

Appendix A,
July 14, 1969

Acad. Learning

To: All members of Senate
From: M. A. Lebowitz
Date: July 13, 1969

Subject: Problems in the procedures of the Faculty of Arts as they
relate to Senate deliberations

At the June 2 meeting of Senate, I indicated my concern that members of the Faculty of Arts had not had an opportunity to discuss the merits of several new courses brought to Senate for approval by the Dean of Arts. While I agreed that Faculty had the right to decide on its internal procedures, I argued that Senate had the responsibility under the Universities Act to determine whether sufficient examination of issues had occurred on matters brought forward from the Faculty. (As indicated by several motions and votes, a number of other Senators also were concerned about lack of discussion in the Faculty of Arts.) Accordingly, I was critical of Senate's action at that time and voted against several items "on the grounds that Senate had voted with full knowledge that the Faculty of Arts had not discussed the items in a full meeting of the Faculty of Arts." (Minutes, p.9).

As the Minutes show (p.7), I was asked by the Chairman to prepare a paper in line with my criticisms of the procedures currently followed in the Faculty, and at that time I withdrew my pending motion for referral.

While the accompanying paper provides for Senate members a summary of existing rules and practices in the Faculty of Arts, of particular importance should be the discussion of the effects of current practices both upon academic matters before the Senate tonight (July 14) and also upon the long-run quality of academic decisions in the Faculty.

Sincerely,

(Signed) "Michael A. Lebowitz"

I. Faculty of Arts Procedures

At the present time, the Faculty of Arts is governed according to procedures adopted by referendum on April 11, 1969. Sent out on March 26, 1969, the referendum did not provide an opportunity for faculty members off-campus to vote, and it appears to have been sent out without any significant preceding discussion. Out of approximately 190 eligible faculty members (over 220 are listed in the 1969-70 Calendar), 76 members voted in the referendum.

Formally an amendment to existing rules and procedures (which appear, at any rate, to have been suspended), the Dean's letter noted that a 51% majority would be sufficient to pass any specific amendment. As often occurs with referenda which have not been discussed adequately in advance, there appears to have been some confusion in this vote. The Dean's letter of March 26 specifically pointed out that:

there is no formal provision for Referenda in the 1966 (current) procedures of the Faculty. Under that item in the referendum (pages 2 and 3) there are two alternatives: you should vote for one or the other.

Unfortunately, the majority of faculty members voting in the referendum voted for both alternatives. Under the circumstances, the Dean or the Dean's committee appears to have declared the alternative which received more "yes" votes (40 to 39) the victor. Both of the mutually exclusive alternatives, it may be noted, received a majority of the votes cast on that particular item. Neither, on the other hand, received a two-thirds majority (specified in Robert's Rules of Order) of the total number of valid ballots (69) in the referendum.

The specific aspects of interest to Senate of the current Faculty rules are the procedures relating to Referenda and Meetings. Item 3.1 of the rules indicates that:

After due notice and debate at an ordinary or special meeting of the Faculty of Arts, questions of substantial importance to the policies and goals of the Faculty shall be sent out as referenda to those members of Faculty officially on campus during the applicable semester. The need for referenda on specific questions shall be determined by the membership, or by the Dean, subject to challenge by the membership.

In addition to a majority decision at a Faculty meeting, the initiative for a referendum may come from the Dean or from a petition signed by at least one-quarter of Faculty members on campus (Item 3.2). Of these three methods for generating a referendum, only the last two are relevant at the present time. The Faculty of Arts has had no meetings to discuss "questions of substantial importance to the policies and goals of the Faculty." All our recent referenda appear to have been initiated by the Dean.

Unfortunately, the procedures for calling Faculty meetings are not entirely clear. Item 1.1 indicates that the Dean shall give "timely notice" of meetings; and Item 1.2, that such notice shall include the agenda and any relevant material. Nowhere does the Dean appear to be given the explicit power to call meetings. (This oversight may in fact explain why he has not called any meetings.) The only reference to the calling of a meeting appears in Item 1.3:

The Faculty is reminded that any votes taken may be rescinded by vote at a subsequent meeting, and that special meetings for the purpose of rescinding or other reasons may be called by petition of 50 Faculty members.

(It should be noted that a pending referendum for Joint Faculty would give one-eighth of the faculty the power to call a meeting of Joint Faculty. This could create the paradoxical situation in which Faculty of Arts members find it easier to call a meeting of Joint Faculty than one of their own.)

While there thus appears to be a mechanism for calling special meetings, there appears to be no way to hold a general or ordinary meeting of the Faculty -- unless the Dean deems it desirable. Even here, there seems to have been a definite intention on the part of the voting faculty that there be at least one meeting of the Faculty each semester. Item 5.1 (Quorum) notes that the "Dean shall announce the quorum thrice annually in the call for the first meeting of the Faculty in each semester." The first meeting of the Faculty of Arts for Summer, 1969, has yet to occur.

Under the current Faculty of Arts procedures, in short, it is possible for a Dean, who is disinclined to permit faculty discussion, to avoid calling a meeting and to conduct necessary Faculty business by referenda (not previously discussed at a meeting.) The only resort in this event for faculty who wish to discuss general faculty business or "issues of substantial importance to the policies and goals of the Faculty" is to run around, petition in hand -- a process hardly conducive to providing an atmosphere for sound academic judgments.

