19 November 1998

TO: John Perkins, for the Agenda Committee

FROM: Burt Guttman

SUBJECT: Separation of individual and program matters

From the founding of the College, faculty members and students have been on an equal basis with regard to borrowing of library materials, including media equipment and films. I think this is proper, but I also believe faculty members must enjoy a certain exception when it comes to materials used in programs.

When we faculty members borrow equipment or use films, we must sign them out on our personal ID numbers (Social Security numbers), and this has created at least two kinds of difficulties for me. First, there have been times when I need to borrow a film or video to show to my program but I have something wrong in my personal account--a book overdue, perhaps. I'm not able to obtain the film or video until I clear up the personal matter, and if I happen to have misplaced the book or left it at home, my program suffers or else I am forced to add one more bit of running around to my already hectic schedule. Second, I have now had a couple of instances of borrowing slide projectors for program use and then being too busy to return them promptly, resulting in fines charged to me personally. The first time this happened, I refused to pay the fine on principle: I refuse to pay the College for the enormous privilege of dragging equipment back and forth across campus for the benefit of my students and then being too busy to return it promptly. I finally had them charge the fine to my program budget, and I will do so again if necessary, but this seems like an insane waste of money generated by an insane policy.

The solution to the problem, I believe, is to allow faculty members to check out materials by using their program budget numbers rather than their own ID numbers. I just called the State Library Media Center and found that they would not accept my budget number for this purpose, and I don't believe any Library department would either. I would like the Agenda Committee to take up this issue and to negotiate a change of policy with the Library and other relevant offices so we can separate program from personal accounts.