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III. Explanation of the Documents

In order to substantiate the claims made in this report and to see it in a greater context, a number of documents have been attached to this report. Even for someone with considerable experience in the world of higher education, the intent of these documents is not always clear, and indeed, that is sometimes by design, as documentation in academe is often fashioned as though it were meant for one purpose, when in fact the actual intent is something completely different. (One low-level but extremely common example of this phenomenon is the letter of recommendation. One can write a very good letter of recommendation, but one can also write a recommendation which, to one not yet initiated in the subtleties of academe, would appear to be good, but which actually is intended to damn with faint praise.) Beyond this, academe, like any profession, has its own organizational structures and professional jargon, which can sometimes obscure meaning for those unfamiliar with them. This section of the report is designed simply to list those documents, which comprise Chapter IV of this report, and, when necessary, to explain what they were intended to do.

IV-A. The Eight-Year Review Report Itself and Associated Documentation.

The Eight-Year Review report consists of the following parts:

1. The Internal Report

The Internal Report was prepared by the four internal members of the overall review committee, that is, the four faculty members who are from UCLA itself. In addition, there was a graduate student member of this internal committee who was also from UCLA. The role of the graduate student member on internal review committees varies according to each individual department reviewed, but usually is not seen as critical. In this instance, however, because of the intense distrust of faculty on the part of the graduate students in the Slavic Department, his role was crucial, not only in getting students to open up and talk about their experiences, but also in acting as a conduit to the review committee itself.

The report begins with a short Preface, describing the internal and external committees, and a brief description of the review itself. This is followed by an Introduction, in which the history of the UCLA Slavic Department is addressed, followed by a section on the Department's faculty, and then sections on the undergraduate and graduate programs. It is in this last section that the most damning charges are made against the Slavic Department and its treatment of its own graduate students. Its four subsections dealing with student welfare, funding, attrition, and graduate requirements detail a somewhat representative selection of the abuses visited upon

these graduate students by the Slavic Department. The two concluding sections deal with actions taken by the Graduate Council and recommendations for further action.

2. The External Reviewer Report (Appendix I)

The External Report was prepared by the two outside members of the review committee, David Bethea, a literary scholar from the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures at the University of Wisconsin, and Alan Timberlake, a linguistic scholar from the University of California, Berkeley, and a former tenured member of the UCLA Slavic Department.

They begin with a general overview of the UCLA Slavic Department and then focus separately on the undergraduate program, the language program, the graduate program, the faculty, leadership and collegiality, and finish with a series of recommendations in their conclusion. The external review team focuses more on the particulars of the program and less on the issue of abusive treatment of graduate students, for reasons already discussed in detail in the previous section, i.e. the refusal of many UCLA Slavic Department graduate students to speak with them due to Alan Timberlake's status as a former UCLA Slavic Department faculty member, and a linguist at that.

3. Site Visit Schedule (Appendix II)

This is simply an hour-by-hour schedule of the on-site meetings that took place from Wednesday, February 3, 2000 to Friday, February 5, 2000.

4. *Factual Errors Statement* from Department Chair, M. Heim and Response to this Statement from H. Martinson (Appendix III)

(In the original report that was made available to students, the response by H. Martinson was listed first, followed by the *Factual Errors Statement*. They have been reversed here in order to represent their chronological order, i.e. first M. Heim's statement and then H. Martinson's response to it.)

As will be discussed in detail in the following sections, the *Factual Errors Statement* section of the review was not intended to be a forum through which the chair of the department under review could rebut individual points of the review itself. That is to say, it was never intended to be an opportunity for the Chair to debate matters of substantive content. Rather, the sole purpose of this section was for the Chair to list purely factual errors. For instance, if the department had four professors at the associate level, but the report listed six at that level, then this would be the sort of thing that would wind up in the *Factual Errors Statement*.

