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Allocation of Duties of Tenure and Promotion at the College Level

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Allocation of Duties of Tenure and Promotion at the College Level 10-29-2004

Submitted by: Robert Costomiris

10/29/2004

Motion:

That Members of the College Tenure and Promotion Committees not evaluate, vote on, or discuss the tenure and promotion materials of faculty members from their own departments.

Rationale:

- 1) College committee members have already evaluated these materials at the departmental level and thus already have made a significant statement about these materials.
- 2) To ensure the fairest evaluation of a candidate's materials, the materials should only be reviewed by faculty from other departments who have not reviewed them before.
- 3) To avoid any potential influence on behalf of or against the candidate it would be best if College committee members were not involved in decisions regarding applications from members of their own department.

SEC Response:

11-8-2004: The Agenda Request of Robert Costomiris (CLASS) regarding allocation of duties of tenure and promotion committees at the college level generated substantial discussion. A concern was that this was a college governance issue rather than a

university-wide issue. On a Moore/Flynn motion, it was approved as a discussion item for the agenda to gauge whether this is a university-wide issue, with the discussion not to exceed 15 minutes of Senate floor time.

Senate Response:

The first Agenda Item Request came from Robert Costomiris from CLASS concerning the allocation of duties of tenure and promotion committees at the college level. The SEC decided that this was a CLASS-specific governance problem as opposed to a universitywide issue and so they voted to place it on the agenda as a discussion item to gather additional information. Discussion Item: Agenda Request by Robert Costomiris (CLASS): Allocation of Duties of Tenure and Promotion Committees at the College Level Robert Costomiris submitted the following request for a motion to the SEC: “That Members of the College Tenure and Promotion Committees not evaluate, vote on, or discuss the tenure and promotion materials of faculty members from their own departments.” The rationales for this motion were: 1. College committee members have already evaluated these materials at the departmental level and thus have already made a significant statement about them. 2. To ensure the fairest evaluation of a candidate’s materials, the materials should only be reviewed by faculty from other departments who have not reviewed them before. 3. To avoid any potential influence on behalf of or against the candidate it would be best if College committee members were not involved in decisions regarding applications from members of their own department. Rice Jenkins noted that the SEC placed this motion on the Senate Agenda as a discussion item and allotted fifteen minutes for this discussion to take place. She called on Robert Costomiris from the gallery to speak first on behalf of this issue. Robert Costomiris noted that he had two more points to add in addition to the three points mentioned in the rationale. The first was that it was inequitable that sometimes colleagues serving on College Tenure and Promotion Committees supported candidates in their own departments and sometimes they spoke against a colleague. The second point was that excluding colleagues that might speak against a candidate would lessen the possibility of bias at the College level.

Pat Walker (CLASS) said that having a member of the department that a candidate is from is helpful to other committee members who may not know how to assess elements of the candidate package.

Virginia Richards (CHHS) stated that, in her College, the Tenure and Promotion committee membership was not secret as it is in CLASS. She also noted that the most of the Professors in her College were ethical enough to recuse themselves from the

process if they felt that they could not give a candidate a fair evaluation. Costomiris responded that such information ought to be in the candidate's package.

Patricia Humphrey (COST) noted that, in her College, members of the Departmental committees are banned from serving simultaneously on the College committee. Thus the members of the College committee have not seen a candidate's package.

Mike Nielsen (CLASS) said that it was extremely rare for a person to change their vote between the Departmental and the College levels. Thus the tendency would be for that person to lobby for the opinion already expressed at the Departmental level.

David Alley (CLASS) pointed out that, while he was concerned about the secrecy of the CLASS Tenure and Promotion Committee process, he had also been the Chair of the Faculty Research Committee. In that committee, evaluating science proposal would have been very difficult had not some science faculty been present.

Jean-Paul Carton (CLASS) said that not everyone in his department looked at the candidate's package. So, for example, he would not evaluate a Spanish-language candidate. Thus, if this were to come up as an actual motion, it would require special wording for different situations. Carol Cornwell Strickland (CHHS) stated that she agreed with what Virginia Richards said earlier. In CHHS, the process was transparent, the committee members were known and that it was up to committee members to behave in a professional manner. Mary Hazeldine (COBA) also noted that in COBA the committee membership was not secret and that the requirements for tenure were clearly stated in the COBA by-laws.

Bob Cook (CIT) recommended that, if this issue returned to the Senate as a motion, that it be stated as a language change in the Faculty Handbook. Furthermore, he also made the point that, since most of the College committees have already met, that there was plenty of time to consider this issue before it had any effect next year. Jane Hudak (CLASS Dean) stated that there was currently a shared-governance task force working on this particular issue.

Judi Robbins (COE) stated that, in the COE, the membership of the Tenure and Promotion Committee was also not secret.

Mark Edwards (COST) noted that it seemed as if every other College except CLASS had an open Tenure and Promotion membership and this seemed to be a problem specific to CLASS and thus did not come under the purview of the Faculty Senate. Ming

Fang He (COE) said that, in the COE, if there was some concern about a member of the College committee, that this person could be replaced by a less-biased person at the next election.

Jeanette Rice Jenkins noted that the discussion time was up.