

SPECIAL REPORT
of the
ACADEMIC PERSONNEL POLICY COMMITTEE
concerning
CRITERIA FOR THE AWARD OF EMERITUS STATUS

Presented at the
443rd Regular Meeting of the Faculty Senate
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COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Harold Boudreau
Bernard Miller, Chair
Anwar Syed
Raymond Mahoney
H. Swaminathan
William Goss
G. Albyn Davis
Jon Simpson
Frederic Busi

A REPORT TO THE FACULTY SENATE
FROM THE ACADEMIC PERSONNEL POLICY COMMITTEE
ON CRITERIA FOR THE AWARD OF “EMERITUS” STATUS

This Committee recommends that the University of Massachusetts designate all honorably retired faculty members as “Professors Emeriti.” This practice would accord with what we understand to be the policy of most other American colleges and universities, and with dictionary definitions of the word “emeritus.”

Since most faculty members appear to regard the award of emeritus status as a rather expected recognition of past service to the University, the occasional denial of that status, on often vague and arbitrary grounds, is likely to be regarded as a gratuitous insult to the faculty member involved. We believe that ill will which might be engendered by such incidents would outweigh any benefit of retaining emeritus status as a special honor to selected faculty members.

We recommend that “Professor Emeritus” be the only University designation for honorably retired faculty members. Terms such as “Associate Professor Emeritus” should not be used. We also see little point in restricting emeritus status to those retiring faculty with some specific length of service—particularly since professors who join this University late in their careers, and are thus likely to retire after short period of service, are often especially distinguished members of the faculty.

We believe it would be beneficial to the University and to the faculty for retired faculty members to retain a close relationship with the campus. We strongly urge the University to encourage continuing scholarly and research activities by retired faculty members. University benefits, which may range from the provision of convenient parking and use of the library to access to secretarial services, use of University laboratories, and financial support, may appropriately be offered to active retired faculty to facilitate their scholarly activities. However, we believe such support should be arranged by discussion with individual faculty members, and should not be tied to the award of emeritus status.

MOVED: That the Faculty Senate recommend that the University of Massachusetts/Amherst
14-90 designate all honorably retired faculty members as “Professors Emeriti” as presented
in Sen. Doc. No. 90-021.

*Webster’s Third New International Dictionary (1981) defines “emeritus” as: (1) holding after retirement (as from professional or academic office) an honorary title corresponding to that held last during active service; (2) retired from an office of position especially after gaining public or professional recognition.