Apparently Michael Heim either did not know these guidelines, or he knew of them but chose to ignore them. No doubt one of the reasons the UCLA Administration does not want to get

into nasty detail in the *Factual Errors Statement* is because it becomes a part of the official review documentation. In any case, Michael Heim did choose to use this section of the review as an opportunity to rebut much of what was in the Internal Report (the report produced by the four UCLA faculty members and the one UCLA graduate student as members of the Internal Review team.) Given that this was indeed destined to be a part of the official review documentation, the chair of the Internal Committee had no choice but to respond. His response follows the *Factual Errors Statement*.

M. Heim's response to the *Factual Errors Statement* is extremely insightful in that it begins the process, albeit unwittingly, of tearing away the façade behind which the UCLA Slavic Department has operated for so many years. As is discussed elsewhere in this report, Michael Heim, when he first learned that his very candid comments (including harsh criticism of the two especially abusive faculty members) would become an official part of the Eight-Year Review report, was visibly upset, asking rhetorically, in front of some graduate students no less, how this could have happened. While it may indeed be the case that he didn't know that this would be included in official documentation, the possibility has been raised that his actions were not as inadvertent as he would have others believe, in that by replying as he did, he was attempting to initiate the process of both spreading and re-directing the blame. The *Factual Errors Statement* is clearly aimed at "two problem faculty", and later, in an email to graduate students dated July 13, 2000, Heim notes that most of the abuses from the time periods in question took place under his predecessors in the departmental chair position. Of course, no one but Michael Heim can know for sure if his long response in the *Factual Errors Statement* was done knowing it would become part of the review's official documentation, but it is intriguing that a mistake of such magnitude would be made in an matter of such importance.

Even more insightful was H. Martinson's response to Michael Heim's objections. The response in many ways speaks for itself, and there is additional commentary on it in the following sections, so suffice it to say for now that it was a devastating point-by-point rebuttal of Michael Heim's claims.

4. Self Review Report (Appendix IV)

The Self Review Report is essentially just the UCLA Slavic Department's view of itself and the job it has done during the eight-year period under review. Not surprisingly, the Department seems to come out with a fairly strong assessment when that assessment is conducted by the Department's own faculty. It is interesting, if not sadly amusing, that the main issue of the Internal Reviewers, that of graduate student abuse and low morale, an issue that even the External Reviewers were forced to acknowledge and to which they devoted a significant amount of time, barely appears in the Self Review Report. It is hinted at in a single sentence at the end of a paragraph dealing with teaching assistantships: "Nonetheless, a number of students

have expressed a desire for a more collegial and transparent atmosphere."

(NOTE: In spite of the fact that the UCLA Administration agreed to release the entire report to all graduate students, for some reason, the first page of the faculty's Self Review Report was missing in the initial distribution and was never redistributed to all the graduate students.)

The Eight-Year Review report consisted only of the four sections listed above. Included here with the Eight-Year Review report are two additional documents, both emails sent by Michael Heim on July 13, 2000. The first is simply Michael Heim passing on to all Slavic Department graduate students an email copy of a report sent by the external reviewers, Alan Timberlake of UC Berkeley and David Bethea of the University of Wisconsin, in which they attempt to backpedal on some of their earlier criticisms and in which they attack the report of the Internal Committee. The second, entitled "Chair's Response to the Internal Review Team's Response", is Michael Heim's attempt to continue the dialog with the chair of the internal committee regarding the latter's point-by-point rebuttal of Michael Heim's *Factual Errors Statement*.

5. Revisionist Letter By Alan Timberlake and David Bethea

The letter by Timberlake and Bethea is addressed specifically to Professor Duncan Lindsey, the then head of the Academic Senate, and to Professor Pauline Yu, the then-Dean of the Humanities, and is addressed in general to all "members of the UCLA community." It is essentially an attempt, after the fact, to soften the picture painted of the UCLA Slavic Department by the internal report and, to an extent, by the external reviewers' own external report. Extensive commentary on this letter is provided below in the annotated version of the Eight-Year Review Report, so no commentary will be provided here.

