

# Editor's Mail

(Contributions are invited. Letters should be limited to less than 300 words. Only signed letters will be considered for publication. Personal attacks on individuals will be eliminated.)

## The McClellan Case

To the Editor:

The writer of the editorial on the McClellan case in *The Mining Journal* of Oct. 23 is badly confused as to both facts and principles.

First, the "Faculty and Staff Administrative Guide" is a document issued not by the faculty but by the administration. It is in no sense "our own."

Second, it is true that the president of the university has the legal authority to dismiss any staff member, including those on tenure. The limits on this authority are set by his fairness and wisdom—or at least prudence. The question is, how far these qualities entered into the decision to dismiss Dr. McClellan.

Third, the question of procedure that the Faculty Senate raised had to do with the stated and customary procedure in evaluating a faculty member's performance. This naturally begins with the department head and dean, who are obviously in the best position to judge. Dr. Harden in this case overrode very strong favorable recommendations from both these officers (and an effort was then made to conceal the fact that these recommendations had been made).

Fourth, two aspects of "academic freedom" call for comment. One is that controversy is inseparable from the pursuit of truth, that truth cannot be compartmentalized and that freedom does not reside in a set of rules but in an intellectual climate. The other is that a faculty member has the same rights as a citizen that any other person has. To charge him with "conflict of interest" because as a member of the community he takes an interest in how the policies of the university administration affect the community is certainly a violation of "academic freedom." Is a university teacher a second class citizen?

Finally, it must be recognized that the charges against Dr. McClellan are simply untrue and have been **SHOWN** (when finally stated) to be untrue. Dr. McClellan is not a "rabble-rouser" or a "trouble-maker"; he has not misused his classroom; he has not incited students or townspeople to hostility against the university administration; he has not been remiss in his duties as a committee chairman. He has, on the other hand, been a brilliant teacher, completely dedicated to the welfare of his students and the university.

Under these circumstances, students and faculty are naturally angry at the manifest injustice of his dismissal, at the initial refusal to give reasons, at the later fabrication of reasons, and at the apparent unwillingness of the board to be informed about the facts. Having met nothing but rebuffs over a period of many weeks—until the current meeting of the board—they have had no recourse except to take their case to the final arbiter in a democracy, that is, the general public.

If members of the boards, even at this late date, are willing to acquire knowledge of the real facts and to act in the light of that knowledge, the university can still be saved. If they act otherwise, then it is they, and not faculty or students who will be responsible for whatever damage to the university may ensue.

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