



MEMORANDUM

October 9, 1978

TO: Dr. Edward Naegele, Chairman
Committee on the Faculty

FROM: Hans F. Sennholz *Hans*

RE: Separation and Retirement

The conditions of separation and retirement are determined by the Grove City College Constitution, the laws of contract, Federal labor laws, and various stipulations in individual employment contracts.

Grove City College has no tenure system. Most members of the faculty favor the present contract system of separation and retirement because it safeguards their own employment better than any tenure system. It permits the College Administration to manage labor, which is the most important factor of costs, to weed out those instructors who continually inflict losses on the employer and thus consume wage funds that otherwise would go to more productive instructors. It safeguards teaching productivity, controls operating costs, and thus keeps the College highly competitive in the education market.

Most faculty members disapprove of a guild-like employment system that is designed to benefit College employees at the expense of its customers, the students. While such a system is conceivable at state institutions where the state covers the losses and students contribute merely a small share of their costs, it is self-destructive in a competitive situation. Grove City College

must stay competitive with other colleges, state and private, through productivity in order to assure its survival as an independent institution. The productivity of its faculty plays an important role in this endeavor.

The Administration usually has been patient with those teachers who for any reason failed to function properly. Over the years this instructor has observed colleagues whose energy and interest seemed to grind to a sudden halt. Some middle-aged instructors regressed in knowledge and competency with every year of their lives. Some made a sham of instruction that deteriorated to classroom cheering sessions. Others sought wisdom and insight from alcohol, or pursued their rejuvenation through sexual contacts with young students. In every such case, the faculty was happy with the removal of the instructor whose conduct was casting a shadow on the College family.

Grove City College always has been generous towards those teachers whose employment contracts were not renewed after a few years of employment. In most cases it has made severance payments in the amount of one year's salary, which prompts some instructors to wish that their contracts not be renewed. It would give them the opportunity to move elsewhere, find employment at another college, and thus enjoy two years' pay in just one year. Dismissal from GCC brings a windfall to those who are capable of finding employment elsewhere.

In matters of retirement the same considerations of productivity are applicable. In the life of every individual there comes the time when his advancing age affects his service. He

reaches a point of diminishing productivity where his costs begin to exceed the value of his service. As it is socially unacceptable to reduce his pay with each additional year of employment, the employer has no choice but to retire him. This is true in all fields of service, in industry, commerce, government and education. In the fields of intellectual pursuits the point of diminishing productivity may come rather late in life. The philosopher may write his greatest works in his seventies and eighties. In other pursuits, especially those requiring physical exertion, it comes much earlier.

At Grove City College, which aims to be a "teaching college," the point of diminishing productivity often comes earlier than at research institutions. We are emphasizing student contact, guidance, counselling, and other personalized services to youth, which can best be rendered by those instructors closest to youth. The grandfather may be a wise man, but his rapport with a teenager may be minimal. Surely, his congeniality suffers in comparison with that of a young instructor in his twenties or early thirties. This is why the GCC retirement age should be as low as it can possibly be legally and contractually.

In the distant past GCC instructors remained active as long as they could possibly meet their classes. Declining remuneration compensated for declining productivity. During the last 22 years the retirement age varied between 65 and 70. Many instructors chose to leave at the earliest opportunity, at 65. Others preferred to stay on until 70. In a few cases the Administration imposed early retirement at 65, which generated considerable controversy and led to three damage suits against the College.

Although this writer favors early retirement for the reasons described above, he cannot judge the merits of the cases for want of information on the particular employment contracts. The cases are complicated by the fact that a new Administration ordered the retirement of appointees of an old Administration. That is, it retired instructors who in its judgment were submarginally productive, but were satisfactorily productive in the judgment of the previous Administration. We believe that the present holder of executive power should have the right to appraise the situation, correct previous mistakes, retire aging submarginal faculty members, and replace them with his own. But, the burden of evidence ultimately shifts to the present Administration to show that its alleged contractual breaches were justified or excusable under current principles of law and equity.

RESOLUTION

We, the Trustees of Grove City College, are firm in our resolve to resist all imperious demands and acts of government. To pledge our compliance with its regulations, which it may choose to prescribe today or tomorrow, would set at naught our commitment to the eternal laws of human liberty and moral elevation. It would delegate our own responsibility to government officials, and make us the instruments of their power. To preserve our conscience, honor, and freedom we have no choice but to resist bad regulations, which are the worst sort of tyranny. We shall withstand them with great confidence and in abiding faith that justice will prevail in the end.

The seal of Grove City College is circular. It features a central shield with a cross and a book. The words "GROVE CITY COLLEGE" are written in a circle around the top, and "PENNSYLVANIA" around the bottom. The year "1881" is at the bottom right. Below the shield, it says "GROVE CITY, PA. 16127".

