

NORTH HARRIS COUNTY COLLEGE UNITED FACULTY

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THE ADVOCATE

NHCC United Faculty
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Dean Meets with Union

by Alan Hall

At his request, South Campus members of NHCC United Faculty met with Dr. Joe McMillian on January 15 and February 4, 1988, to discuss ways to improve the instructional program. One serious concern that we raised in our first meeting was classroom environment, a concern involving two issues: noise levels and temperatures. First, we are bothered by the problem of noise between classrooms (from films and lectures) and from the hallways. We recommended wall insulation and carpet to help reduce distracting noise levels. We also addressed classroom temperatures and air circulation problems and urged the administration to continue seeking remedies so that students will have a comfortable environment in which to learn.

In terms of equipment, we noted that the photocopying machines we use are worn out and recommended the purchase of new ones. Dr. McMillian informed us that new machines have been purchased and will be in place shortly. We also recommended more computers for use in faculty suites as well as an administrative effort to include faculty service and use in its new administrative hardware and software.

Other topics included administrative withdrawals, committee work, and the LRC. On the LRC, we recommended that copy machines be moved to a separate room to reduce noise levels, that the microfiche catalogue be replaced by a computerized system, that weekend hours be extended, and that books that will be heavily used be ordered for all campuses.

During our second meeting Dr. McMillian and union members compared opinions regarding office hours, campus hours, four-day weeks, thirty-five hour weeks during registration and

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finals weeks, quality of instruction, and faculty evaluation. We found much common ground with the Dean on these topics. He also shared information with us on the Tadlock report and discussed possible reorganization structures. Most noteworthy was a focus on the qualifications for a division head. With the opening of the Tomball Campus, Dr. McMillian will be selecting two new division heads, and he invited the union to submit a form list of characteristics that faculty desire in a division head. Dr. Robert Miller of the English faculty agreed to collect data and write a summary report for Dr. McMillian. The basic points of that report are as follows.

Statement of Qualities and Expectations of Division Chairs

I. Hiring

- A. Division faculty members should be able to interview and screen prospective candidates for their division chair. A committee might be formed representing all of the departments within a division.
- B. The division chair's position should have a three-to-five year tenure. At the end of that time, the current chair, and others within the division, could apply for the position.
- C. The division chair should have graduate credit, or at least upper division credit, in every subject he or she supervises -- or he or she should make a commitment to gain such credit within a determined time after accepting the post.

II. Performance

- A. The division chair should be fair to all departments, applying all rules consistently.
- B. The division chair should show intellectual as well as managerial leadership.
- C. The division chair should be objective, with the ability to see the merits on both sides of an issue.
- D. The division chair should be energetic in his or her leadership of the division and take an active role in reviewing and developing curricula within the division.
- E. The division chair should be not only open to suggestions made by faculty for improving the division, but also an active advocate for those suggestions before upper echelons of management regardless of the chair's own views or feared administrative views. (Too many times division chairs are viewed as being the linemen of upper management whose job it is to stop suggestions from getting to or bothering the backfield.)
- F. The division chair should have the ability and courage to deal directly and explicitly with individual instructors who need guidance.