

r e f l e c t i o n s
 on a
 brick wall

"But the Dwarf answered: 'No; something human is dearer to me than the wealth of all the world.'"
 —Epigraph to Youth (from Grimm's Tales).

It is heartening to see and talk with so many students and faculty and staff members who are actively beginning to challenge UNCC's dictatorial Administration. The faculty response, in particular, in the struggle to reverse the decision of the Administration not to re-new the contract of Dr. Leonard Jordan is a long-awaited step toward joint student-faculty action.

A great many inequities of the past are coming to light for the first time, and we are sorry the Journal has not adequately been reporting and commenting on these matters previously. If we were given enough funds by Student Government to print the pages, we could give you a 12 or 16-page issue every week — and with the increase in information, we feel you could better understand and challenge UNCC's problems. But, that's another story.

We feel the Administration has grossly degraded the very principals of truth and the open pursuit of knowledge in its thus-far unexplained and suspect dismissal of Dr. Jordan and the other nine faculty members. The lowly members of our Community are the ones most subject to unanswered pleas for why. Just because the University Code does not require reasons for dismissal is no judicious reason for the Administration to hide behind a "loop-hole" device. They have refused to even tell Dr. Jordan why his contract will not be re-newed.

A faculty member — tenured or not — deserves the honesty of an Administration in revealing the reasons for dismissal. Logically, how can a faculty member ever know what was disapproved about his service to the University? How can he reasonably appeal his case when he doesn't know the grounds for the case at all? Circumventing the truth by alluding to "immaturity" without defining what such "immaturity" may involve is pure deceit and deception.

The conclusions we draw from this silence are obvious. 1) The Administration's reasons are so poor that they can not stand public scrutiny or debate; 2) Revealing the reasons would show what type of activities and actions the Administration does not allow (they prefer to keep these in their "heads"); and 3) The Administration attempts to infer that the reasons are "damaging" to the faculty member, i.e., so terrible that they are doing him a service by not revealing them. The inferred "terrible actions" are kept secret to further speculation on how bad they are, to frighten other faculty members by not allowing them knowledge of the unknown "forbidden sins."

Such tactics and thinking are unfit for high officials of a public University. They call into question the ethics and principals of those who engage in such secret actions.

There is more. Political intrigue and behind-the-back manipulation at UNCC is the rule for the Administration of UNCC. There is more of this type of underground "pressure" than a University in supposed public service can tolerate. An amazing story of "quiet" actions has come to light and we share it with you in the hopes that public disclosure will further create the University's collective desire to change itself before it is too late.

Re: the case of the "private conference." Suppose an Instructor or untenured professor speaks out against an action by the Administration. He may do it privately to colleagues or by writing the Journal or by writing the Charlotte Observer.

What does UNCC's Administration do about such actions? The Instructor is called by Vice Chancellor McEniry to his office and promptly told that such criticism is not allowed. The Instructor's future job with UNCC is placed on the line: any more such actions and out-out he goes.

What better example of blatant repression by the Administration do you need? There is evidence that this type of "warning" is usually delivered by McEniry, a sort of Big Brother disciplinarian, self-appointed to keep things at UNCC under control.

The Administration at UNCC are very smart and very secretive and very well-voiced in what is evidence, what is legally damaging, what is liable to get them in trouble. They take caution to deal "orally" in matters that could be construed as deceitful and deceptive. They never permit themselves to put in writing what we could use in court or open public disclosure. We have seen "private" memorandums between members of the Administration and only rarely do they express anything less than total concern, sympathy with great causes, and flowing terms that wrap themselves in glory and great honor. They maintain in public a sympathetic point-of-view while privately are the very forces you must struggle against.

Re: the case of the fabulous extortion move. It is now being reported to the Journal from faculty members who have asked to remain anonymous (for obvious reasons) the details of activities which may be defined as intimidating threats, i.e., extortion. The procedure proceeds something like this in one case: a faculty member is dismissed (contract not re-newed) and he is cautiously advised not to dispute the action or appeal it or raise a big issue over it.

pages of opinion

UNCC

Opinions of the Journal are expressed on its editorial pages, page 6-8. All unsigned editorials are the majority opinion of the Editorial Board. Letters and columns represent only the opinions of the individual writers. Opposing editorial viewpoints may be printed by contacting the Editor.

The reason? The department chairman or other Administration official advises the faculty member that recommendations from the department will be withheld or unfavorable if he fights his dismissal. If he is quiet and passive, the recommendations are assured to be glowing.

We cannot know who many faculty members have left UNCC quietly under such pressure. We suspect that Bill Bigelow was somewhat quieter in his departure from UNCC than the personality of the man would indicate. It is a strange irony that Bigelow was not good enough for UNCC but now is employed by Davidson College. No, it is not true that we have higher standards than Davidson. It is our opinion that we have less academic and personal freedom for our faculty members at UNCC than any other University of comparable size. It is debatable whether Bob Jones University is less repressive than UNCC since most faculty there willingly submit to the oppressive will.

It is not difficult to understand how faculty members could fall prey to such pressures. After all, they do need a job for their families, and poor recommendations may be tantamount to academic suicide for a college professor.

Such practices may be common in the business world but are critically destructive at an academic institution. Yet, these practices exist today at UNCC. And it is both the faculty and students who are suffering. It is up to both of us to protest such unethical and intimidating tactics. It is up to us to insure that such pressure never be brought to bear upon faculty members of UNCC again.

There is a process, called co-optation, whereby the Administration takes the strongest and most capable faculty and offers them positions of power and authority. Often these positions are offered with raises in rank and pay; most often, however, along with the position goes the unwritten admission that they will cooperate with the Administration's decisions.

The Administration is grateful for their support and give priority to their programs, buildings, funds, etc. It is a neatly-packaged example of "back-scratching" and the obvious question is: "So what?"

With a few exceptions at UNCC, the college deans and department chairmen are pawns of the Administration. Watch them close the door when a phone call comes from McEniry. A whole group on this campus jump when their chain is pulled. This is perhaps one of the saddest losses of all.

These faculty members no longer remain independent, creative, free-thinking individuals. No matter how much they try to convince themselves of their "freedom," it simply isn't there. Faculty members can look to their deans and chairmen and count on one hand the number of times that they went against the Administration on anything and won. There is a difference between the "smokescreen" effort and a sincere struggle for what they believe in. It is sad that UNCC has degenerated to such weak individuals in leadership. One of the problems is McEniry's power to appoint chairmen and deans — and make no mistake, it is McEniry and not Dr. Colvard who makes the appointments, regardless of whose name is on the letter.

The faculty themselves should choose their leaders. A selected leader would then truly represent them and not be indebted to the Administration for their position or rank. But, as the way it is now, you cannot help but wonder what became of the present chairman and deans' spirit, their human integrity, their self-desire to strike out freely as individuals with a mind and ideas of their own.

It can be argued that compromise is necessary here; that no change, no improvements would be possible without such willful servitude by faculty in appointed positions. If compromise is necessary, then we are still further away from the goals this institution should represent. The ideas in a department or college should survive on their own merits — not because they get "favored" support or fit in with the preconceived acceptable limits set by the Administration. The free spirit of competition and debate over various ideas and possibilities will provide UNCC with forward impetus and growth.

