotion and tenure recommendations,"

In accordance with Ms. Smith's e-mail, I distributed the proposal to the members of the UFC. Professor Peter Lykos, who was at the time chair of the Main Campus Faculty Council (MCFC), in turn distributed the proposal to some or all of the faculty members in Armour College. I received a couple of responses, including one from Professor Lykos, and I forwarded those, along with my own comments, to Ms. Smith. The gist of the responses was that no one objected at that time to the overall proposal, nor to the specific matter of the Council of Deans being involved in the promotion and tenure process.

Subsequently, you distributed to all faculty members the final version of your memorandum, entitled "University Senior Leadership," which, insofar as promotion and tenure matters are concerned, tracked the earlier draft. In your memorandum you concluded with the following language: "I know that the university faculty council will be acting promptly in the fall to review all suggested changes. Please send any recommendations and comments to Howard Eglit .. [.] who will continue to act as chair of the university faculty council until a new chair is elected."

As it turns out, there indeed have been subsequent "recommendations and comments" regarding the "suggested changes." On September 27, 2002, the MCFC held its first meeting of the new school year and the following motion was adopted by a vote of 12 - 0: "Whereas the members of the proposed committee [i.e., the Council of Deans,] already have input into the promotion and tenure process, we are opposed to a council of deans and directors acting in the promotion and tenure process as proposed by the President."

The UFC, to whose chairmanship I have been reelected, held its first meeting on October 9, 2002. At that meeting we took up the matter of the MCFC resolution. The members of the UFC of course were aware that the offices of vice-president for the downtown and main campuses are vacant, and that in any event you intend to replace those officers -- but have not yet done so -- with a provost. We further were aware that because of these vacancies promotion and tenure recommendations coming up through the administration track cannot proceed as prescribed by the current Appendix C of the Faculty Handbook.¹ We further recognized that the proposed role for the Council of Deans constitutes a good faith

¹ For that matter, Appendix C does not by its terms recognize the involvement of a provost, so presumably even if there were a provost there still would be a problem insofar as the literal terms of Appendix C are concerned. In any event, there currently is no provost, but rather a council of deans. So what we have at issue is really a double proposed modification of the extant process: from vice-presidents to non-existent provost, and then from non-existent provost to

effort to deal with this reality. (And we are confident that the MCFC members likewise realized this.)

Vacancies and good faith notwithstanding, the MCFC concluded that the assignment to the Council of Deans of the roles previously played by the campus vice-presidents is undesirable. This is because such an eventuality would provide a given dean with two opportunities to register his or her views -- first in his or her recommendation to the next tier in the process (in the past, the vice-president), and again at the Council of Deans level. Moreover, the UFC has concluded that the concerns expressed by the MCFC are valid ones, and accordingly that part of the proposal regarding the Council of Deans that accords a role in the promotion and tenure process to the Council should be discarded. (The UFC vote on this matter was 8 - 0).

For my own part, I am sorry that during the summer I was not able to more aggressively obtain input regarding the proposal. But the reality was that not much more could have been done given the dispersal of faculty during the summer. Now, that input has been developed, consistent with your memorandum to the faculty calling for "review" by the UFC with regard to the "suggested" changes. And the conclusion reached by both the MCFC and the UFC is that the proposal should not be pursued.

Sincerely,

Howard Eglit
Professor and Chair,
University Faculty Council

cc: Members, University Faculty Council
(Assoc. Prof. Miles Wernick
Prof. Joel Goldhar
Prof. Howard Chapman
Assoc. Prof. Liam Coffey
Prof. Phillip Nash
Prof. George Schipporeit
Assoc. Prof. Michael Young
Assoc. Prof. Gregory Prygrocki
Prof. Kenneth Noll
Assoc. Prof. Sheldon Mostovoy
Assoc. Prof. Philip Troyk
Prof. Ralph Brill)