



**University of
Houston**

Faculty Senate
Houston, Texas 77204-2173
713.749.2817

Dr Alex Schilt, Chancellor
University of Houston System
1600 Smith, Suite 3400
Houston, TX 77002

27 Sept., 1990

Dear Alex,

The enclosed resolution was presented to the full Faculty Senate of the University of Houston on Wed. 19 Sept., 1990 and was passed unanimously by those in attendance. A significant number of faculty, however, also requested that I convey to you their strong feelings regarding the Downs' case which was instrumental in initiating the resolution. I believe that it is accurate to say that the mildness of the resolution should in no way be viewed as an indication of the intensity of feeling on this issue but more as an expression of goodwill towards the System in the hope that we might resolve the matter both amicably and expeditiously.

Yours sincerely,

Stuart A. Hall
President, Faculty Senate

cc: Dr Marguerite Ross Barnett, President
Dr Robert L. Lineberry, Senior Vice-President

Faculty Senate Resolution, 19 September 1990

The Faculty Senate of the University of Houston notes with grave concern the recent dismissal of a tenured professor at a sister university within the University of Houston System.

This dismissal was recommended, against the unanimous findings and recommendations of a duly constituted faculty grievance committee, solely on the basis of an unsubstantiated charge by a student against the faculty member in question. The administrator who recommended dismissal gave no reason for reversing the committee's recommendations, even though such a written explanation is explicitly required by the university's faculty handbook.

Given that this arbitrary and capricious action was upheld by the Chancellor of the University of Houston System, and consequently executed by the Board of Regents, faculty members throughout the System are understandably fearful that similar disciplinary actions might be taken against themselves in the absence of conclusive evidence and at the whim of any disgruntled individual.

While the Faculty Senate recognizes that tenure at the University of Houston does not bestow immunity against sanctions, including dismissal, for adequate cause, we believe that the principle of shared governance, and indeed the very integrity of the professoriate, require the exercise of good faith by administrators in the application of due process to charges against their faculty. Such good faith dictates that culpability be demonstrated beyond a reasonable doubt before any disciplinary action is taken. We furthermore believe that when administrators fail to respect established faculty governance procedures in reviewing such cases, it becomes increasingly difficult for faculty members to perform the sensitive teaching function that lies at the heart of the academic life.

We therefore call upon the administration of the University of Houston and the University of Houston System to rededicate themselves and these institutions to protecting faculty in the exercise of their professional duties in a climate free of intimidation, and to carrying out the spirit as well as the letter of established shared governance procedures.