For Senate, our main concern should be with the quality of reports from the Faculty, and we should be certain at all times that all members of the Faculty have had a full opportunity to discuss academic matters of substantial importance at a Faculty meeting before the report of Faculty is brought to Senate. While Section 64 of the Universities Act indicates that no general rules or regulations made by a Faculty are effective or enforceable until Senate has approved them (a process which does not appear to have occurred in this case), Senate could best show its disapproval of current procedures of the Faculty of Arts by returning its reports to the Faculty for discussion.

II. Short-Run Effects of Current Procedures

New Courses (S.247)

As mentioned earlier, there is no opportunity at present for Faculty to discuss the content of new courses. The Curriculum Committee meets, makes its recommendations and Faculty receives a referendum. Other than in the Curriculum Committee, there is no discussion of courses from members of associated disciplines; no prior notice of potential new courses is given so that questions can be directed through Curriculum Committee members. This procedure, eliminating faculty discussion, appears to be directly contrary to that in the Faculties of Science and Education. Again, the only recourse for a faculty member interested in a general faculty discussion of a new course is to begin a petition -- and to look for 49 other faculty members. This procedure, again, is hardly one designed to provide sound academic judgments, and it is not one to which the Senate should subscribe by accepting the decisions which are its result -- if Senate is performing its duties under the Universities Act.

Report on Graduate Studies (S.245, S.245a)

On this matter (which certainly is of "substantial importance to the policies and goals" of the Faculty), there appears to be little evidence of direct faculty involvement. The Dean's letter of December 12, 1968 to the Registrar notes that the Faculty of Arts voted against the implementation of the Harper Report in a referendum. Since then, there appears to have been no effort to obtain Faculty views even by referendum. Paper 245(a) indicates that "a major submission was made through the Faculty of Science following discussion in that body, and through the Faculty of Education." The Registrar informed me on July 11 that, other than the Dean's note of December 12, there have been no submissions from the Faculty of Arts.

Senate now faces the prospect of approving a proposal with major implications for the university -- a proposal which has received no general discussion in the largest Faculty in the university. It is quite possible that a majority of the Faculty of Arts may not understand the implications of this paper, may not even know it is being discussed in Senate, or may believe it was laid to rest in the referendum noted in the Dean's letter of December 12. Since the paper proposes the removal of faculty members who are candidates for higher degrees from graduate studies committees, there may be serious implications -- which certainly should have received general discussion in the Faculty of Arts. The failure to call a meeting may, in this case, reflect the Dean's judgment that this is not a matter of "substantial importance to the policies and goals of the Faculty."

Senate should suspend judgment on this crucial issue until there is an opportunity for a complete discussion of this paper in a meeting of the Faculty of Arts.

Academic Planning (S.215, S.215(a), S.215(b), S.215(c))

The paper on Academic Planning, presented to Senate on April 8, again has not received any general discussion within the Faculty of Arts. Again, in contrast, both the Faculty of Science and the Faculty of Education held meetings and have submitted reports of those meetings to Senate. (S.215a, S.215b)

Since Senate specifically directed the paper back to the faculties for comment, a report has indeed come back to the Senate. But it is only "the Preliminary Report of the Faculty of Arts." Paper 215(b), which consists of reports from the meetings of the Dean's Advisory Committee (Committee of Acting Heads) and the Faculty of Arts Academic Planning Committee, is particularly revealing, however, in its indication of how far we have departed from the concept of a Faculty. Following a statement of the conclusions of the Dean's Advisory Committee (p.2), the Dean notes:

From the above, it is apparent that the Faculty of Arts wishes to retain

We, of course, do not know what the Faculty of Arts wishes. A process appears to have occurred, however, in which the Dean has substituted for the Faculty and the Faculty views, the views of his committees. Senate, which expected to learn what the Faculty of Arts believes, should wait until the Faculty has had the opportunity to discuss Paper 215 in a meeting in the same manner as the other two faculties.

III. Long Run Effects

In the short run, the effect of current practices in the Faculty of Arts is both to deny faculty members the opportunity to express their views on current academic matters before the university among peers from other departments in the Faculty and also to deny Senate the product of such open discussions. It is likely that the effect of these practices can be seen in matters besides those before the Senate tonight, and the full extent of the problem may be uncovered only by a careful study by the Senate of the practices of the Faculty of Arts.

As important for Senate as the short-run effects, however, are the potential long-run effects. The absence of Faculty meetings means both that Senators from Arts are unable to inform the Arts Faculty of matters before Senate and also that they are unable to bring a representative view to the Senate from the Faculty. Rather than acting as representatives, they cannot help but bring their own views only or those of their close associates. In the absence of faculty meetings, the selection of candidates for Senate must also be affected; without an opportunity for Faculty members to evaluate individuals from their contribution to faculty meetings, Senate candidacy can easily reflect departmental politics and political intrigue. Little else will be left.

The absence of faculty meetings also cannot help but foster fragmentation within the Faculty, reduce contacts among individuals from different disciplines -- and, in general, bias academic decisions against interdisciplinary approaches within the university. This same lack of faculty meetings also reduces the sense of identification with the university; without faculty meetings (and, in some cases, departmental meetings) faculty members will naturally view their position here as paid individuals rather than as members of a university community.

Senate, the highest academic body in the university, has the responsibility to deal directly with these issues. If it is truly concerned with matters of academic soundness and the well-being of the university, it will not seek an expedient solution.