

December 11, 2003

Loren Crabtree, Chancellor
810 Andy Holt Tower
University of Tennessee
Knoxville, TN 37996-2410

Dear Chancellor Crabtree,

The Executive Committee of the campus AAUP chapter has asked me to send you this letter of concern regarding the manner in which some administrative appointments have recently taken place. We strongly support the re-establishment of the Office of the Chancellor for the Knoxville campus, and we are pleased that the reorganization is now moving forward. We hope that some faculty roles that were in place previously will also be reinstated as part of this process.

We have been particularly concerned that one effect of previous reorganizations has been to exclude or significantly diminish the voice of the faculty in the selection, evaluation, and retention of senior-level academic administrators. In the past, for example, faculty played an active role in both internal and external searches for a variety of positions in the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, the office most directly affecting faculty.

This administration's stated commitment to shared governance would encompass reviving such faculty participation, and yet a report in the local media indicates that some permanent appointments and title changes have been made without it. We believe that exclusion of faculty participation in the selection of academic administrators is a serious setback for shared governance on our campus.

The current handbook states that "the University seeks always to ensure appropriate faculty participation in the appointment of [all] the [academic] officers" (1.7-24). "Appropriate participation" would include, for example, peer-selected representation of non-administrative faculty on search committees, as well as open forums for faculty to learn the candidates' attitudes and positions on matters of faculty concern.

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We hope that such searches in the future will provide for meaningful faculty participation. The search currently in progress for an Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs provides an excellent opportunity for the revival of these valuable traditions (including the addition of non-administrative faculty members to the search committee, which presently lacks them).

For past searches, appointments, and promotions to new titles within the administration, it is desirable for the faculty to be provided with the following information:

- what the job description is
- how the opening was advertised
- what the qualifications were of the finalists for the position
- what efforts were made to meet AA and EEO requirements
- if the position is new, what cost/benefit considerations led to the decision to create a new position

In order for shared governance to thrive, faculty members need to feel--and be--invested in the selection of consequential Academic Officers. From this type of engagement come the trust and goodwill of thoughtful partners. Faculty members need to be able to support academic administrators, and academic administrators need faculty support in order to be effective. Both are seriously undermined, however, when the voices of faculty are silenced during the selection process--regardless of the quality of actual appointees. The outstanding faculty on this campus are willing and ready to play their part in these important matters. We hope that you will continue your efforts on behalf of shared governance by ensuring that faculty members regain their voice in the selection, evaluation, and retention of academic administrators.

Sincerely yours,

Stephen H. Blackwell
(For the AAUP-UTK Executive Committee)