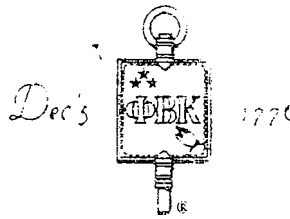


The
PHI BETA KAPPA
Society

1606 New Hampshire Ave. NW
Washington, DC 20009



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Fax 202 986 1601
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May 6, 2004

Thomas A. Van, Ph.D.
Professor, Department of English
University of Louisville
Louisville, KY 40292

Dear Dr. Van:

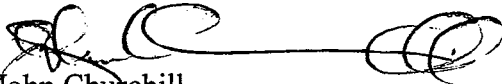
I am writing to report the action of the Committee on Qualifications of the Phi Beta Kappa Society in regard to the application from the University of Louisville seeking authorization to shelter a chapter of Phi Beta Kappa.

After careful study of the several dozen applications that were received, the Committee has selected eight institutions for further study. I regret to say that the University of Louisville was not among those selected to go forward. Below I will attempt to characterize the Committee's sense of your application.

The Committee has asked me to convey to you its interest in continued communication with Louisville in the future. The University has much to recommend it for a chapter of Phi Beta Kappa. However, the Committee hopes to learn of increasing faculty salaries, an improved graduation rate, and a strengthening of the role of foreign languages. Also, the overall place of the liberal arts and sciences in the institution's mission needs clarification. The Committee is curious about the "open enrollment" honors program, and about the apparent lack of a policy on freedom of inquiry. I would be happy to talk further with you about any of these matters. I urge you to ensure that any future application addresses them.

I realize that this news is disappointing. But let me thank you and all those at the University of Louisville who have worked so hard on this project for your interest in Phi Beta Kappa and your devotion to education in the liberal arts and sciences.

Sincerely,

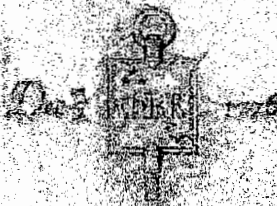


John Churchill
Secretary

The
PHI BETA KAPPA

Society

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May 1, 2007

Dr. Gregory S. Hutcheson
Classical and Modern Languages
University of Louisville
Louisville, Kentucky 40292

Dear Professor *Greg* Hutcheson:


I am writing to report the action of the Committee on Qualifications of the Phi Beta Kappa Society in regard to the application from Phi Beta Kappa members at University of Louisville seeking authorization to shelter a chapter of the Society.

After careful study of the several dozen applications that were received, the Committee has selected six applications for further study. I regret to say that the proposal from members at University of Louisville was not among those selected to go forward. Below I will attempt to characterize the Committee's sense of your application.

It is seldom the case that a single factor underlies a decision not to move forward, and in any event, the Committee's decision is a collective one, based on the judgments of a dozen individuals who have independently assessed the material and then deliberated together. Within that caveat, I can say that several factors contributed to the Committee's judgment. The Committee noted, among the strengths of the University of Louisville, its honors program, study abroad programs, and the general curriculum. The graduation rate, however, at 41%, seemed seriously low, and hard to reconcile with a 76% rate of retention from the first year to the second. The ratio of academic advisers to students seemed perilously high, and it was a matter of concern that a full third of the instruction in arts and sciences disciplines was conducted by contingent faculty. Salaries for full-time faculty seemed to the Committee to be relatively low.

I realize that this news is disappointing. But let me thank you and all those at University of Louisville who have worked so hard on this project for your interest in Phi Beta Kappa and your devotion to education in the liberal arts and sciences.

Sincerely,


John Churchill
Secretary

*I wish we'd gotten to a different outcome
but it's not in touch.*

The
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June 28, 2011

Dr. Gregory Hutcheson
University of Louisville
Humanities 323
Louisville, KY 40292

Dear Greg:

I regret to convey the news that Phi Beta Kappa's Committee on Qualifications will not be carrying forward the application of the Phi Beta Kappa members at the University of Louisville for authorization to create a chapter. I am keenly aware of the hard work that has gone into the preparation of the materials in support of the application, and the Committee is grateful for the hospitality extended to its visiting team this past year. But I am afraid that the news this round must be disappointing.

It is important for me to convey the Committee's sense that the University of Louisville is in many ways an institution on the cusp of readiness for a Phi Beta Kappa chapter. The visiting team reports a very strong student population, with many in the prospective pool of eligibility for election to membership. The faculty are productive, and many of them are doing interesting research with students. The Honors College struck the team as very impressive. Student papers were of very high quality. There are good numbers of winners of prestigious awards such as Fulbrights, and a recent Rhodes Scholar. The University seems to be on top of assessment issues, and the Learning Center appears to be a valuable resource for professional development.

The campus facilities struck the team as excellent. I should also say that while the team was concerned that it would find that evidence confirming initial worries about gender equity in salaries, further study suggests that there is not a significant issue. Faculty governance seems very good. There is representation of part-time faculty in the Faculty Senate, and recent improvement in the extension of health care to part-time faculty. It should also be mentioned that the Committee considered carefully the question whether the possibilities for revenue generation through on-line courses provided problematic incentives for structuring departmental offerings. While this concern struck the Committee as one among the symptoms of strained financial circumstances, it did not loom large in the decision.

Beyond these specifics, the Committee remains convinced that the University of Louisville embodies in large measure the commitment to the liberal arts and sciences that Phi Beta Kappa celebrates, and that it strives to uphold a standard of excellence consistent with the Society's vision. Even so, the Committee saw enough grounds for concern to decline to carry a recommendation forward.

Those concerns stem very largely from the effects of what the Committee understood to be eleven budget cuts in eleven consecutive years. In the face of this exigency, the team found that the institution had done a very good job of preserving the core academic program, as well as financial aid. Clearly, great credit must be extended to the University's leadership for these tactical successes. But the success has been won at a price, and the most evident aspect of that cost is the very widespread use of contingent faculty at the core of the academic program. It appears that over half of the arts and sciences curriculum is being taught by contingent faculty. The team reported difficulty in ascertaining who was actually responsible for some courses, and the data supplied—perhaps more generously than helpfully—did little to clarify their concerns.

The team understood that a commitment has been made to add a very significant number of new full-time faculty lines in the immediate future. To the extent that the fulfillment of this plan could mitigate the proportion of the curricular core—and the arts and sciences—covered by contingent faculty, this concern could recede in a subsequent review.

The Committee also noted that the institution has made good progress in driving up the graduation rate, and understands the challenges peculiar to an urban mission university. Even so, the current rate struck the Committee as lower than could have been hoped for, and continuing improvement would be a major advance in the prospects for a future application. The stated goal of 60% seems a good minimal threshold.

The Committee understands that much, if not all, of what it has detected as problematic is the consequence of years of stringency, to a high degree outside the capacity of the University to evade. They were moved to consider whether the Commonwealth had fallen short in its recognition of the support due such a fine institution, and expressed admiration for the ability of the institution to protect so much of its essential function under considerable adversity. In that spirit and with hope for the addressing of existing concerns, the Committee would encourage the Phi Beta Kappa community of the University of Louisville to continue engagement with this process.

Please call on me if I can be of assistance moving forward.

Sincerely,



John Churchill
Secretary