6. Chair's Response to the Internal Review Team's Response

The response by Michael Heim to the point-by-point rebuttal of his *Factual Errors Statement* by the Chair of the internal committee was also sent to all Slavic Department graduate students. This communication from Michael Heim continues his campaign to rehabilitate the Slavic Department, and himself as well, but the general consensus was that he served only to dig himself and the Slavic Department in that much deeper. From a legal point of view, this email from the Chair escalated both the Chair's personal responsibility and that of the University when he, without permission from the student in question, illegally released grades from the UC Riverside transcripts of the one graduate student who had allowed her story to be made public. As is the case with the revisionist letter sent by Timberlake and Bethea, extensive commentary on this "rebuttal to the rebuttal" is included in the annotated version of the Eight-

Year Review report below, so no further commentary will be provided here.

IV-B. An Annotated Copy of the Eight-Year Review Report in Which Explication of Various Aspects of this Report is Provided.

This is a copy of the same Eight-Year Review report listed above, with all six sections, but with commentary interspersed throughout. It is this annotated copy of the report, issued by some of the graduate students of the Slavic Department, that was provided to the UCLA Graduate Council at the Graduate Council's request. Students were told that the Graduate Council would take this information into account before deciding on the request from the Chair of the UCLA Slavic Department to lift the stay on graduate student admissions to the program. It's not possible to know if the Graduate Council did indeed avail itself of this document, but what is without question is that the Graduate Council did indeed acquiesce to Michael Heim's request that the stay on the admission of graduate students for Fall 2000 be lifted.

The document itself is large and can be difficult to follow. To counteract that, different fonts have been used for the various sections, and those fonts have been retained when quoting from one section in a different section. In addition, the student commentary/annotation has been listed in blue font in order to make it easier for the reader to know what is commentary and what is the original text.

IV-C. Letter From the Head of the Internal Review Committee Urging Slavic Department Graduate Students to Participate in Discussions with Slavic Department Faculty Concerning the Eight-Year Review.

This letter, dated July 18, 2000, was included in the mailing of the hardcopies of the Eight-Year Review report that were sent out to all graduate students. More will said of this letter in coming sections. Its main significance lies in the fact that, at a time when graduate students were frantically trying to keep Michael Heim and other faculty members from the UCLA Slavic Department from questioning them about the Eight-Year Review, this letter in effect encourages students to do exactly that, to openly engage in discussions of the review with the Slavic Department faculty. The conditions leading up to this letter and its consequences will be discussed in detail later in this report.

IV-D. Initial Communication of Findings from the Internal Review Team's Graduate Student Representative to the Head of the Internal Review Team

This is one of the initial communications from the graduate student member of the internal review team to the head of the internal review team, describing his findings after having

spoken to a number of students in the UCLA Slavic Department. The first part is a more or less informal communication addressed directly to the head of the internal review team, while the second part is a summation of his findings after having gone through the graduate student surveys, read comments from graduate students in the UCLA Slavic Department, and spoken with some of those students. It was meant to convey some of the concerns that the graduate students had to the faculty members of the internal committee as they set about the process of compiling a final report about their findings during the Eight-Year Review process.

IV-E. E-Mail Communications from Internal Committee's Graduate Student Representative Requesting Protection for UCLA Slavic Department Students

This is a series of emails sent from the internal committee's graduate student representative to various officials of the University and to the internal review committee itself. These emails were prompted by graduate student concerns that 1. the UCLA Academic Administration, in the face of threatened lawsuits by the UCLA faculty, withdrew its order that faculty members of the UCLA Slavic Department should not speak to Slavic Department students directly about the results of that review; and 2. The UCLA Administration and the faculty head of the internal review committee were encouraging students to speak with the Chair of the UCLA Slavic Department, Michael Heim, concerning the results of the Eight-Year Review.

What should stand out is that the tone of these emails becomes progressively more urgent as the graduate student representative to the internal review team is rebuffed time and time again in his attempts to get the UCLA Academic Administration to keep its promise and protect students by adhering to its order to the UCLA Slavic Department faculty not to talk with graduate students in that department directly about the results of the Eight-Year Review. It is interesting to note that by the fourth and last of these emails, the graduate student representative is actually at the point where he questions his own judgment in having encouraged graduate students in the UCLA Slavic Department to go along with the requests from the UCLA Academic Administration and to cooperate fully with the investigation.

