

Lee Pelton

ps I will be away until Monday, but am happy to talk, if you so desire when I return.

Date: 15 Jan 97 22:02:08 EST

From: Sandra L. Weber

Subject: Re: Advisor?

To: David C. Kang

Cc: Peter D. Goldsmith, Daniel M. Nelson

--- You wrote:

--- You wrote:

I would like to know more about your thoughts on this issue and especially how your suggestion would impact the role of the two advisors (a faculty member and Peter Goldsmith) which have already been designated to support Asian and Asian-American interests.

--- end of quoted material ---

Dear Dean Pelton:

How are you? I think we need to talk.

From the context of the email, Peter's responses, and most importantly, the students' responses, I get the impression that I am that "faculty member" who had already been designated as quasi-Asian American Dean. If this impression is incorrect, no problem and we've cleared up a potentially dangerous issue.

However, if the Deanery has already designated me in this fashion, some serious discussion between you and me needs to take place immediately.

I was rather surprised to find out that I had been designated for something that I had never heard of nor been asked to do; my last recollection of anything dealing with student issues was some very informal discussions between me and Sarah Cho and Jack Vaitayanonta last spring about whether I would advise some group of them were organizing; I declined but said I'd be happy to be an informal advisor. I never heard anything more; and I certainly never engaged in formal discussions with the Administration about terms and conditions.

While I am very sympathetic to Asian-American needs and issues, my job is to be a professor at this school. As you must certainly know, minority professors have a fairly unique burden of being seen as the natural advocate of their own minority students on campus. This adds other concerns that "non-minority" faculty do not deal with. I have been willing and eager to help students in an informal way; if the College wishes me to move beyond that I would appreciate being told before I am appointed such.

I am away from the College Friday-Monday, since its my birthday! I'd be happy to meet with you at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely,

Dave Kang
Assistant Professor
Government Department

--- end of quoted material ---

Dear Professor Kang,

I did, in fact, assume that you had accepted a role as an advisor for Asian-American students. I also assumed that whatever arrangements existed were made between you and the students. A number of faculty assume unpaid advisor/advising positions for certain student groups. For instance, gay, lesbian and bi-sexual students have traditionally had faculty advisors. The Afro-American society has (or at least had) two unpaid faculty advisors (in addition to the dean who serves as a College liaison to those students). There are other examples, as well.

I did not suggest that you were a dean or that you had assumed a paid administrative position. (My e-mail message does not use the word "dean.") My question was and still is related to understanding how students view the request for a dean in the context of what I had been led to believe were discussions that resulted in the designation of you and Peter Goldsmith as advisors to Asian-American students.

It appears that I may have assumed too much about the outcome of your conversations with students during the past six months.

Sincerely,
Lee Pelton