GROVE CITY COLLEGE

GROVE CITY, PA. 16127

MEMORANDUM

September 30, 1978

TO: Dr. Edward Naegele, Chairman
Committee on the Faculty

FROM: Hans F. Benholz

RE: Faculty Recruiting and Hiring

At Grove City College the executive power to engage a teaching staff rests solely in the hands of the chief executive, the President of the College. His power is circumscribed by the GCC Constitution and the instructions he receives from the Board of Trustees. These sources of authority in turn are subject to the Pennsylvania laws of contract and to federal legislation and regulation pertaining to labor relations.

The present staff reflects past executive decisions. Since the President cannot possibly be an expert in all disciplines, he naturally seeks the advice and invites recommendations from the chairmen of the departments.

The sixteen chairmen of departments obviously differ greatly from each other, and thus play different roles in the recruiting process. Some offer little help to the executive seeking to fill a vacancy, which leaves him no choice but to seek outside help from professorial employment agencies. Many positions, therefore, have been filled in the past with the help of the American College Bureau in Chicago, and others.

Other department chairmen may submit recommendations that prove to be ineffective for a number of reasons, which again shifts sole responsibility for recruiting to the Administration.

Some department chairmen may submit excellent recommendations and then leave the selection of the best candidate to the President.

A few chairmen have made recommendations that were unacceptable to the President who, for reasons of his own, preferred to hire candidates of his choice. In a few cases the difference of opinion was resolved by compromise.

Altogether, the recruiting process has been rather successful in obtaining a faculty that reflects the basic objectives and values of the Administration. It would be a serious mistake to unify the system and institutionalize it. A rigid recruiting system would be unable to cope with the departmental differences and would generate more tensions than it would solve.

The teaching staff of Grove City College is to reflect the basic objectives of the College as outlined in the catalogue. As the College aims to impart Christian principles and give a Christian perspective in all fields of learning, the faculty should be selected to achieve these objectives. To give "the best in liberal arts and scientific education in a beautiful Christian environment" (GCC Bulletin, 1976-1977, p. 7) you need the best Christian teachers.

This observer of the Grove City College community for more than 22 years has often been touched and moved by the self-denying and unpretentious behavior of some teachers. They are low-profile Christians whose personal lives are committed to the enduring principles enjoined by Scripture. They are virtuous and righteous men

and women always ready to serve our students and needy fellow-teachers. They would enoble any college family.

To find such teachers among the great number of applicants who are seeking employment at Grove City College is a difficult task. Previous service may be an indication of desirability and a criterion for selection. This is why the Administration has always shown a distinct preference for teachers with experience, that is, a track record in high school or college service. Others were known to us as students and graduates of GCC.

Since senior college professors are hard to get because they are holding tenured positions elsewhere, GCC has rarely sought their services. Instead, we have enriched the staff with the best high school teachers. This group of instructors, among which is at least one Pennsylvania "teacher of the year," has an excellent record of service and dedication to the College community.

Another group was recruited from the ranks of military and government retirees. Commissioned officers who served with the Grove City ROTC detachment for a number of years eagerly returned to GCC upon retirement. They are known to be loyal, dependable, and hard-working staff members.

As Grove City College is affiliated with the Presbyterian Church it cannot be surprising that a good number of ordained ministers have joined the teaching staff. They form the department of religion and philosophy. In the social sciences they give a distinct flavor to the instruction, applying their Christian interpretation to all matters of political, social and economic living.

At the beginning of this academic year the college president announced a new drive for "academic excellence." The recruiting process should reflect the new objective. We have no knowledge of how it will affect the faculty, which makes our deliberations highly speculative.

In a conventional sense, a quest for academic excellence implies a search for more teachers with scholarly and scientific inclinations. It means a staff enrichment through teachers who research problems at the limits of knowledge and publish their discoveries in national journals. In the past, GCC has shied away from this "publish-or-perish" variety because it would raise operating costs significantly. More importantly, research professors would not easily fit the mold of the given faculty. When, in the past 22 years, such instructors inadvertently and imperceptibly found their way to Grove City, severe tensions and frictions erupted invariably and the Administration sought to remove them promptly. After unpleasant confrontations we lost such great writers as Dr. Clarence Carson and Dr. Susan Huck. And we ruthlessly purged a great evangelist, Rev. Heinsohn, after just one year.

In recent years a few promising young men have been added to the teaching staff. But one of the greatest young minds, a prolific writer on Biblical Law, Dr. Gary North, was rejected although a Pittsburgh foundation offered a subsidy of \$20,000 toward his employment. We want great teachers, but they have to be just like us.

We do not know the future of Grove City College. But we do know that any significant change in objective and performance

would necessitate a change in teaching staff. This would be a life-long task wrought with many problems and difficulties. In its present composition the faculty is serving the College objectives rather well. Its founders and trustees always envisioned a "teaching college" that affords "the best in liberal arts and scientific education in a beautiful Christian environment." There cannot be any doubt that the GCC faculty is meeting this objective.