

March 23, 1987

TO: Dr. MaryAnn Yodelis Smith  
Director, School of Journalism

FROM: Henry Blackburn, M.D.

RE: Joint Health Communications, Faculty & Activities

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The last eight years or so have seen the School of Public Health and School of Journalism and Mass Communications engaged in fruitful and delightful collaboration in health communications research and teaching. After your and my visits last year and recently, I would like to summarize the strengths in research and teaching that I perceive this joint program provides for both of us. Based on your assurances of personal support of this activity, I would like to start with a series of suggestions to bolster this program to our mutual advantage. It is my understanding that I will continue to work with you in regard to a joint appointment with John Finnegan. We can work through Phil Tiscenor as head of the graduate faculty to discuss the research/training aspects of the program.

This Division offers, in MHHP and in the Health Communications concentrations, the research training of doctoral candidates in Journalism by involvement in a major community-based educational intervention carried out under a quasi-experimental design.

The collaboration between us was enriched by the basic participation of Jerry Kline as Co-Principal Investigator of this NIH project, as well as his recruitment and involvement of doctoral students in MHHP researches. Not only was the project guided by his administrative function, but it has had a productive research training record for Journalism. Judy Sobel, John Pavlik and Chuck Salmon obtained their Ph.D's in this program. Two Ph.D's continue to be actively involved and guided in this joint program by Dan Wackman of your faculty and Dave Jacobs and John Finnegan of ours. This includes Jung Sook Lee and Vish Kasisomayajula.

This Division has been able to provide substantial economic support for these students as research associates, as well as contributing to their advising and research environment. Our mutual research/training efforts have, I believe, been strengthened by this program.

Access to these NIH research funds has resulted in Epidemiology's strong participation in building your TV, type setting, graphic and photographic facilities, which we use jointly today.

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We have encouraged and indirectly participated in the support of John Finnegan's teaching of courses in your School's sequences on theory and method in public opinion. I believe there is also an impression that our collaboration enhances the science writing curriculum of your School. We have been proud of this link between the two Schools, so that we've included this as a major bridge across the campus in the School of Public Health "Focus Statement", now being formulated.

We have managed, with the efforts of the faculty mentioned above, to maintain both the research and training aspects of this collaboration despite the terrible loss of Jerry Kline's service, motivation and inspiration. We have, in fact, with the continued rich collaboration of Drs. Finnegan and Wackman, formulated ideas in an excellent curriculum for Health Communications recently approved, I believe, by your graduate faculty.

We are now, however, at a crossroads in our joint activity and would like to see maintained the mutual strengths this program provides our two Schools by a firmer link. This should be in the form of a joint appointment for John Finnegan in Journalism, if possible with primary appointment in Journalism on tenure or tenure-track status, and with predominant support from the SPH.

We recommend this, despite many opportunities we still have to engage John Finnegan in numerous health communication and research activities and to support those activities. We do this because the program can only survive with such clear involvement and visibility within Journalism, and an intellectual base in Journalism. We are prepared to continue substantial support for this position and to collaborate with you in the development of mutual health communications research proposals and undertakings. This would take advantage of an increased need, it seems to me, for health and science communications for graduate students, with research and training from both our sides.

What the School of Journalism connection has done for the School of Public Health, beyond the remarkable leadership of Jerry Kline and the useful participation of Dan Wackman, has been the communications skills applied to our research and public health educational undertakings. We feel the need to move forward in this Spring Quarter in support from and involvement with Journalism. We would like to plan to enhance communications, recruit students and develop new 8000 level seminars that Dr. Finnegan might teach jointly with the School of Journalism.

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Dr. Finnegan's academic future in Journalism has been in limbo for over a year since the death of Jerry Kline and his assumption of a T faculty position in the School of Public Health. We would not like to see forward movement in these activities decline. We would not like to lose a good person and a good program which have contributed and can continue to contribute to our mutual research and training strengths.

With your agreement I am forwarding this cover note, plus documentation from John Finnegan and his CV and syllabi for consideration of your graduate faculty.

/lk

Enc.

5/12/87

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File:  
Dr. Smith

Dear Henry,

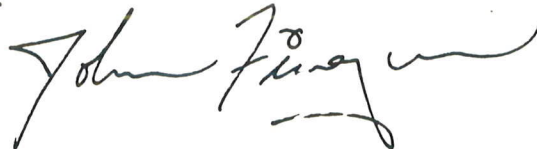
Just a quick note to let you know where we stand with the Journalism School on a joint appointment for me --

I met with Phil Tichenor yesterday (Director of Graduate Studies) to discuss some options. There is precedent for some sort of conversion of appointment from Public Health to Journalism based on some well-developed rationale that CLA would approve. A possibility exists in the area of the Science Journalism graduate program. I expressed an interest in teaching in that program (it dovetails nicely with my work in Public Health). Phil expressed his interest in collaborating with me in the area (he currently is the sole faculty member concerned with the program).

Another option is simply to apply for one of the open tenure tracks likely to be posted this year. That would involve an open search following the usual affirmative action guidelines, but I would not anticipate a problem in successfully competing for a position. Without saying which approach he approves, Phil indicated his support in exploring these options with Director M.A. Smith. I spoke to her briefly today. We have agreed to meet following her return from ICA week of Monday, May 25th.

I hope my "stock" has increased in value over there -- I learned yesterday that I was selected as this year's winner of the Nafziger-White Dissertation Award. It's a national competition with a panel of senior faculty reviewing nominated Ph.D dissertations in Mass Communication (Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication). It's quite an honor considering the national scope and that part of my competition included Chuck Salmon of UW Madison (who did his dissertation on MHHP).

Good luck with the remainder of your sabbatical. I hope it is profitable if not relaxing.



cc: R. Prineas  
R. Luepker