

MEMO

TO: Provost Nancy Barrett

FROM: Faculty Senate Committee on Academic Affairs

RE: Merger of SLIS with College of Communication

CC: Dr. Ronald Rogers, Graduate School

The Faculty Senate Committee for Academic Affairs has reviewed your memo of 7 January 1997 regarding the proposed merger of the School of Library and Information Studies with the College of Communication. We have several documentary concerns which are detailed below. We cited similar concerns in a previous merger involving the College of Engineering. We hope that you and the Deans will use our comments as examples of what to include in any future "merger memos."

1. The memo contains no "summary of all responses received" from faculty affected by the proposed merger (see Section II.3 of the "merger document"). Such a summary is crucial to evaluating the impact of the proposed merger on affected faculty.
2. We are concerned about the tenure, promotion and salary prospects for all faculty affected by the proposed merger. In particular probationary faculty are particularly vulnerable in departmental mergers and closures, but are not identified. Are any of the affected faculty going up for tenure or promotion this fall? If so, will their new colleagues be familiar enough with their work to assess them fairly? In the longer term, how will the merger affect future tenure, promotion and salary reviews?
3. We cannot tell whether the affected faculty received copies of the relevant guidance document: "Principles and Procedures for Merger or Discontinuance of Academic Units."
4. The bulk of the 7 January memo is composed of a task force report, which does not list the membership of the task force. Therefore, we cannot assess whether SLIS and the College of Communication were represented.
5. The rationale cited in the memo is not very specific to the proposed merger. For example, increased collaboration and sharing of infrastructure are listed as motivating factors, but these benefits would also accrue in a merger with the College of Arts & Sciences (according to the task force report).
6. There is no discussion of the physical and logistical implications of such a merger. Will SLIS faculty be moved? If so, what would be the impact upon other University units?

These are the major concerns elicited by our review of your memo documenting the proposed departmental merger. In light of our concerns, we look forward to receiving the necessary supporting

documentation.

Raymond White & Peggy Jessee (co-chairs)
Faculty Senate Committee on Academic Affairs