14 May 1998

TO: Masao Sugiyama and Rob Knapp, for the Academic Deans

FROM: Burt Guttman

SUBJECT: Developmental Biology hire

Since Monday evening, I have searching my soul and having "I coulda said" conversations with myself. I have been deeply upset by the fact that the Faculty Hiring DTF has recommended Julio Soto be hired. I think it is a great mistake.

Let me tell you what "I coulda said" and probably "shoulda said" after we voted on Monday afternoon. I could have said essentially, "I think this is crazy! Four out of five members of the subcommittee came in here telling you that we favored Steve Verhey. Our year of experience with Steve has produced a large group of students who are utterly loyal to him, who think he is a wonderful teacher who has a fine ability to explain ideas clearly to students, whereas we saw real, serious evidence that Julio cannot explain important ideas. You heard a statement from one student member of the subcommittee who told you how Steve stimulates his students to do much more than they thought they were capable of doing--a quality to be cherished in any teacher. Furthermore, several of our faculty colleagues have gotten to know Steve, have taught with him, and think he would make an excellent member of the faculty. Steve is a known quantity, and he is known to be first-rate. Julio is a largely unknown quantity by comparison, and the votes in his favor are based on a relatively brief interview and the consideration of cultural diversity in the faculty. I think this is a mistake. I also think it's a lousy way to treat someone who has served the College well for a year--and what does he do for a job now, in the middle of May?"

I did not say any such thing. I didn't think fast enough, I didn't realize how strongly I felt about the issue, and I didn't think I could have any influence in the DTF, after seeing how the vote had gone. I am also aware that this communication is outside our normal procedures and that it is second-guessing a group of our faculty colleagues. But I now beg you: If there is any way to reconsider this decision, it ought to be reconsidered.

cc: Barbara Smith