

FACULTY SENATE MEMORANDUM

To: Connie Tipsword, 231 HA

cc: President Coleman; Michael Wichman (President, Staff Council); Lana Zak (President, Student Government)

From: Jonathan Carlson, President, Faculty Senate

Date: December 6, 1999

Re: Proposal for amendment to University Safety and Security Committee Charter

Dear Connie,

The Faculty Council considered the University Safety and Security Committee's proposed amendments to its charter at a Council meeting on November 30, 1999. For reasons described below, the Council was unwilling to forward the proposed changes to the Senate for its approval.

The bottom line was that the Council did not feel that the changes were necessary, and it feared that in some cases the changes would prevent the faculty, students and staff on the Committee from having input into important policies on which their input should be sought.

1. The proposal to eliminate current item b(2) from the Committee's charge

The first proposed change was to eliminate the following provision from the Committee's charge:

the Committee shall . . . (b) advise on policies respecting the selection, training and assignment of security personnel, including their assignment to special status or responsibility which may include peace officer status and the right to carry arms.

The Committee's memorandum in support of this change stated that the change was recommended for several reasons, including i) that "the committee does not now nor have they in recent memory advised on the hiring of Department of Public Safety personnel," a matter which is generally governed by the hiring practices established by the Department of Human Service, ii) that there is no "special status" category among DPS personnel, and iii) the issue of right to carry arms is decided by the Board of Regents and the administrative branches of the University.

The Council was simply not persuaded that any of these reasons was a basis for depriving the Committee of its authority to advise on these issues. In particular, the issue of the right of security personnel to bear arms is an issue of great interest and importance to faculty, students and staff. The fact that the issue is ultimately decided by administrators and the Board of Regents is no reason to deprive the committee of its right to advise on this issue. Indeed, if we denied committees the right to advise on issues which are ultimately decided by administrators or the Board, then most advisory committees would have no responsibilities at all! The whole point of

the advisory committee structure is to seek input from faculty, students and staff on issues that affect them so that the decision makers can be better informed when they make their decisions.

If the "special status" category described in the charter no longer exists (and, therefore, no one could ever be assigned to it), then that reference could be deleted from the Committee's charge without eliminating the other parts of provision b(2).

2. Building watch activities

The Committee also proposed to eliminate item 2(e) concerning building watch activities by faculty and students "because no such programs currently exist."

Frankly, the Council was not sure what to make of this suggestion. Item 2(e) in the Committee's charge authorizes the Committee to advise on building watch activities "*IF the need for such efforts arises.*" In other words, the charge does not assume that building watch activities exist; it merely says that if such activities become necessary, the Committee should advise on the participation of faculty, students and staff in those activities. The question then is whether the Committee wishes the change because there are currently no building watch activities (which doesn't seem to the Council a good reason to change the charge) or because the Committee believes that no such activities would ever be necessary (or utilized) in the future? I, for one, can foresee the possibility of a need for building watches in a variety of circumstances. It may be, however, that the University would never contemplate using students, faculty or staff as building monitors, even if there were a need for vigilance. If that is the case, then perhaps the charge should be amended.

At this point, however, the Council could not see the need for amending the charge. More to the point, however, the Council is of the firm belief that the matters covered in current items 2(b) and 2(e) are matters on which faculty, staff and student input and advice is perfectly appropriate and desirable. The Council was not willing to endorse a change that would deny faculty a voice on these issues, if and when they arise.

Thank you for your time and efforts. If you have any questions at all about the Council's action and the reasons for it, please give me a call. I'd be happy to provide any clarification or further information that I can.