Academic Improvement Also Needed

Bargaining and other measures to protect academic personnel deserve thoughtful consideration by faculty people. Still, there remains a need for improvement of higher education as a basis for justifying the public support of the campus and the granting of rights enjoyed by university professors. Concerning the relationship between the public and the universities, the University Professors for Academic Order has issued this evaluation:

A DEEP and powerful tide of public discontent with the present state of American higher education has been broadly evident long enough so as to leave no reasonable doubt that a turn in the course of the huge academic complex must occur, and even now is beginning to take place. Still unanswered, however, is the question: From what sector will come the leadership that will shape the destiny of the Academy during the final quarter of our 20th century?

INDECISION of many college and university administrations in dealing with the campus violence of the recent past has inspired little public confidence that administrations at many points can be depended upon to exert the vigorous leadership our times will require.

FACULTIES, on their part, too often have seemed unwilling to divert enough attention from their classroom or scholarly duties so as to provide the substance and purpose of a new and greater era in American education. They have seemed too often to react only defensively, more preoccupied with preserving their own rights and privileges than with restoring the synchronization between the Academy and the mainstream of American thought. Congenitally ill-disposed toward expressing themselves through organizational channels, these faculty members have watched in frustration while many of their largest, oldest and most prestigious professional associations have been perverted at the national level into political instruments, overtly and routinely espousing partisan ideological causes remote from, and in abdication of, the purposes of professional advancement for which they solicit their own support.

IMPATIENT with an apparent deficiency of leadership from within the educational establishment, the public has begun to assert its right of accountability through various external means and agencies. Financial stringencies, now more often the rule than the exception at all levels of both public and privately-supported education, clearly reflect this dissatisfaction. Legislatures are ringing academic alarm-bells as they become progressively more inquisitorial in reexamin ing the present-day justifiability of many traditional academic privileges. Many other straws are in the wind.

ONE CONCLUSION seems inescapable: if strength and leadership for building the American higher education of the future are not generated from within the Academy, they must certainly will be supplied from without—at a cost of painful readjustments within the profession and also, much more importantly, with real threat of dilution of the basic principle of academic freedom. A corollary conclusion seems equally valid: Truly professional teachers and scholars concerned for the integrity of American education and its future effectiveness along the track of its soundest traditional principles must provide the central, if not ultimately the only decisive, demonstration and defense of those principles.
To foster academic excellence and support the principles of academic freedom and responsibility through a national professional and protective association, the University Professors for Academic Order (UPAO) at the time of incorporation in 1970 issued the following statement of UPAO purposes:

1. To foster and maintain the integrity of the academic teaching profession;
2. To study, improve and facilitate the lawful governance of university and college administrations;
3. To advance and promote the study of the legitimate ideals of higher education within the framework of the constitutional and ethical values upon which the government and social order of the United States have been founded;
4. To preserve and advance the ideals of the freedom to teach and freedom to learn;
5. To promote policies intended to maintain and increase the scholastic excellence of members of the academic teaching profession and research scholars;
6. To promote suitable academic standards for colleges and universities and their teaching and research staffs;
7. To study, promote and advance the professional interests of the teaching and research staffs of colleges and universities;
8. To promote cooperation between members of the academic profession;
9. To cause the promotion of lectures and studies on the issues bearing upon the aims aforementioned.

In implementation of the foregoing purposes the UPAO annual conventions have adopted resolutions which commit the UPAO to these policies:

To defend the principles of the academic freedom and tenure wherever these privileges are responsibly exercised;
To investigate and counteract to the limit of its resources any acts of unfair discrimination against members of the profession which impinge upon these principles;
To adhere to the ideal of the university as a place for instruction, learning, and the seeking of truth through research and reflection—a bulwark against the forces of entropy assailing our society rather than as an instrument of social change or an organization for the furtherance of political objectives of whatever complexion,
To seek clarification of the proper roles of administration, faculty, students and staff as elements of the academic community;
To resist demands from any source that the university politicize itself by taking stands on questions that are not properly its concern, or permitting small groups acting in concert to infringe upon the rights of the majority of the academic community;
To minimize the use of the classroom for the proselytizing of students to any political ideology, reemphasizing the responsibility of the university and the individual professor of presenting their courses as officially announced;
To uphold the high calling of the university professor, in sum, as one which imposes an obligation to preserve and advance the continuity of the American tradition through maintenance of high individual and institutional standards of competence, responsibility, and accountability to the American public.

