

July 22, 1957

Superior Educational Council
University of Puerto Rico
Rio Piedras, Puerto Rico

Dear Sirs:

Recently, signatures were collected among the members of the Faculty of the College of Agriculture and Mechanical Arts in order to repudiate the statements made by Mr. Gustavo Agraft in the last meeting of the Superior Educational Council.

The way in which these signatures are obtained is deplorable. When a person collecting these signatures approaches a professor, he tries to make him conscious of the fact that the head of the department, the division director, or the Dean would be very pleased if his (the professor's) signature appeared in the prepared document. The persons collecting signatures and those preparing the document are, as a rule, the same people we have seen before working together in this type of activity.

They also resort to other techniques in order to collect signatures. To the professor whose signature is wanted, it is mentioned that in some future date he will be able to ask for a rise, a bonus, a fellowship or a license with pay and other things that would be decided by the Administration.

We then ask ourselves: What value are we to give to the declarations of a College or University faculty under these circumstances?

This truth also applies to the faculty in Rio Piedras.

The administrative organization of the University of Puerto Rico is typified by inflexibility and authoritarianism. This is a great impediment to the development of a "university life." The majority of the faculty feels limited in their liberty to act and express themselves. These feelings are the cause of anxiety and insecurity. My four years of contact with the faculty in Rio Piedras and Mayagüez have made it clear that this is the condition under which the most important members of the University find themselves. It is up to you gentlemen of the Council to remedy this situation in our highest seat of learning.

To this situation has contributed the present law ruling our University. This law gives too much power to the Chancellor and he uses it without any inhibitions whatsoever. I consider it necessary to amend the present law to the effect that the University's government would reside in a Board composed by the Chancellor, the Deans, and a representative of the faculty of each college. The faculties' representatives should be elected by their respective faculties upon secret ballot.

The Chancellor should be the president of the University Board (or Boards) and the executive that will carry out the decisions of the Board. Decisions of the Board should be by a majority vote. The Senate Bill 247 presented by the lady Senator Cabrera de Ibarra on March 14, 1957, creates a system of internal government for the University of Puerto Rico along these same lines.

At present there are two University Boards, one in Río Piedras and the other in Mayagüez, and, as the law reads now, these are merely advisory bodies for the Chancellor. He may, therefore, ignore both Boards and the whole faculty, since the latter one has no authority under the present law. The Superior Educational Council should continue to be the supreme body of Government for the University.

The Chancellor should be appointed, as he now is, by the Superior Council for a fixed term of say five or six years. The deans should also be appointed by the Superior Council from a list of candidates submitted by the faculty of each college who will meet for this purpose. The deans and the faculty representatives of each college should serve in their positions for a fixed period of time.

The Vice-Chancellor should be appointed by the Superior Council and serve in the same manner as those mentioned above for a fixed period of time. The heads of departments, division directors and professors should be appointed by the University Board.

I feel confident that you will take the necessary steps to remedy the difficult situation in which the University finds itself and that liberty of thought and action be brought

back to the faculty, therefor contributing to their development in the kind of atmosphere that makes possible fruitful and creative work.

Sincerely,

(sgd.) Miguel A. Charneco

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