Universities Act

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Senate

FROM: Tom Brose

SUBJECT: Senate's Responsibilities under Sec. 46(f) Universities Act.

DATE: October 3rd, 1966

Sec. 46(f) (T)he Board has power...
with the approval of the Senate, to provide for the establishment and maintenance of Faculties and departments with suitable teaching staff, and for such chairs, fellowships, scholarships, exhibitions, bursaries, prizes, and courses of instruction in any subject as may seem meet to the Board and Senate, except for theology courses intended as training for the ministry of any religion, and with the approval of the Senate to discontinue any Faculty, department, chair, fellowship, scholarship, exhibition, bursary, prize, or course of instruction.

This memorandum seeks to open the discussion on Senate's responsibilities regarding the "maintenance of...departments with suitable teaching staff" as mentioned in the Act. In our several months of existence, we have not accepted the full burden of our responsibilities. I hope our discussion could clarify Senate's role and lead to the creation of Senate committee or committees concerned with staffing, promotion, and tenure in the Faculties.

Since the essential criteria for either hiring, promoting, or granting of tenure are academic, it seems only reasonable to expect to have Senate enter the picture at some stage, if only to give approval after review to proposals of the departments as accepted by the Board. To date, Senate has been absent and silent.

There are also practical reasons in favor of Senate's participation in this process, even though 54(b) of the Act gives Senate the power "to provide for the government, management, and carrying-out of curriculum, instruction, and education offered by the University". Senate could bring both the public and a wide segment of the Faculty, selected by the Faculty, into the academic process of establishing criteria for hiring, promoting and granting tenure. The present system of dealing with these matters is very overlapping. Heads make recommendations which are reviewed by a committee composed of Heads, and then subject to another committee struck by the President and composed of some of the Heads and full professors. Senate's committee could be a review committee as well as an appeal committee within the Act. If the role of Senate as the academic decision-maker is to be made fully meaningful, then the academic criteria for promotion, tenure and the like should be presented, at some stage, to Senate.

Furthermore, Senate as a body concerned with the academic consequences of departmental staffing could review, prior to giving its approval, the Board's decisions which, in the main, are determined by economic considerations. One

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could maintain a situation in which the Senate might have to inform the Board on any academic dangers resulting from Board decisions to limit staff for economic reasons. Also, the changes in students' academic interests might result in departments being temporarily overstaffed, but decisions made on economic grounds by the Board could result in danger to such academic values as a broad liberal education.

Finally, I am not here suggesting that Senate attempt to spread itself too thin by keeping a hand in all aspects of the university, but I think that the maintenance of departments involves essential questions of an academic nature, and Senate should not shirk its responsibility. Senate should realize, moreover, that if it does not assume its full role, its function will be performed by other persons and other bodies in the university.

THB/kc