



University of Nevada, Reno

MEMORANDUM

Date: October 20, 2011  
To: David Ryfe, Faculty Senate Chair  
From: Marc Johnson, President  
Subject: Recent Faculty Senate Recommendations

Thank you for your memo of October 17 relaying two recommendations of the Faculty Senate passed during the special meeting on October 13, 2011. In this letter I provide my responses.

"In a first motion, the Senate recommends that the open tenure-track line in Women's Studies and a humanities discipline be used to offer Associate Professor Valerie Weinstein reinstatement at her former rank and title as an associate professor in Women's Studies and a related humanities discipline." As noted in your letter, the open position is not the same position Dr. Weinstein previously occupied; the position previously occupied by Dr. Weinstein was closed permanently as a result of budget reductions and closure of the German Studies program, to which Dr. Weinstein was assigned. Thus, Code section 5.4.7(c), addressing filling a laid off faculty member's position, does not apply. Dr. Weinstein's contract ended in mid-May of 2011, though her equal monthly pay continued through June. The new tenure-track position in search currently was a position held by a lecturer who announced in late June 2011 her intention to leave December 31, 2011. By previous program planning, the unit and College have converted the lecturer position into a half women's studies and half humanities tenure-track position parallel with the social science half-and-half position in the unit. The unit and College have followed proper procedures in the College and University bylaws, involving significant faculty and personnel committee, dean and provost discussions and decision-making. I do not agree that ignoring the results of the College of Liberal Arts faculty hiring process and bylaws will "heal the wounds of our colleagues." Rather, ignoring these processes and bylaws will encourage these wounds to continue to fester. Therefore, I do not accept the Faculty Senate recommendation to intervene in the hiring process for the new position and allow the Faculty Senate to select the person to fill a College of Liberal Arts position.

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"In a second motion, the Senate recommends that the academic planning process associated with curricular review be revised to include an explicit process of reassignment, and that this process include some form of faculty senate review." There are two means of continuing laid off faculty in employment. The first can be used in a program downsizing in which some faculty positions are closed in a unit, but not all. The policy adopted in the spring, 2011 curricular review procedures was to allow all of the faculty in a unit to apply for the remaining positions in the unit, and a selection process was instituted to choose which faculty will fill the remaining positions. This procedure was used in the downsizing of the Nevada Bureau of Mines and Geology and in the downsizing of the University of Nevada Cooperative Extension. The second means for continuing laid off faculty in employment is more *ad hoc* as attempts are made to find alternative employment for laid off faculty members in an appropriate qualified professional capacity. This is consistent with Code section 5.4.7(b). Examples include creation of RCUF positions for the teaching of lower division foreign language courses frequently taught by LOAs, the filling of vacancies, or creation of self-supporting positions in a different college. These positions are individually evaluated as opportunities are found. The first of these will be included in the administrative manual and standard internal search rules will apply.

The last few years certainly have been extraordinary. I sincerely appreciate the empathy expressed in these Senate recommendations. Now that the budget situation is stabilizing, the best way to "heal the wounds" of our present colleagues is to look forward and regain the stability generated with the application of the bylaws crafted by faculty during normal times.

CC: Heather Hardy, Executive Vice President and Provost  
Scott Casper, Dean, College of Liberal Arts  
Faculty Senate and Faculty Senate Executive Board Members