IV-F. E-mail from Graduate Student Representative on the Internal Committee to an Administrative Official Concerning the Distribution of the Eight-Year Review to Graduate Students

This is an email by the internal review committee's graduate student representative to an administrator in the Academic Senate office concerning the distribution of the Eight-Year Review Report. As was mentioned above in [Section II](#) of this report, the distribution of the report was controversial for a number of reasons. Normally it was not distributed at all except for a copy to the department that was reviewed. While this copy was, in theory, available to students, in

practice this was usually not the case, either because someone had taken out the one available copy or, more likely in the case of the UCLA Slavic Department, students would be too afraid to go into the departmental office and actually ask for the review report.

The problem arose specifically when the Chair of the UCLA Slavic Department, Michael Heim, began sending out emails to the Department's graduate students in which he challenged individual parts of the report (specifically, those parts which list the many times when he gave false information to the internal review team). The problem was, many of those students were out of town and thus had no access to the report, and most of those who actually were in town, as was mentioned above, would not be likely to walk into the office and ask for a copy of the report. (The fact that this was happening in the summer would make their presence in the Department seem all that much more conspicuous.)

As can be seen in this communication, the graduate student representative addresses this issue and suggests that its solution lies in providing each of the graduate students of the UCLA Slavic Department with their own copy of the Eight-Year Review report.

IV-G. Initial Written Response by the Slavic Department Faculty as a Whole to the Eight-Year Review

This is the first official response by the UCLA Slavic Department as a whole to the Eight-Year Review report. There are a number of interesting points in this document, beginning with its opening sentence, in which it expresses the Department's gratitude (gratitude?) for "the praise for the Department's stature and the accomplishments of both the graduate and undergraduate programs". The second half of the opening statements acknowledges "harsh criticisms" as well, but were one to read this statement without having first read the reports, one might be tempted to think that the "praise-to-criticism" ratio was 1:1.

The document, of course, offers no real alternatives for graduate students who are abused, it merely mouths official policy and waxes eloquent on how such abuse could never be tolerated in a department such as the UCLA Slavic Department. The document quotes the Chair from a student-faculty welcome meeting in Fall 2000: "I want to assure you that as chair I will exercise the full power of my office to discourage [abusive behavior toward graduate students] and ensure that anyone who engages in [such behavior] will be held accountable." Even a cursory glance at the this exposé of the Slavic Department and the review process will quickly make clear of what value such assurances are when coming from the then-Chair of the Slavic Department. These points are made repeatedly, so they will not be addressed here.

Two final related points about this document: in requesting that the Graduate Council

lift the ban on graduate student admissions that had been instituted only at the end of the previous academic year, the Department writes the following: "It may seem questionable whether changes made over the eight months that have passed since the site visit can resolve problems that developed over a period of eight years." This is a ludicrous statement, of course, as anyone who has read this report will clearly see, but what is especially interesting is this statement in the context of the over all Departmental response. While problems existed in both the literature and linguistic sides of the house, the linguistic side was disproportionately represented. What is amusing about this document is that it made all sorts of recommendations for changes specifically in the literature program (seven recommended changes), but when it comes to the linguistic side of the house, the side that was far more affected by the policies in place that allowed for abuse of graduate students, there the UCLA Slavic Department only deemed it necessary to institute a single change, as follows:

"1. The catalogue text describing the PhD requirements in Slavic linguistics shall be modified as follows: Students in linguistics take two three-hour written examinations. In the first of these THE STUDENT IS EXAMINED IN THE GENERAL AREA OF THE PROPOSED DISSERTATION RESEARCH, in the other, in comparative Slavic linguistics, the history of Russian and the history and structure of a second Slavic language."

So apparently, by instituting just one change that specifically applied to the linguistics program, the Department nonetheless felt that it had indeed, in eight short months, remedied the conditions which existed for decades before that, and which had been most prominent in the linguistics side of the house. Perhaps the Department felt that its tactical use of upper-case letters would make clear to the Graduate Council the sincerity and intensity with which it was approaching the problem.

