The Committee concludes that my record, teaching effectiveness, professional growth, and service, does not merit promotion. To justify this conclusion, the Committee asserts that my teaching record is mixed, the content of my publications is mediocre and my publications are with obscure or illegitimate publishers, and my service is only satisfactory. The evidence, however, proves the opposite in all three areas. This letter will present the evidence and in doing so show that my record merits promotion. It will also show that the Committee did not fairly or honestly evaluate the evidence and in order to justify its conclusion went beyond its policy guidelines, used misleading and untrue statements, hyperbolic rhetoric and unexamined assumptions. The criteria and evidence that the RTP Committee is supposed to use in the evaluation process is stated in the University Senate Policy Guidelines.

Teaching Effectiveness

The evidence that the Committee is supposed to use in evaluating teaching effectiveness include:

1. “Student Evaluations of Instruction”

The evidence is overwhelmingly positive, but in the letter receives little acknowledgement. I have taught lower division introductory courses, upper division courses, and graduate courses. And I have received high evaluations for every class that I have taught, most often, significantly higher than the department average. For the introduction courses, the range for the quantitative evaluations is 4.65 to 4.74. During the three year time period, I taught Sociology 539 and received a 4.71 quantitative evaluation. The range for graduate classes was 4.48 to 4.98.

2. “Motivate”. . , “participate”. . .and “foster critical thinking”

A content analysis of hundreds of student responses in the qualitative section of student evaluations not only show that I am, as the letter states, universally lauded as passionate, inspirational and one of the best teachers that students have ever had, but also that I have had a positive impact on their knowledge base, critical thinking skills, and complex reasoning skills. And the qualitative responses further indicate that students have had their eyes opened by being exposed to a critical pedagogy that emphasizes a dialogical concept of education. As one student wrote, “He really encourages critical thinking and makes learning a very positive and transformative experience.” A content analysis of my qualitative evaluations reveals that students do not comment on the course being easy. Out of x responses only x number comment on > > >

3. “honors and distinctions received for excellence in teaching,”

The awards that I have received are evidence of my teaching effectiveness, including my high standards. They are not popularity awards, nor awards given to me because of “grade inflation.” In fact, the following awards were given to me prior to teaching the large introduction class. The Mortar Board Award is given to “outstanding faculty and staff” and those faculty are selected by students who have been elected to the Mortar Board Society. The Society recognizes only a few students and it does so on the basis of “scholarship, leadership and service.” I have been nominated x times for this award. I consider it an honor and the numerous times that I have been nominated are evidence of my teaching excellence. Also in the last x years I have been awarded the Most Influential Faculty Award in the Sociology Department x times. The department faculty selects the outstanding graduating senior and the student selected then picks the faculty member who has been most influential in the student’s academic career.

Since 2004, I have been chosen for the Quest for the Best Faculty Award six times. The “Quest for the Best” award seeks “to recognize outstanding student leaders who have typified and promoted the mission of the university. This Vice Presidential Student Service award is given each April to the ‘best of the best’ at SDSU – those students who excel academically and through community and campus involvement. This award recognizes individual excellence in academics, campus involvement, and community service.” Those students selected choose the faculty member who has been most influential in their academic career. And finally, it is with no little irony that I mention that I was recipient this last year of the College of Arts and Letters Teaching Excellence award. This award was presented to me by the Dean of the College of Arts and Letters, Paul Wong. The criteria for this award are “high quality teaching, engaging and motivating diverse student populations in learning and critical thinking, enrollment, and effective pedagogical techniques.”

The Committee dismisses the above by emphasizing “grade inflation” and disingenuously claims that the Department RTP Committee agrees. This is categorically untrue; the Department RTP Committee using the policy criteria and evidence outlined for an RTP committee overwhelmingly supports my teaching. The emphasis on grade inflation supports the conclusion of the CAL RTP Committee that I do not deserve promotion in two ways: it makes my record mixed, according to the Committee, and further, according to the Committee, it makes everything that I have mentioned above illegitimate. The Committee uses the supposed mixed nature of my record as the justification for denying me promotion. It says, “. . . the Committee finds that your record is mixed and does not merit promotion.” The evidence of the record of my teaching effectiveness is not mixed by definition. In fact, it is overwhelmingly positive as evidenced by the Department letter and the material that I presented above. The real significance for the introduction of grade inflation into the promotion process is to make everything positive illegitimate. The Committee’s position which is never explicitly stated appears to be that grade inflation necessarily means that I do not have high standards and that my student evaluations and teaching awards are a result of high grades and a lack of standards and therefore illegitimate. While it can be plausibly argued that high grade average leads to high quantitative evaluations, there is much evidence to the contrary, for example, bad teachers who give high grades still receive bad evaluations. However, it can not be plausibly argued that high grade averages lead to extremely high qualitative evaluations, evaluations that emphasize the most important aspects of teaching effectiveness. And it can not be plausibly argued that the prestigious awards that I have received for teaching excellence based on my relationship with the best students at the university are based on high grade average.

