



UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA

COLUMBIA, S.C. 29208

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

March 6, 1990

Dr. William C. Bruce  
Faculty Secretary  
University of South Carolina at Spartanburg  
Spartanburg, SC 29303

Dear Dr. Bruce:

Thank you for sending me a copy of your letter of February 21, 1990 to Mr. Alexander Gilchrist, Chair of the USC System Academic Planning Committee. It is a courtesy which was not extended to me by the writers of the letters from the Aiken and the Coastal Carolina campuses. As you identify your position substantially with theirs, I take it for granted that their message is fundamentally the same.

I notice with regret that you clearly misunderstood the message of the USC Columbia Faculty Welfare Committee. Let me summarize the major ingredients of the report:

FACTS

1. There has not been for the past fifteen years, and there is not now, enough money to pay faculty salaries at an adequate level.
2. The level of overall compensation places us at the bottom of the southeast. Benefits could, of course, be raised unilaterally by the university through an increase in salaries, but see Point 1.
3. There is not enough money for operating budgets commensurate with academic requirements.
4. There is not enough money for maintenance of buildings and grounds. Only two or three buildings on the Columbia campus are in perfect repair, all others suffer from what is euphemistically called "deferred maintenance" and tend to look twice their age.

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5. There are only two sources of revenue. One of these is tuition, already the highest in the southeast and difficult to raise further. The other one is state appropriations, which have been inadequate to pay for everything the university has wanted to do and are not likely to increase in the future.

#### CONCLUSIONS

1. The university is overextended in its commitments. It cannot adequately acquit itself of its present obligations to faculty, operations, and maintenance.
2. If the financial situation is to improve, it can be done only internally, through a re-thinking of priorities and a policy of austerity.

In order to accomplish the last point, the Faculty Welfare Committee introduced a number of recommendations, all of which were intended to take a sharp look at the university's operations and expenditures, from high to low, covering all activities, and affecting all campuses alike.

I wish to point out that so far no one--repeat, no one--has disagreed with the facts and the conclusions presented by the Faculty Welfare Committee. Divided minds enter only when we come to what can be done about the fiscal situation. Especially when it comes to potential sacrifices, the response so far has been rather self-centered and self-serving. Sacrifices? By all means, as long as someone else makes them.

If, in a situation where the budget currently is unable to meet all obligations satisfactorily, the university adds programs or expands programs without additional funding, either through tuition or special appropriations from the legislature, it can only be done at the expense of existing programs. Except for a few people, either individual professors or administrators, the majority of the faculty, through continued inadequate salaries, and operational budgets will have to bear the additional burden.

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The four- and two-year campuses would be entitled to outrage if the recommendations affected only them, if sacrifices or rethinking were expected only from them. That is clearly not the case.

You might even be justified with your resentments if the Columbia faculty intended to dictate your future course of action. That also is not the case. Regardless of what your ambitions may be, the USC Columbia Faculty Welfare Committee proceeded from the assumption that all campuses are part of a system which jointly suffers from financial difficulties and that the shortcomings diagnosed on the Columbia campus equally afflict the two- and four-year campuses.

Perhaps the USC Columbia Faculty Welfare Committee was wrong. If we take your response at face value, then apparently there is no shortage of money on your campus to pay for operations, maintain buildings and grounds, and raise your faculty salaries. The last time I looked, however, faculty salaries on the other campuses were even lower than on the Columbia campus.

I trust that as the Faculty Secretary on the Spartanburg Campus you will disseminate this letter to the members of your faculty.

Sincerely yours,



Peter Becker  
Past Chair  
Faculty Welfare Committee

cc: Mr. Alexander Gilchrist  
Dr. Gunther Holst  
Dr. Ron Ingle  
Dr. Blanche Premo-Hopkins  
Dr. John Duffy  
Dr. Art Smith