We invite colleagues to discuss these concepts with UPAO members at OSU and in all available faculty forums.

Fred W. Decker
Atmospheric Sciences
Karl F. Drlica
Physical Education

5 August 1972
THE CASE FOR EARLIER EARLY RETIREMENT

1. The economic interests of employers and employees do not always coincide, but neither do they always diverge. We are concerned here with earlier optional early retirement, and it needs to be said first that implementation of a plan to make such retirement possible is clearly to the advantage of both employers and employees. Increasingly widespread recognition of this mutual advantage, both in the public and private sectors, accounts for the strong recent trend toward earlier retirement, at the option of the employee.

2. The present PERS retirement plan permits state employees to retire, at their option, up to five years before compulsory retirement age of 65. (Special provisions for firemen and policemen are not treated here, but the general discussion below applies equally to them.) An employee who elects to retire before compulsory retirement age will have his annual current service pension dollar amount reduced by a factor which depends on the earliness of the retirement, as shown in the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Factor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>.6060</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61</td>
<td>.6665</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>62</td>
<td>.7348</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>63</td>
<td>.8121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64</td>
<td>.8999</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These reductions reflect only actuarial considerations, i.e., the fact that those who retire before age 65 will, on average, receive retirement payments over a longer period of years before they die. But, of course, total annual retirement payments are also further reduced for the early retiree because average income during the working years, years of service, and the amount contributed by the employee toward the annuity part of his retirement plan will all be less than they would be if he retired at age 65.

3. What is proposed here is that PERS be amended to permit optional retirement at any time after twenty years of service, without regard to age.

4. It is obvious that implementation of this proposal need not result in any additional cost to the State; the reduction factors shown in the table above need only be computed, according to standard actuarial tables, for ages younger than 60.
5. While there cannot be any financial disadvantage to the State in this plan, it is not unlikely that it would save the State money, for an employee who elects to retire at, say, age 50, and whose salary has reached a relatively high level, may have been doing a job that could be done with equal effectiveness by a much younger replacement, and at a much lower salary. In the State System of higher education, for example, a retiring full professor may, in certain circumstances, be replaced by a young instructor at half the former’s salary. While replacement of high-salaried retirees by lower-salaried employees is not the rule in civil service, neither is it uncommon.

6. The advantage to the employee is obvious. He may, at age 50 or 55, have accumulated some capital, or he may have some permanent source of income such as a trust fund, so that he can count on a certain income for the remainder of his life. However, that income, unsupplemented, may be insufficient for his needs. Under the present PERS plan, an employee who finds himself in this position cannot afford to retire until he has reached age 60, when he can begin to draw State retirement payments. One who is in this position may not be the most enthusiastic worker if he sees himself as merely time-serving for five or ten more years until he is eligible to draw retirement pay.

7. One can only speculate about the rationale for not permitting optional retirement before age 60 -- the rationale of the present PERS plan. There are those who think that the refusal to allow retirement pay to be drawn before that age was simply copied from industrial retirement plans that have this feature, without any consideration of the reason for it. It is well known, however, why some industrial retirement plans have this feature: many such plans do not have any provision for vesting. Under such a plan, an employee who does not remain with his employer until the earliest retirement date receives no benefits at all, and the employer knows that only a small proportion of his work force will ever draw retirement benefits. This, of course, is certainly not the reason for the provision against retirement before age 60 in the PERS plan.