IV-H. Graduate Student Handbook Prepared by the Slavic Department in Response to the Eight-Year Review

The handbook that was put together by the UCLA Slavic Department is, for the most part, simply a restating of information that existed elsewhere and does nothing to address the problem of graduate student abuse in a substantive manner. It appears to be nothing more than an attempt to throw quantitative solutions (or "non-solutions" in this instance) at the problem as opposed to getting to their core, something that neither the Department nor the University itself is capable of doing. As has been stated above, of its thirty-four pages, only the last half-page addresses the issue of graduate student abuse, and even then, it merely restates what had already been official policy. It offers nothing new.

IV-I. INTERNAL REPORT—THE DEPARTMENT OF SLAVIC LANGUAGES & LITERATURES/NOVEMBER 2001

This is an interim report, issued by the UCLA Slavic Department in November of 2001, approximately a year after the Graduate Council lifted the ban on the admission of graduate students to the Department. It speaks of the hiring of a new professor, of new admissions and funding procedures and policies, and of the structure and procedures for forming M.A. and Ph.D. committees. It also addresses changes in academic programs, policies regarding student welfare, and participation of staff members in departmental meetings. It is interesting for a number of points:

- In both the Internal and External reports from the 2000 Eight-Year Review, the need for a specialist in 19th century literature was repeatedly stressed:

Internal Report

- "Both external reviewers considered replacement of the 19th century specialist to be 'absolutely crucial to the long-term health and viability of the department...' (ER, p.4)";
- "Note that the 19th and 20th century literature appointments will be very important for the undergraduate program as well as for the reasons discussed above, as these areas (particularly 19th century) attract substantial enrollment.";
- "Raise the current search for a 19th century specialist to open rank, preferably someone already highly respected in the field, and ideally someone who might take a leadership role as the department emerges from the present crisis."

External Report

- "There are gaps in current coverage that will need to be filled before the department can be considered to be at full speed and competitive with the top programs in the country: 1) a specialist in "Golden Age" prose (Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, etc.) with theoretical sophistication and a well-established record in the field;... It is our belief that the first position, the Golden Age specialist, is absolutely crucial to the long-term health and viability of the department: this is where the biggest enrollments reside in any Slavic program, and to have a well-known person representing this area would certainly add to the luster of the department. It is the core area of any graduate program, and it would not be unnatural to expect the person filling the position to exercise a leadership role in the definition of the literature program. For this latter reason, we recommend that the search be open as to rank; the department might be extremely well served if it could identify and attract a prominent colleague at an intermediate rank (approximately, the senior associate rank—that is, ready to be promoted to full professor) and with one or more outstanding books to his or her credit. To repeat, however, nothing in our estimation would do more to raise the profile of the department and to solidify its orientation as an equal parts literature and linguistics faculty than this appointment."

For the 20th century literature and South Slavist position, the recommendation was to fill these needs with joint-appointments: "We urge the department and the administration to explore aggressively the possibility of filling the 20th century and the South Slavist positions with joint appointments."

What is clear from this, then, is that everyone who reviewed the UCLA Slavic Department felt that the next appointment should be a specialist in 19th century literature. So important did the External Reviewers feel this appointment to be that they even urged that the Department be allowed to hire an already tenured mid-level or senior scholar to fill it.

And yet, what did the UCLA Slavic Department do? Did they indeed fill this position with a 19th century specialist? As can be seen from this report from November 2001, they did not. They instead hired, with tenure, one of their own former literature students. Nothing against this particular scholar: he is extremely bright, he is personable, and he is young, all good qualities. He is a prodigious writer, having already published a number of books in his field. What he is not, however, is an expert in 19th century literature. This might have been puzzling to those outside the Department, but to those inside, this made perfect sense. The literature side of the house was trying to consolidate its power, and the last thing in the world it wanted was some "prominent colleague" to come in from without, much less one who would "exercise a leadership role in the definition of the literature program". Instead they got a very good 20th century scholar who had done his graduate work under the mentorship of Ron Vroon, who, as Michael Heim pointed out "was chair for most of the period under review".

