President's Report and Recommendations, April 3rd, 1974

University of Texas at Tyler

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1. Honorary Degree for May 14, 1974 Commencement Speaker

At the March 13, 1974 Board of Regents meeting, I was requested to report to the Board concerning awarding an honorary degree to our May 14, 1974 Commencement speaker. I am pleased to report that upon studying this matter, along with the Convocations Committee and the Interim Faculty Senate, the idea to confer on our Commencement speaker an honorary doctorate meets with favorable endorsement.

After considering this matter, along with the faculty groups, I talked with Senator A. M. Aikin, Jr. to determine if he would accept an honorary doctorate in Public Administration from Tyler State College. Senator Aikin assured me that he would be honored to receive such a degree from Tyler State and expressed appreciation that such action is being considered.

Since Senator Aikin has agreed to accept the degree, final consideration needs to be given to the matter by the Board of Regents; therefore, I recommend the following:

BOARD ACTION: The Board of Regents approves the conferral of an honorary doctorate of Public Administration upon the May 14, 1974 Tyler State College Commencement speaker, Senator A. M. Aikin, Jr. who represents Senatorial District No. 1 of the State of Texas and who is a resident of Paris located in Lamar County, Texas. Further, that the Board directs the president of the college to arrange for the awarding and conferral of the Doctor of Public Administration Degree on Senator A. M. Aikin, Jr. in accordance with proper and accepted academic standards and protocol during and as a part of the first commencement program in the history of Tyler State College to be conducted on May 14, 1974 at Harvey Hall in the City of Tyler, Smith County, Texas.

I, along with the general faculty, appreciate the fact that the Board of Regents at the March 13, 1974 meeting requested that study be given to the specific matter of awarding an honorary degree to our first commencement speaker. In addition to the immediate decision of awarding an honorary degree to Senator Aikin, it also brings to our attention the realization that an established procedure for considering recommendations on proposed honorary degrees in the future needs to be established. Pursuant
to this realization, I have advised the Interim Faculty Senate recently that I concur with their recommendation that the Faculty Senate, which will be implemented during this month in accordance with action of the Board on March 13, 1974, consider through their deliberations a procedure for acting on future proposed honorary degrees to be awarded by Tyler State College. An established procedure will assist us in making timely decisions regarding the conferral of honorary doctorates.

II. Extension Work and Off-Campus Centers

At the March 13, 1974 Board of Regents meeting, it was requested that I make an additional report concerning extension work and the establishment of off-campus centers. I reported to you on March 21, 1974 through Administrative Notes on this matter. Essentially, this report related that the most appropriate action for Regents at this time is to express concern to your individual state senator and representative. At this time, I do not think there is need for additional action.

III. Academic Freedom, Tenure and Responsibility

Several months ago I reported that an institutional committee was appointed on May 16, 1973 to begin a study of developing a proposed policy on academic freedom, tenure and responsibility for Tyler State College. This is an important task and the committee members have continued to work very hard on it since their appointment. And although the committee has not completed its work, I wish to report to you again that progress is being made and within the next few months, hopefully, the product of the committee's work will be available for Board consideration.

In view of the fact that this matter will be before us at some future date, I am distributing Policy Paper No. 1 developed and approved by the Coordinating Board, Texas College and University System pursuant to this matter. Upon reading this policy statement, you will find guiding principles to assist Texas colleges and universities in the matter of academic freedom, tenure and responsibility. Additionally, a letter from Dr. Bevington Reed dated February 12, 1973 pertaining to this matter is attached for your information.

Although academic freedom, tenure and responsibility will likely be considered by the Academic and Personnel Committee before being presented to the Board of Regents, I know that each Board member will be interested in the material concerning this subject and trust that you will have time to become familiar with it.
Dr. Bevington Reed  
Commissioner of Higher Education  
Coordinating Board  
Texas College and University System  
P. O. Box 12788, Capitol Station  
Austin, Texas 78711

Dear Dr. Reed:

This will acknowledge your letter of February 12, 1973, in which you advised me of Section 14 (2) of the Higher Education Coordinating Act of 1965, which enjoined the Coordinating Board, Texas College and University System, to develop and recommend minimum standards for academic freedom, tenure and responsibility.

I was aware of the Coordinating Board's adopted recommendations as published in Policy Paper 1. Since our institution is new, we have not accomplished measurable progress currently relative to this matter but we do, of course, intend to proceed with this work and develop a statement on academic freedom, tenure and responsibility at the earliest possible time.

Continuing kindest regards and best wishes.

Cordially yours,

James H. Stewart, Jr.
President

JHS:ll
cc: Dr. Bill L. Turney  
Vice President for Academic Affairs
TO THE PRESIDENT ADDRESSED:

Under Section 14(2) of the Higher Education Coordinating Act of 1965, the Coordinating Board is enjoined to "Develop and recommend minimum standards for academic freedom, academic responsibility and tenure." On October 16, 1967, the Board adopted policy recommendations in these areas and they were published and distributed as Policy Paper Number 1.

Part of the policy adopted dealt with the implementation of the recommendations. That statement was as follows:

"Within one year, and with appropriate faculty participation, each public institution in Texas is expected to draft its own written statement on academic freedom, tenure, and responsibilities. The statement should be based on the guiding principles described in the preceding paragraphs, and a copy should be filed with the Coordinating Board, Texas College and University System. Each statement should detail a procedure to be followed in case of dismissal of a tenured faculty member."

Since your college is new and may not have had time to consider this matter, we call it to your attention now. We need to know the progress you have made. Has such a policy been developed according to the guidelines and approved by your board? If not, is such a policy under development or consideration at this time? If you have such a statement and have not filed it with this office, will you please send us a copy.

Your cooperation in responding to this inquiry will be appreciated. I need not tell you how timely it is for all of us to know how the public junior and senior institutions in Texas have progressed in this area.

Sincerely yours,

Bevington Reed
Commissioner