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President's Report and Recommendations, October 16th, 1974

University of Texas at Tyler

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1. Approval of Degree Proposals by the Program Development Committee of the Coordinating Board, Texas College and University System

On September 20, 1974 the Program Development Committee of the Coordinating Board, Texas College and University System, unanimously approved our proposals for the following four new degrees at Tyler State College:

- Bachelor of Liberal Studies
- Bachelor of Applied Arts and Sciences
- Bachelor of Science Degree in Respiratory Therapy
- Bachelor of Science Degree in Health Professions

This action by the Program Development Committee means that the committee will be recommending these degrees to the full Coordinating Board for approval on October 18, 1974 at the Board's regular meeting in Austin.

2. Additional Temporary Facilities for Institutional Use

Under the authority granted by the Board of Regents at the September 11, 1974 Board meeting, the staff has studied several alternatives relative to solving the need for additional temporary facilities for institutional use. Following our evaluation of these alternatives, a report was made to the Campus and Building Committee. Also, the staff met with the Finance and Appropriations Committee in order for this committee to give attention to the fiscal considerations related to securing additional facilities.

The results of our study and recommendations of the staff will be presented through the reports of the Campus and Building and Finance and Appropriations Committees.

3. Academic Freedom, Academic Responsibility, and Tenure Statement

Periodically over the past several months, I have furnished the Board of Regents with information, both written and oral, relative to academic freedom, academic responsibility, and tenure. In order to review some of the significant aspects of this area of concern, I want
to examine several points pursuant to this matter as the attached statement on Academic Freedom, Academic Responsibility, and Tenure is presented for Board consideration.

Under Section 14, Paragraph 2, the Higher Education Coordinating Act of 1965, which was a part of House Bill I of the 59th Texas Legislature, the Coordinating Board, Texas College and University System, is enjoined to develop and recommend minimum standards for academic freedom, academic responsibility and tenure for institutions of higher learning in the State of Texas. On October 16, 1967, the Coordinating Board adopted policy recommendations in these areas and they were published and distributed as Policy Paper No. I (Policy Paper No. I was distributed to each member of the Tyler State College Board of Regents on April 3, 1974). This Policy Paper was developed in response to Legislative mandate and was developed with the basic purpose in mind of providing guiding principles designed to aid Texas colleges and universities in evaluating the condition of academic freedom, academic responsibility and tenure that prevails on each campus. Part of the policy adopted dealt with implementation of the recommendation. That statement, which appears on the second page of Policy Paper No. I, is 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 (as you will note by referring to page two of Policy Paper No. I, these paragraphs deal with academic freedom, academic responsibility and tenure), and the 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."

I appointed a representative faculty committee on May 16, 1973 which initiated our study of an institutional statement concerning academic freedom, academic responsibility and tenure on the basis of "appropriate faculty participation." This committee finished its work during the spring of 1974 and submitted the proposed document to me in order that I could request the Attorney General to review the proposal from the legal point of view. After the Attorney General evaluated the proposal, all members of the Tyler State College faculty, through the Faculty Senate, were given an opportunity to read and react to the document, whereupon only minor suggestions which entailed no significant changes were made and unanimous Faculty Senate approval was given.
Following the Faculty Senate’s approval of the proposal on August 13, 1974, I again requested the Attorney General to make a final review of the statement prior to its submission to our governing board. The Attorney General’s office generally complimented our efforts and expressed the thinking that our proposed statement would serve our institution very well.

During the recent Southern Association evaluation, our proposed statement was studied by members of the visiting committee who felt it was a very adequate proposal. Further, the committee recommended the adoption of the Statement on Academic Freedom, Academic Responsibility, and Tenure at an early date. Such a statement is a basic requirement contained in Standard Five of the Standards for Accreditation of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools.

As you examine the proposed Statement on Academic Freedom, Academic Responsibility, and Tenure, you will note that it basically adheres to the 1967 statement adopted by the Coordinating Board, Texas College and University System.

The fundamental concept under academic freedom applies to rights of expression pertaining to teaching and research within an individual’s area(s) of professional competence. Academic freedom is the right of members of the academic community freely to study, discuss, investigate, teach, conduct research and publish as appropriate to their respective roles and responsibilities. It is the responsibility of Tyler State College to assure and to protect these rights within the governing framework of the institution.

Academic freedom can only endure when it is accompanied by an equally demanding sense of academic responsibility shared by governing boards, administrative officers and faculty. This commitment can only be effective, however, as all members of the academic community recognize their responsibilities to society, to the institution and to one another. Since the primary responsibility of a faculty member is to be an effective teacher, each faculty member must assume professional responsibility for achieving this goal in working with students. This responsibility extends to relationships with students, colleagues and all elements of the institution and profession of which the individual is a member.
Since the goals of Tyler State College center around teaching, other scholarly activity and service, these goals can only be accomplished through the building of a superior faculty. Basically, a system of tenure is a valuable aid in attracting persons of ability, in encouraging their retention, and in providing a stable environment in which full effort can be given to teaching and other responsibilities within the institution.

Viewed positively as it should be, academic tenure, therefore, is in reality a basic personnel practice which assists in attracting and retaining the very best teaching personnel for our institution. Therefore, academic tenure combined with the concepts of academic freedom and academic responsibility is thus essential to the success of our institution in fulfilling its mission.

In fact, the granting of tenure is one of the most important decisions, if not the most important decision, made within an institution in the development of an outstanding faculty. It is a highly selective process which recognizes the individual as a continuing member of the faculty based on performance during a trial period. Importance of this decision to the institution dictates that affirmative action in awarding tenure be taken only when there is no reasonable doubt of the individual's long term superior contributions to the goals of Tyler State College.

It follows, therefore, that it is of the utmost importance that particularly during the years of probationary service, the faculty member be advised and counseled by the appropriate administrators within the institution concerning progress toward tenure which is dictated by annual, or more regular, evaluations by students, his peers, administrators and others within the institution.

In the spirit of providing a policy on academic freedom, academic responsibility and tenure for Tyler State College which will make our institution a better institution of higher learning, I hereby endorse and recommend the attached proposal pertaining to academic freedom, academic responsibility, and tenure to the Board of Regents for consideration and adoption.

4. Southern Association of Colleges and Schools

Official confirmation is expected within a few days concerning the
interview for Tyler State College pursuant to our accreditation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. This interview is expected to be conducted on the date of October 28, 1974 in the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools headquarters in Atlanta, Georgia.

In accordance with Southern Association policy, Board Chairman B. H. McVicker, M. D., the two vice presidents, Dr. Frank H. Smyrl, and I will attend and participate in the interview.

5. Fiscal Authority for Contract Changes During Phase I Construction

Proposed procedures for fiscal authority for contract changes during Phase I construction are specified in Attachment #2. The advantages pursuant to the proposed procedures are listed as a part of the Attachment on page three.

Therefore, in order to provide for efficient and effective administration of Phase I construction, I hereby endorse and recommend the procedures contained in Attachment #2 to the Board of Regents for consideration and adoption.