

Docket
Number
50-005

From: Marcus H. Voth <mhvnuc@engr.psu.edu>
To: ud1.internet3("tbauer@mail.utexas.edu","wehring@ut...
Date: 10/15/96 10:31am
Subject: Departure from Penn State

October 14, 1996

Dear TRTR Executive Committee Colleagues,

A month ago some of you received the message that I would be resigning as Chairman of the University Reactor Support Committee as of the TRTR meeting next week. That was one step in attempting to resolve a contentious issue of defining my role as director of the reactor program here at Penn State.

It has been a very turbulent month since then resulting in my imminent departure from the program. The university is committed to provide continued employment for me in the form of teaching responsibilities but I am actively pursuing other career options at this time. Since this development will catch most of you by surprise, I chose to make an announcement in this manner and provide some background to those of you with whom I have worked closely over the past years.

When I took the position of Director at the Breazeale Reactor ten years ago I was given an assignment of restoring an active utilization and research program that had reached a high level of prominence in the mid-sixties.

During the same time, income expectations grew while the market for our service income from training power reactor operators vanished, forcing us to diversify into more labor-intensive services. It has been difficult convincing the staff that the new expectations go beyond the traditional expectation of strictly reactor operations, especially since I never had strong support from my management in communicating this message to the staff. With time and the replacement of retirees, some members of the staff have developed to the point of undertaking solicitation of funding, engineering facility enhancements, and supporting new experiments and income sources. The university system for designating staff grade levels has not acknowledged the increased level of responsibility, nor did annual increases recognize merit for their career advancement. I found myself leading and challenging the staff in taking on new projects and in professional growth for which they were never rewarded or compensated to a reasonable extent. To make time to be personally involved in expanding activities, I delegated most of the operational activities to the staff which was their strong area. The staff did not see value in the role I filled and the activities in which I was engaged to fill that role. While we made major achievements with this arrangement I generally worked in one area and the staff in another; we never were a closely knit team and morale suffered from this arrangement the entire time.

An independent review committee was formed a year ago to assess the safety culture of our program. Their findings included the need for definition of the role of the director to address the situation described in the previous paragraph. Feeling that I had one set

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of expectations from the top down and a different set from the bottom up, each being more than a full time job, I have been working with my department head since last December to define the role I was expected to fill. While it was clear what activities I should be adding to my role, I was never freed from expectations to allow time to take on new responsibilities. Resigning from the URSC Chairmanship in September was the only specifically approved request to curtail my workload. Early this month, in anticipation of adverse action on this matter at a safeguards committee meeting, my department head informed me that I was being re-assigned. The official effective date will be within a few days.

Since my current situation is at best in a holding pattern, there is no career incentive in staying on at Penn State. I anticipate finding another position at the end of the fall semester, before spring semester classes begin. Since I was only informed of the redirection of this action item a few days ago, I have not searched the market thoroughly. Any suggestions are welcome. I will attend the TRTR conference next week and plan to turn over the URSC Chairmanship at that time. I hope to remain active in TRTR from another position but can not be sure of that at the present time. I look forward to seeing all of you in Texas.

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