

EAST CAROLINA UNIVERSITY
GREENVILLE, NORTH CAROLINA 27858-4353

College of Arts and Sciences
Department of Physics

August 26, 1988

Telephone (919) 757-6739

Faculty Senate
East Carolina University

Dear Senator:

I am writing to you for two purposes. The first purpose is to withdraw from consideration for the new Search Committee for the Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs. The reason for this action and my second purpose is simply that I want to communicate to you some observations about the search process which I couldn't do as a candidate for nomination.

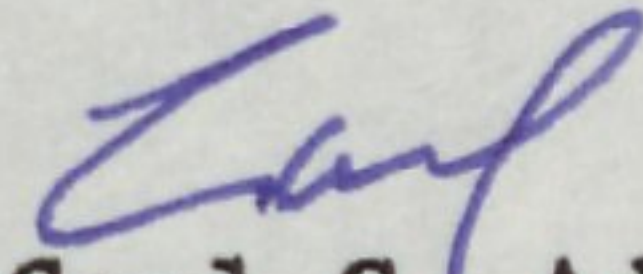
Several years ago I approached the Governance Committee with the purpose of urging them to reform the search process. The situation then was the same as it is now; no code of ethics exists for the guidance of this process and its committees. This omission encourages some individuals in our community to use rumor, contumely and, at times, even character assassination in an attempt to influence search committees. It was clear to me then, and still is today, that many faculty who I otherwise respect thought such inappropriate attempts at influence were justified.

At least two of our candidates were subjects of such attacks. It is deplorable that truth would be so lightly valued at a university. One long-time senator made a serious charge to me against one of the candidates. I said in reply that "as professionals we should seek to establish the facts of this charge." The senator countered with, "You have been in the Senate long enough to realize that facts don't make any difference. So much for professionalism at East Carolina University." I am proud to say that facts did make a difference to this Search Committee; specifics were investigated and mindless contumelies ignored. Nonetheless, it is a crass situation when the expectation exists among many that anonymous, unsupported, damning generalizations should play a role in the deliberations of search committees and in the search process as a whole. This is the very antithesis of what a university should stand for. I strongly believe that a code of ethics for searches, applicable to the entire academic community, should be developed by the Senate. I think that the Senate should go on record to the effect that facts are indeed important to it and to East Carolina University.

Based on my experience, I believe a chief feature of such a code is that search committees should only consider charges which are backed by specific evidence or instances which in turn are of the sort that their truth can be verified. Furthermore, the search committee should only evaluate information of this sort if the name of the person supplying the information is known to all of the committee. I think as professionals we should strive to attach our names to our beliefs.

I bring these matters to your attention because I do not share my Senate colleague's cynicism. I believe that you do value facts and truth and, furthermore, I believe the future will prove this. I thank you for allowing me to serve.

Sincerely,


Carl G. Adler, Chair
Search Committee for
Vice Chancellor, Ret.