

## **Statement by Dean Tom Robinson**

### **Delivered to the 3/17/03 Meeting of the College of Health Sciences Faculty**

The purpose of today's faculty meeting is to discuss the current situation initiated by Dr. Holsinger's proposal to create a new College of Public Health and Health Sciences, using the College of Health Sciences as the base. The faculty of our College must decide in its deliberations what information is necessary to obtain and how this College would like to proceed with discussions and debate leading to a recommendation regarding this proposal and any other proposals. In essence, the faculty of this College is required to exert leadership and their proper role in faculty governance regarding this issue. Today is the beginning of that process.

Some say, Why? Why do anything? Why respond and make recommendations? We shouldn't be non-cooperative. Why not wait for the final administrative decision? After all it is a "done deal." The answer is because it is our duty to carry out our expected role in faculty governance.

Universities are a very different kind of organization. There are two parallel structures in place in Universities . There is the corporate structure - more bureaucratic in nature that manages the business of the enterprise. Then there is the academy - the academic or collegial structure that tends to the business of faculty. They are two very different kind of structures representing different cultures with different values and a quite different mode of decision making.

Faculty governance has its roots in the English, German and Continental Universities. "The inheritors of this tradition, today's faculty members, generally manifest a catholic concern and a claim to a comprehensive competence in a wide assortment of matters of institutional policy and administration. The breadth of their claim is illustrated by the report of the Special Committee on Faculty Organization and Procedures at Cornell University (April 1957~. This report on 'the functions of the University Faculty' claims responsibility for the faculty for initiating, considering, and making recommendations on questions of educational policy or problems arising therefrom, whether concerning (i) current operations of the University, or (ii) long-range policy (such as admission policies, proposals for new degrees, establishment of new educational and research units, the size of the University, auxiliary cultural agencies, and questions concerning the status and privileges of the Faculty).' And the report interprets the term 'questions of educational policy' broadly to include questions that involve '(i) conditions facilitating instruction, study research, publication and other scholarly activities of faculty members and students or (ii) the general welfare of the academic community.'" (pp. 98-99. John J. Corson, Governance of Colleges and Universities, 1960).

The 1960's were a unique and unusual time for higher education. It was a period of intense growth and expansion which created very complex organizations and an environment for shared governance. The Cornell statement pre-sages the Academic Revolution, the title of a text by Jennets and Risen and the apt description of the development of faculty rights and prerogatives over the course of the twentieth century. Jeneks and Riesman report that "nineteenth century college presidents also tended to be far more domineering than they are today, carrying the business of the college around in their brief cases or even in their heads, entrusting very little to committees of faculty members or lower level bureaucrats, and imposing their personal stamp on the entire college....this was because the faculty was still quite unprofessionalized." (p. 6 Christopher Jencks and David Riesman, The Academic

Revolution, 1968). The effect of the German research Universities on American higher education in the late 19th century was an emphasis on academic freedom (*lehrfreiheit* and *lernfreiheit*- the freedom to teach and the freedom to learn) and the Ph.D. degree with the research initiative. These influences went a long way toward the professionalization of the faculty discussed in the Jencks and Riesman argument. "From the very start the professionalization of university professors brought conflict on many fronts. Late nineteenth and early twentieth century academic histories report many battles in which the basic question was whether the president and trustees or the faculty would determine the shape of the curriculum, the content of particular courses, or the use of particular books. The professors . . . lost most of the publicized battles, but they won the war. Today faculty control over these matters is rarely challenged." (p. 15, Jencks and Riesman, 1968).

The AAUP formalized faculty governance in its 1966 Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities. "The variety and complexity of the tasks performed by institutions of higher education produce an inescapable interdependence among governing board, administration, faculty, students, and others. The relationship calls for adequate communication among these components, and full opportunity for appropriate joint planning and effort."....."The framing and execution of long-range plans, one of the most important aspects of institutional responsibility, should be a central and continuing concern in the academic community." ....Effective planning demands that the broadest possible exchange of information and opinion should be the rule of communication among the components of a college or university. The channels of communication should be established and maintained by joint endeavor. " (AAUP Statement, 1966).

Although UK's charter included faculty governance in it, it was not really implemented until Dr. Oswald came to UK. Faculty governance in real measure was brought here by President Oswald during this very time of growth, change, and institutionalization of joint governance around the country. Hence, amongst the functions of the University of Kentucky Senate are to "...recommend to the Provost on the establishment, alteration, and abolition of educational units in the University System." (UK Governing Regulations, Part IV-3.) John Oswald established a system here that recognized joint governance and for about forty years, the University of Kentucky has indeed functioned in this way. Note however that the ultimate responsibility and authority still lies in the Board and the President. Presidents however are very keen on consulting with the faculty and tend to follow their advice.

When I first received Dr. Holsinger's document regarding the establishment of a College of Public Health and Health Sciences, I shared it with the Administrative Council, I said that the process is our best friend. I believed that then and I believe it now. UK does subscribe to shared governance. The faculty governance process within and outside the College will help UK make the right decision in relation to Public Health education for the University itself, and ultimately for the benefit of the people of the Commonwealth.

As a College, we are amongst the best. We are looked at by many others nationally and internationally as the model. We have, indeed, completed the College. We have recruited the best faculty and students. We have finally gained approval of our full array of graduate and doctoral levels programs. We have the best building in the country. I believed that when we reached this point that our challenge would be to increase the qualitative measures of success. I was wrong. The challenge is to ourselves to

invoke our responsibility as faculty to do our duty to collect appropriate information; to discuss and debate our form of governance and our structure. And to recommend what we feel is in the best interest of the current programs of the College; the Public Health School, and the University. It is really quite simple. Does faculty governance mean anything or not? I am here to tell you that it does mean something. We have an opportunity, indeed the responsibility to recommend. The College of Health Science voice should provide clarity to this issue. There should be no equivocation.

The process will proceed and prevail and what comes of it is truly related to how we respond. In the meantime, we are the best at what we do. We need to refocus on our core mission. We must not be defeatist. We must not feed the rumor mill. We must be professional in our relationships to one another. We must do our duty and step up to the plate on where we stand not what we think others want to hear.

Do not fall prey to the feeling that this is a "done deal." I believe that Dr. Nietzel's recent memo, which you have been provided, brings this concept back to what the Futures Committee originally recommended and that is to establish a group of faculty to examine the future of the School of Public Health. He is going to establish a working group to study the feasibility of the merger of various existing units to accomplish the goals established by the President, i.e. to consider alternatives to the development of a free-standing College of Public Health that would advance the

University's research and educational capacity in the field of Public Health, that would position a Public Health unit to become accredited, and that would require a minimum of additional administrative resources.

What I have said today is the response to why bother- why not wait to see what happens question. We must participate in the process; hence, ensuring that it is an open process.

So today we are here to begin that process which determines our recommendation. Faculty Council will and should manage the process for this College.

Today Faculty Council will discuss the process of establishing new units, etc; discuss what we do know and things that we don't know; and what are our next steps.

I know that three of those next steps will be to recommend to the Provost names for the committee that he will charge to examine the feasibility; determine how we will keep the dialogue going with our representatives and a template for our April 28, 2003 faculty meeting where the Provost will attend and be prepared to discuss this and other academic issues.

Now I would like Faculty Council to have someone join me here to begin our discussions today.