8. Another theory as to the reason for the restriction is that it rests on "moral" grounds, i.e., that if it were possible to draw retirement benefits before age 60, some employees would quit their State jobs, start drawing retirement benefits, and then take jobs with private employers. Thus they would be employed and receiving retirement benefits from the State at the same time, and this would be somewhat improper. Anyone who holds this view may not have given the matter adequate thought. This is not to deny that a State employee who elected to retire at, say, 50, under the plan proposed here, might not then take other employment. However, not a few who now retire under the present PERS plan at ages 60, 65, and even 70, do the same, and there seems to be no objection to that on grounds of impropriety. More to the point, the present PERS plan, due to its vesting provision, does permit an awkward sort of "retirement" before age 60. That is, an employee who
quits his State job after the vesting period will (if he wisely leaves his contributions to the PERS plan on deposit) receive retirement pay under the PERS plan, even if he goes to work for another employer, though not until he reaches age 60. The point here is that there is no significant difference, from the "moral point of view" between:

(a) leaving State employment at, say, age 50; working for a private employer from age 50 to, say, age 70; and drawing PERS benefits from age 60 on, and

(b) leaving State employment at age 50, working for a private employer until age 70, and drawing (much smaller) benefits from PERS from termination at age 50.

The ultimate cost to the State is the same in both cases because of the actuarial reduction in benefits that would be made in case (b); but case (b) is not possible under the present PERS plan.

9. In the end, the case for earlier early retirement comes to this: An employee who wants to retire before he is 60 years old is an employee who should be encouraged and enabled to do so. Those who are tired of their work do not make the best workers and it is not in their interest, nor in the State's interest, to put an obstacle in the way of their retirement. Yet the present PERS plan does just that. In effect, it says to the State employee, "You may start to draw retirement benefits at a certain level any time after you are 60 years old. If you are younger than that and would like to retire earlier, you may do so, but you'll get no retirement benefits until you are 60. You do not have the option of retiring earlier and receiving reduced retirement benefits to the time of your death." This arbitrary dictum breeds resentment in employees, tends to make them time-servers until they reach minimum retirement age, and prevents the State from replacing such time-servers with new people who might be expected to show more dedication to their jobs. Since the remedy is simple and without cost there is reason to hope that those who are in a position to apply it will soon do so.

Peter Anton
Philosophy

August 21, 1972
GUIDELINES FOR PREPARATION OF MANUSCRIPTS FOR THIS PUBLICATION

The "OSU Faculty Forum Papers", a publication for the exchange of faculty opinions concerning university affairs, is published monthly through the office of the Dean of Faculty with the assistance of a faculty advisory committee. Guidelines for this publication were approved by the Faculty Senate on March 7, 1968 and appear in the March 15, 1968 edition of the Staff Newsletter. The guidelines contain the following directions for the preparation of manuscripts:

a. Must be authored by a faculty member eligible for election to the Senate according to the provisions of Section 2 of Article IV of the Bylaws.

b. Should be typed in a form which can be reproduced directly without the need of retyping or rearranging.* Short papers of one or two pages may be typed with either single or double spacing to make best use of full pages. Longer papers must be single spaced. Other requirements:

(1) Use 8-1/2" x 11" plain white bond paper (sub.20)
(2) Type on one side of page only
(3) Do not number or fold sheets
(4) Leave at least 1-1/2" margin at the top of all pages

c. Should not exceed a reasonable length. A six page limit is suggested, including displays such as tables or graphs. If this limit is exceeded, publications will require approval of the faculty advisory committee.

d. Should be signed (use black ink) and dated by the author at the end. The author's name and a subject, if appropriate, may be typed at the heading of the first page of the paper.

e. Manuscripts are to be submitted to the office of the Dean of Faculty. Receipt of each manuscript will be acknowledged. For each monthly publication, the deadline for the receipt of manuscripts shall be noon of the last full working day (Monday thru Friday) of the preceding month.

* Suggestion from the Printing Department: Better reproduction can be obtained if the manuscript is typed with an electric typewriter that uses a carbon tape rather than a silk ribbon.