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Administrators teaching to help relieve our budget woes

Submitted by Annette Laing

9/3/2003

Question:

Given the budget crunch, and Chancellor Meredith's letter, which informed us that campuses are expected to do more with fewer resources, when can we expect administrators to take on teaching responsibilities? When, in particular, will President Grube, who stated when he was interviewed for his present position that he would regularly teach a class, make good on that promise?

Rationale:

Having administrators teach would contribute toward ameliorating the impact of the budget cuts. More importantly, it would create goodwill among the faculty, both by setting an example of making sacrifices during these difficult times and, equally critically, in giving administrators a better sense of empathy in dealing with the challenges that faculty regularly face in the classroom.

Response:

Minutes 9/3/2003: The second query from Laing (CLASS) concerned administrators teaching to help relieve our budget woes. This was forwarded to President Grube, as he was the administrator named in the request. The short answer received by the SEC is that his schedule is fully booked with administrative work, particularly in our current stressful budget situation. While no other administrative personnel or types of personnel were defined in the query, the SEC thinks the implication is that the same holds true for them.

President Grube stated that the quick answer with respect to him is really very simple: you don't want me doing that right now. He believes that the University really needs him to be doing other things that are eating an incredible amount of time. He does hope that he will eventually get to teach, as that would be a wonderful change of pace. However, at this time, he feels it is not in the University's best interest.

Laing (CLASS) expressed her appreciation for President Grube's comments on cooperation and positive thinking, as made during the President's report today, and as she was present when he interviewed, she recalls him saying that he would teach occasionally. She stated that she has known administrators at institutions twice as large as this with fiscal crises that have still taught, and she (and many of her constituents) believe that as faculty are being asked to do more with less, it would be a tremendous boost to morale if they could see some administrators and senior levels from deans on up occasionally setting foot in a classroom so they would know what faculty are up Against.

President Grube responded that while he appreciated Laing's comments, if she would please convey back to the people she represents that he has over thirty years of teaching in his background and understands only too well what happens in a classroom, what people are up against, and what that means, so he did not take her question lightly. He reiterated that he was being very serious when he said you don't want me doing that right now. However, he postulated that if a symbolic morale boost is more important than going to work on legislators and the Governor and on the budget issues so be it. In that case, the Senate can have a vote about whether that is where he ought to spend his time and he would be glad to take that into consideration.