

NORTH HARRIS COUNTY COLLEGE UNITED FACULTY

2700 W. W. THORNE DRIVE • SUITE A-217 • HOUSTON, TEXAS 77073

THE ADVOCATE

NHCC United Faculty
May 1988

Edited by Olin Joynton
Secretary, NHCC UF

Interview with Gary Hall

THE ADVOCATE: What led to your inquiry into the hiring of a Biology instructor for the Tomball Campus?

GH: On March 11, 1988, I received a memo from the South Campus Biology faculty asking me to investigate what they perceived to be irregularities in filling the Biology position on the Tomball Campus. This memo was sent to me in my capacity as Chair of the Faculty Senate Rights and Responsibilities Committee. As the Biology faculty stated in their letter to the editor of the Advocate last month, they believe that when Dr. George Younger was approached about serving on the Veterinary Technology faculty of the Tomball Campus, he agreed on the condition that his wife, Dr. Melanie Younger, also be given a position. The Biology faculty further believes that the Administration acceded to this condition, hired her for the Biology position, and that as a result due consideration was not given to current Biology faculty who sought the position. I have discussed the problem with full- and part-time faculty who were originally interested in the position as well as members of the hiring committee.

THE ADVOCATE: Have you drawn any conclusions from these discussions?

GH: Upon learning that Dr. Roy Lazenby sent Dr. Melanie Younger's credentials to Dr. Hulon Madeley and two full-time faculty members for informal review in October of 1987, I asked Dr. Lazenby if a deal had been cut. I put the same question to Mr. Charles Chance. Both insisted no deal had been cut and that the position was not filled until the Board approved her contract on March 15, 1988. However, Dr. Lazenby related to me that at the same time Dr. George Younger was hired to fill the Veterinary Technology position on the Tomball Campus, Dr. Melanie Younger was promised a position. Dr. Lazenby noted that he told Dr. George Younger that he could find his wife a position. Dr. Hulon Madeley confirms this by saying, "She was going to be put

"Education for Democracy — Democracy for Education" ^(over)

in some job. The question was which one."

Five current faculty members (three full-time and two part-time) were interested in the Tomball Biology Department position. Dr. Madeley informed me that preference was given to those faculty members with two teaching fields. The full-time faculty members were disqualified by not sufficiently meeting this requirement. Both part-timers (Dr. Penny Smith and Ms. Caryn Vaughn) were briefly interviewed on February 19 by Dr. Madeley alone. During the first minute of her interview, Ms. Smith was informed that the position was filled. Ms. Vaughn's interview lasted five minutes, and she was told that she did not get the job. Dr. Madeley said there may have been an interpretation problem for those who reported being told that the position was already filled. He described these interviews as "informal." The only formal interview given by the committee composed of Dr. Lazenby, Dr. Madeley, Mr. Chance and Ms. Katherine Persson was conducted on March 8 with Dr. Melanie Younger. This was a luncheon interview lasting three and one-half hours.

THE ADVOCATE: That's quite an interview! Do you believe that any official policies were violated?

GH: No. South Campus Faculty Senate President Rami Shafiee and I met with Chancellor Airola on Wednesday, May 11, to present my report on these matters. In that report I enumerated the ways in which the events described above seem to be at variance with several sections of the College's Handbook of Policies and Procedures. For example, Section 311.03 requires "personal interviews for all candidates to be hired." As one part-timer stated, "You couldn't really call what I had an interview." Section 311.03 states "The College District will make every effort to hire the most qualified applicant for the position." While Dr. Younger will undoubtedly fulfill the obligations of her new position, I cannot say that fair consideration was given to anyone else. Section 311 P (a) stipulates that "As a matter of practice, the division head of the position to be filled initiate the final employment procedure by submitting to the appropriate dean the names of several potential applicants who fit the requirements of the position to be filled." This did not occur.

However, Chancellor Airola explained to me that the sections I cite in my report are actually procedures, not policies. The distinction is that policies have been acted upon by the Board, while procedures are established by the administration and are more flexible. Board policies have the designation (BP) in the Handbook, while procedures appear in italicized script.

The Chancellor further stated that while the usual procedure is to have formal interviews with several potential candidates, procedure does allow the administration flexibility to choose a candidate who is qualified and appropriate for the position. He said this especially comes into play with a new campus that may not have an established faculty.