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To: Joseph Burns, Dean of the Faculty
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cc: Members of the AFPS

Date: August 28, 2012

Re: Annual Report (2011-12) of the Committee on Academic Freedom and Professional Status of the Faculty (AFPS)

The AFPS was involved in three petitions over the 2011-12 academic year. Furthermore, it worked to revise the "Charge to the Committee" from the Faculty Senate and began work on changes to the University's policy on consensual romantic relations between students and faculty or staff.

AFPS Charge. On March 14, 2012, the Faculty Senate accepted the motion to modify the AFPS enabling legislation. Professor Peter Stein, former Dean of the Faculty and Chair of the AFPS, worked diligently on the draft and spoke to the motion. The revised Charge to the Committee provides needed guidance regarding the procedures followed by and recommendations from the AFPS. The changes were adopted with the approval of the Provost's office.

Petitions #1 and #2. In September 2011, two professors from the Hotel School separately petitioned the AFPS regarding pay and evaluation grievances against the deans of that School. Following the University's grievance process, the Committee chose not to entertain those grievances on the grounds that the grievance process at the School level had not yet been undertaken. One of the two grievances was resolved shortly thereafter, but the other came back to the AFPS in April 2012, following a school grievance committee report, the dean's acceptance of the grievance committee's recommendations, and the petitioner's decision to challenge the dean's decision. The AFPS decided to entertain the challenge and formed an ad hoc committee to investigate the matter. On the recommendation of the AFPS Chair, the professor and the dean met to discuss the matter and in early May of 2012 reached a resolution. The AFPS discontinued its activity in this matter.

Petition #3. On December 29, 2011, the AFPS received a petition from a professor in the College of Veterinary Medicine regarding the dean's decision to uphold the decision of a department chair to deny a sabbatical leave, following a college grievance process. The AFPS agreed to entertain the case at a meeting on February 2, 2012 and formed an ad hoc committee to investigate the matter. The ad hoc committee reported back to the full AFPS on April 12, 2012. Following the procedures outlined in the newly revised Charge to the Committee, a draft report was prepared and circulated to the relevant parties. Comments were obtained and the AFPS revised its draft report in early June 2012. In an attempt to resolve the situation informally, the AFPS provided a copy of its revised draft report and recommendations to Associate Provost John Siliciano, who then attempted to seek a mutually satisfactory solution. That attempt proved unsuccessful and on August 23, 2012 the AFPS formally sent its revised draft report and recommendations to Provost Kent Fuchs.

Three issues remain outstanding on the date of this report:

(1) the potential for drafting of a University policy statement regarding the use of University-supported e-mail services in sending partisan political interest messages;
(2) further discussion and resolution of a proposal to amend and supplement the University's policy on consensual romantic relations between students and faculty or staff who occupy positions of authority over them; and
(3) interaction with the Provost regarding the third case discussed above.

All on-campus faculty members of the AFPS Committee were active and participated in fulfilling the Committee's duties. Members for 2011-12 were Joel D. Baines, Nancy Chau, Carl Hopkins (on leave 2011-12), Risa Lieberwitz, Steve Morgan, Pat Johnson, Sandra Green, Susan Suarez and Jerome Hass. The Dean of the Faculty, William Fry, attended all meetings of the Committee in ex officio capacity. The student members were not called to participate in any of the discussions in 2010-11.

Finally, at the request of the Dean of the Faculty, the Chair has been working with the administrative staff of the Statler Hotel to reinstate a faculty lunch, using his AFPS role as a spokesperson for the faculty. A faculty "soup and bread" lunch facility began operation on the first day of classes for the fall term.

Respectfully submitted,

Jerome E. Hass
Chair of the AFPS

P.S. By way of information, the Board of Trustees adopted the petition approved by the Faculty Senate on 5/11/12 and sponsored by the AFPS last year regarding a modification of Article XVI(2)(c) of the Bylaws of Cornell University to extend the maximum period of service for assistant professors with term appointments at the Johnson School from six to eight years.