

April 29, 1977

To: The Faculty of Davidson College

At the meeting of the Faculty on Tuesday, May 3, the Committee on Professional Affairs will move that the Faculty adopt the following statement, and that it be transmitted by the President to the Trustees of Davidson College at their next meeting:

In May 1973, the Faculty of Davidson College passed a resolution calling for a change in the policy of the college relating to the recruitment of members of the faculty. The resolution expressed the belief "that the President and other officers of the college should be entrusted with the responsibility of recruiting such faculty members as will strengthen the college, intellectually, morally, and spiritually," and that this would obviate the need for a By-Law specifying a religious requirement for tenure. The latter, it noted, "is likely to inhibit the recruitment of the best faculty and student body that could be obtained by suggesting that Davidson lacks intellectual freedom and diversity of opinion."

After a good deal of discussion among members of the Faculty, Board of Trustees, and student body, the Trustees, on October 25, 1974, adopted a revision of Article V, sections 5 and 6, of their By-Laws, according to which "the President is directed to seek out and secure as officers and Faculty members Christian men and women who are not only highly competent but who understand and respond to the implications of their commitment as Christians." It specified further that, "in view of the fact that the Christian community has always had a place for the reverent seeker, the Trustees may in special circumstances grant tenure to a person who respects the Christian tradition without commitment to all its tenets."

Since the final adoption of these sections in 1975 the Faculty has had the opportunity of seeing whether the change thus instituted was sufficient

to avoid the problems anticipated in 1973. Recent experience has shown that the change was not sufficient. We believe that the continuation of a religious requirement for tenure, in its modified form, has restricted faculty recruiting, caused embarrassment to the college, and created a misleading impression of the character of this academic community.

We therefore urgently request the Trustees of Davidson College to remove the religious requirement for tenure from their By-Laws and entrust the matter of recruiting Faculty members to the President and other officers of the college, using as their guide the Statement of Purpose of the college. In this way, we believe the Christian character of the college can be nurtured and sustained without hindering its development as an institution of liberal learning.

Committee on Professional Affairs

R.B. Jackson
R.D. Kaylor, Chairman
R.J. Manning
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