In summary, the positives in relation to my teaching effectiveness are extremely high evaluations in all courses, student comments that refer to my passion, their positive learning experience, including positive responses at being introduced to a new pedagogy, teaching awards based on teacher-student relationships with the best students at the university, and commendable evaluations from the Department RTP Committee and the Department Chair. The negative is grade inflation in the 500 student class. To conclude other than that my teaching effectiveness merits promotion defies credulity and raises serious questions about the legitimacy of the process in my specific case and the integrity of the Committee and especially its Chair, Peter Herman. The evaluation of my professional growth and service do nothing to dispel these serious questions. In fact the evaluation of my professional growth is selectively biased, overtly hostile, guilty of misstatements of facts, and oversteps the Committee’s bounds, in this case by the Committee assuming the role of peer reviewer of my publications.

The Committee finds that my professional growth does not merit promotion. It does so by selecting two publishers with whom I have published, and then making unsupported accusations about them. It also assumes the role of peer reviewer of articles and book chapters that have already been peer reviewed by experts in the field. This is unprecedented perhaps because such a presumption exceeds the policy guidelines of an RTP committee. In regard to the Committee’s claim that AAkar Books is obscure, Aakar is a globally recognized publisher. Authors from all over the world publish with Aakar, and it reprints classics from authors such as Raymond Williams, Jose Marti, E.P. Thompson, Eduardo Galeano, Slovoz Zizek, and Terry Eagleton. And it has co-publishing agreements with Cambridge University Press, Yale University Press, Monthly Review Press, among others. For the Committee to refer to AAkar as obscure suggests their own ignorance, willfulness, and perhaps demonstrates their Eurocentrism.

The Committee asserts that Nova Science Publishers with whom I have a single publication are illegitimate without defending the accusation except to claim that the San Diego State Library “declines to purchase books by this publisher.” This statement is simply untrue. And the veracity of the statement has been refuted by the Head of Collections, Dr. C. Weston. While the Committee letter does not mention the “controversy” concerning Nova publications mentioned in the Department letter, it is obvious that the claim that Nova is illegitimate is based not only on a false statement but on the controversy. This supposed controversy was started by a single librarian at the University of Chicago. His claims were refuted with ample evidence to the contrary. The current catalogue of Nova Science Publishers contains publications of the authors from the following major Universities around the world:

1 Harvard Univ 62

2 Stanford Univ 28

3 Univ California - Berkeley 27

4 Univ Cambridge 47

5 Massachusetts Inst Tech (MIT) 20

6 California Inst Tech 38

7 Columbia Univ 94

8 Princeton Univ 13

9 Univ Chicago 33

10 Univ Oxford 28

11 Yale Univ 33

12 Cornell Univ 35

13 Univ California - Los Angeles 21

14 Univ California - San Diego 19

15 Univ Pennsylvania 50

16 Univ Washington - Seattle 7

17 Univ Wisconsin - Madison 10

18 Univ California - San Francisco 13

19 Johns Hopkins Univ 24

20 Tokyo Univ 90

Also, researchers from some of America's leading government research institutions published with Nova:

US Military Academy 11

US Air Force Academy 7

Defense Intelligence College 6 titles

Rand Corporation 5 titles

Hudson Institute 3 titles

US Naval War College 1

US Army War College 1

Over recent years, Nova increasingly also published authors from major Asian Universities

1 Tokyo Univ 20

2 Kyoto Univ 22

3 Australian National University 57

4 Hebrew Univ Jerusalem 64

5 Osaka Univ 67

6 Tohoku Univ 18

7 Univ Melbourne 35

8 Nagoya Univ 25

9 Tokyo Inst Tech 53

10 Hokkaido Univ 18

In addition, Nova also publishes a great number works by European researchers:

1 Univ Cambridge 47

2 Univ Oxford 28

3 Imperial Coll London 19

4 Univ Coll London 64

5 Swiss Fed Inst Tech - Zurich 9

6 Univ Paris 06 12

7 Univ Utrecht 27

8 Univ Copenhagen 16

9 Univ Manchester 23

10 Univ Paris 11 56

The following universities are examples of major institutions that carry the most recent titles from Nova Publishers.

Stanford University

Northwestern University

Ohio State University

Ohio University

Indiana University

UC Berkeley

University of Texas

University of Wisconsin

Columbia University

University of Michigan

University of Miami

UCLA

University of North Carolina

University of Maryland

University of Illinois

New York University

Library of Congress

University of Arizona

I have published eighteen manuscripts since 2002 and they are published with highly regarded academic publishers. These include Routledge, Sage Publications, Springer Press, Hampton Press, and Praeger Press. All these manuscripts were peer reviewed by experts in the appropriate field. The idea that the Committee would presume to re-review my work is ludicrous. The silliness is magnified by Peter Herman’s review of my work “The Urgent Need for a Post-Market Ethics” in which he claims my work is “underdeveloped and lacks rigor.” This is diametrically opposed to the Department letter’s review that states the work is “well formed . . . noteworthy and laudable,” and is a “sustained and thoughtful interrogation of the work of Immanuel Levinas.” This is one of the problems with Committee’s reviewing research in areas in which they are not experts.

In the third area, the Committee concludes that my service is only satisfactory. However, the evidence proves that my service is outstanding.