



THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA

AT
CHAPEL HILL

School of Information and Library Science
Phone# (919) 962-8366
Fax# (919) 962-8071

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
CB# 3360, 100 Manning Hall
Chapel Hill, N.C. 27599-3360

December 28, 1999

Joanne Gard Marshall
Dean
School of Information and Library Science
CB 3360 Manning Hall

Dear Dean Marshall:

Thank you for meeting with me last week to discuss the outcome of the SILS Personnel Committee's letter to you, "Re-Appointment Review of Assistant Professor Gregory Newby." As we discussed, I understand the outcome of the review and am enthusiastic about building a strong tenure case for myself.

This letter is to point out some factual errors in the Personnel Committee's letter. These are not critical concerns, but I believe it is important for the record to be correct.

The letter states, "Dr. Newby has been involved in distance education. This provides a useful opportunity for anyone teaching technology-based classes, however, distance education involves a considerable amount of time." The letter seems to advise that distance education may be a poor use of my time. In fact, however, I have never delivered any class at SILS by distance education. All my classes have been campus-based. Although I have made use of electronic mailing lists and discussion forums, this is supplemental to campus-based instruction and typical of many SILS classes.

It may be the letter's statement is directed at my work with a small UNC grant to develop cross-institutional doctoral seminars using distance education. In fact, I am not planning on instructing such seminars, but instead am trying to make the technology available to any SILS faculty, including me, to use for any instructional purpose. The only plan I have for the use of distance education in my classes is to schedule one or two remote guest lectures for my spring classes. If this is what the letter means by "distance education," and I am being discouraged from this type of activity, I would appreciate clarification.

The most important factual error in the letter is the statement, "he was hired to teach in the undergraduate curriculum." In fact, this is exactly the opposite of my discussions with past Dean Barbara Moran. When I was interviewed and subsequently hired in 1997,

it was explicitly stated throughout the interview process that there was no division between faculty who taught undergraduate students and those who teach graduates. Furthermore, there are no statements in any of my hiring documents regarding the teaching of undergraduate students versus graduates.

The letter offers the recommendation, “that Dr. Newby engage more in undergraduate teaching.” While this may have been offered as a suggestion that reinforces my perceived strength and value for the SILS undergraduate minor, it was not. Instead, it was presented as a criticism, indicating that my teaching agenda is evidently not in accord with the reason I was hired.

One final factual problem is related to my choices in courses to teach. In fact, the control I have over which courses I teach has been limited. In particular, I taught INLS 180, “Human Information Processing,” during fall 1999 (and recently was informed I would likely be scheduled to teach it again in fall 2000). This course is not consistent with my unique teaching strengths (information technology and related topics), and I have often stated my reluctance to teach it to you and Associate Dean Helen Tibbo. For the letter to be critical of my being, “primarily involved in graduate level teaching,” is insensitive to the limited ability I have to choose which courses I will teach.

Overall, I believe the letter offers sound advice, especially regarding my research and publication productivity. The letter is supportive of my contributions to SILS, and generally appreciative of my abilities. This response to the letter is not intended as a criticism of the Personnel Committee’s work, but as a necessary correction of factual errors that, if left uncorrected, could be a source of difficulty in the future.

Thank you for taking time to consider my responses. I am looking forward to a continuing positive academic experience in SILS.

Sincerely,

Gregory B. Newby
Assistant Professor

Cc:

Robert Losee, Chair, SILS Personnel Committee, Subcommittee B