

## Report of the Committee on the Criteria of Academic Appointment (1974)

*Note: This report was first published in the University of Chicago Record, III, volume 8 (20 December, 1974), 230-231. The following is a transcription of the report as it appears in that volume.*

*On 17 April 1974, President Levi requested the Committee on the Criteria of Academic Appointment to propound its views on the standing and rights of persons who are invited by The University of Chicago, through appropriately constituted appointive bodies, to lecture or conduct seminars on particular occasions. The Committee met on 12, 22, and 29 July, 1 August, 9 October, and 6 and 11 November.*

In the conduct of its program of teaching, training, and research, The University of Chicago has frequent occasion to invite persons who are not members of its academic faculty to deliver lectures and to conduct seminars. Such invitations, which are appointments for specific occasions, are made in order to enable faculty members and students to hear and exchange ideas with distinguished scientists, scholars, and other qualified persons whose views on matters of interest in their own fields are not available to them in the ordinary run of things in the University. These are important supplements to the official teaching and research program of the University. The lectures and seminars are sometimes part and parcel of the regular instructional arrangements of various teaching departments and committees. They are also sometimes separate from the regular instructional program and are open to attendance by members of the University and also to members of the larger public.

All such invitations should be offered in accordance with the criteria enunciated in the Committee's Report, insofar as they are applicable to the particular function which the person appointed is to

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perform. His<sup>1</sup> intellectual accomplishments should be of the high quality which is expected of teachers of The University of Chicago. If he is a professional academic or a professional research worker, his scholarly and scientific accomplishments should be such as are generally accepted by the University, and particularly by the members of the department or the committee which is responsible for the invitation. If he is neither a university teacher nor a research worker by profession, his experiences and his achievements should be such as will contribute to the fulfillment of the educational program of the University.

All occasional invitations and appointments of this sort must be made by the appropriate appointive body of the University or by the individual member of the University to whom the power is delegated by the appointive body for this particular occasion. Sometimes an invitation is issued by a constituted University appointive body or its delegate, with the joint sponsorship of an outside body. In such cases, the same criteria must apply as in those occasions in which the sponsorship is exclusively that of the University appointive body; the application of these criteria should not be perfunctory.

All such occasional invitations and appointments postulate that the person appointed will enjoy the same rights for the performance of the duties for which he has been invited as any person holding an academic appointment duly made by a constituted appointive body. The fact that the invitation is only for a specific occasion does not derogate from his right to expound his interpretations of whatever problem he has been invited to treat. The power of invitational appointment implies the right and obligation on the part of the appointed person to carry out the task for which he was invited. The performance of the task may entail the delivery of a lecture, the delivery of a lecture

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<sup>1</sup> See *A Report of The University of Chicago Committee on the Criteria of Academic Appointment*, p. 1, footnote I. [Copies available from the Office of Public Information, Adm. 200.]

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followed by questions and comments by the audience, or a seminar in which the appointee presents his views, which are then discussed by the members of the seminar. All persons attending such occasions are bound by the same rules which bind participants in regular University teaching arrangements. These include acceptance of the authority of the chairman as regards relevance, amount of time and number of questions allowed, civility of speech, etc. Deliberate frustration of this activity is an illegitimate abrogation of the powers of invitation and appointment, which are absolutely crucial to the University's execution of its proper functions.

Each occasional invitation and appointment must be considered on its own merits, i.e., in the light of the qualifications of the appointed person to perform the task at hand. "There must be no considerations of sex, ethnic, or national characteristics, or political or religious beliefs or affiliations" (see *Report of the Committee on the Criteria of Academic Appointment*, pp. 6-7; also, pp. 25-26) in occasional invitations and appointments. Similarly, as the Committee said in its "Later Elaborations on Political Criteria" (*ibid.*, p. 36), considerations regarding an occasional appointee's "past and current associations and the objectives of his past or current employer, the sources of the funds which support his research and the uses to which third parties might or have actually put its results independently of his desires" should not constitute grounds for objection to such invitations.

Nothing which is said in the foregoing derogates from the right of individuals and groups of individuals in the University—students as well as teachers—from inviting and sponsoring whomever they wish as "occasional" speakers at meetings which they themselves organize. The persons who are thus invited are entitled the freedom to express their views without obstruction. Where members of the University believe the criteria of appointment have not been appropriately observed, the regular channels which are available in the University may be used to present objections to a particular invitation and to have these seriously considered.

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While the problem to which the Committee has been asked to address itself is complicated when we consider all conceivable situations which may arise, it is really very simple in terms of general principles. The University is dedicated to scholarly ends. All of its members are assumed to strive toward those ends. And all of our actions, as members of the University, are assumed to be directed to those same ends. If one grants this premise, then it follows that all invitations extended to persons from the outside to come to the University as temporary visitors, for shorter or longer durations, to give lectures and seminars, or to participate in other relevant activities, are again with the same ends in view. With the best of intentions, mistakes can be made; and if some "wrong" person gets invited, then it is clearly incompatible with our stated ends to exhibit impolite behavior; and violence, of course, is inexcusable.

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*Dr. Roderick Childers*

*John Hope Franklin*

*Arthur Friedman*

*Jacob W. Getzels*

*Harry G. Johnson*

*Saunders MacLane*

*Edward Rosenheim*

*Edward Shils (Chairman)*

*John Simpson*

*Lorna P. Straus*

*H. G. Williams-Ashman*