This is not to suggest that this new hire has been nothing more than a non-threatening "yes-man" to the senior faculty since his hire, a sort of Clarence Thomas to the senior faculty's Antonin Scalia. Not enough is known at this point. What it does suggest, quite clearly, is that the faculty was loath to bring in an outsider. Just as Alan Timberlake was a former member of the Department with whom the Department was comfortable, so too was it the case that this particular hire seemed the least threatening to the faculty, for obvious reasons.

- The supposed "changes" in funding are different only in form, not function. For years this department had depended on recruiting students that it might consider marginal but who were willing to either fund themselves or take out student loans to make their way through the program. This supposedly new policy of guaranteeing four years of funding seemed, on the surface, good: "The Department has committed itself to a policy of offering newly admitted students four-year packages, contingent upon timely progress. Such support will be equivalent in monetary terms to a 50% teaching assistantship (TAship) on the assistant level. This package may consist of fellowships, grants, unrestricted aid, research assistantships, teaching assistantships or any combination of the above." The problem lies with the phrase "unrestricted funds". It was not clear

what this term meant. If it could include student loans, then this would in effect mean no change whatsoever in the amount of funding graduate students were being granted. All this would mean is that graduate students had the right to go tens of thousands of dollars into debt on the off chance they would be one of the lucky few to survive this program and come away with a Ph.D., something which was already the case before the review. No clear answer was ever forthcoming on what the term "unrestricted funds" meant. Perhaps it was not meant to include student loans. (Different faculty said different things on this when questioned.) If it was in fact meant to include student loans, then this would be an example of what the Department does often when confronting problems: they throw a lot of words at these problems, knowing that most people don't have the background or know enough of the situation to interpret what they are saying. The insertion of this one little easy-to-overlook phrase, if it is indeed meant to include student loans, has the effect of keeping the status quo in place, regardless of how much writing the Department does about its new policies with regard to funding.

- This policy of guaranteeing four years of funding to each of its students is actually nothing new. The Department or its representatives would routinely misrepresent to incoming or potential students the amount of funding it gave out. This "four year" rule was in fact usually only a "rule" when a student who had been in the Department more than four years applied for funding, in which case it was conveniently invoked if the Department didn't wish to provide that particular student with funding. (Of course, if this student was favored, then the Department would move heaven and earth to provide funding. This happened on numerous occasions.) In addition, there were students who had never had anywhere close to four years of funding, but who were nonetheless listed as having been funded for four years.
- Finally, the criteria for funding (e.g. "Level of Academic Progress") are, as before, not only vague, but they presuppose a rational faculty that has a quantifiable and verifiable system of assigning grades to graduate students, something which would be essential to keep faculty from assigning grades based on factors other than academic performance. Likewise, the Student Welfare and Internal Resolution policies all presuppose a rational and fair-minded faculty. Given the nature of the faculty in the UCLA Slavic Department, however, the idea that they could or would always assign grades in a rational and fair-minded way is pure fantasy.

IV-J. The Graduate Student Association Resolution, Prompted by the Inadequacies of the Review Process, Passed in 2001

During the Eight-Year Review of the UCLA Slavic Department, the Graduate Student Association (GSA) was invaluable in providing resources and counsel to the Slavic Department student body. What became quickly apparent to the senior officials in the GSA was not just the degree of graduate student abuse that existed within the UCLA Slavic Department, but how the

system itself that was put in place allegedly to protect students and to examine academic departments is itself deficient and in need of overhaul.

In consequence of that belief, the GSA passed a resolution authorizing the incoming GSA to take up certain issues with the Academic Senate and the Graduate Division regarding the efficiency of the Eight-Year Review process, the lag in time between its recommendations and their implementation, the question of resources (more particularly, the lack thereof) in the investigation of departments, the protection of students from abuse of power, the need for objective standards, and the need for easy access to results from eight-year reviews.

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