

Gary J. Ferland

From: Thomas H. Troland [troland@pa.uky.edu]  
Sent: Tuesday, October 23, 2007 5:55 PM  
To: macadam@uky.edu; levenson@pa.uky.edu; shlosman@pa.uky.edu; gary@pa.uky.edu; ellis@pa.uky.edu; mike@pa.uky.edu; shafer@pa.uky.edu  
Subject: Report to the Chair r.e. committee decision

To the Observatory Committee,

As all of you know who attended today's Observatory Committee meeting, the committee voted to recommend that the observatory director position be offered to Tim Knauer. Among those committee members present (Troland, Shlosman, Shafer, Ellis and MacAdam), the vote was 4 in favor of Knauer and 1 in favor of Gaskell. If Nancy Levenson's earlier e-mail still reflects her opinion, she would have also voted for Gaskell. No member of the committee supported Quinn Sykes.

Mike Cavagnero explained that the Committee Chair (Troland) should write a brief statement reflecting the sense of the committee and its rationale. This statement, Mike said, may also reflect a minority view. The statement is to be directed to Mike who will forward the committee statement and his own analysis to the Dean. The Dean will make the final decision regarding the observatory director position.

Here is my first draft of that statement. Please let me know if you have any comments, corrections or additions. I particularly invite other committee members to suggest additional text regarding Tim Knauer if they feel I have left out any important items. (Nancy - I have not included you in the minority view because I do not presume to know your detailed thoughts on the matter. If you wish to be included, please let me know.)

\*\*\*\*\* DRAFT \*\*\*\*\* October 23, 2007

Dear Mike,

As you know, the Observatory Committee met today to consider its recommendation for the student observatory director position. By a vote of 4 to 1 among those present, the committee recommends that the position be offered to Tim Knauer.

The majority of the committee feels that Knauer is the best choice owing in part to his notable enthusiasm, creativity and energy. They believe that Knauer works well with his colleagues, and he will grow into all aspects of the job as observatory director. They see Knauer as possessing an intuitive understanding of how students learn and as having a good work ethic (based upon his prior employment in the Department). The majority also believes that Knauer has a good understanding of the needs of K12 teachers, although he does not at present have experience working with them directly. Despite his relatively limited experience with some aspects of the observatory director responsibilities, the majority of the committee is confident that Knauer's passion for astronomy and his vision for the observatory's potential will serve him well and that he will be very successful in the position. The majority also notes that Knauer was a successful instructor of astronomy survey courses which he taught as an overload while employed previously in the Department.

A minority of the committee (Troland) favors Martin Gaskell. Troland believes that Gaskell's considerable experience with virtually all aspects of the observatory's mission makes him



dramatically more qualified for the position. Gaskell is a Ph.D. astronomer with 26 years of postdoctoral experience in academic institutions. Gaskell has already established a similar student observatory at the University of Nebraska. He has worked extensively with undergraduate students at all levels (including upper level undergraduate research). He has had considerable experience with astronomy outreach activities including open observatory nights, public lectures, school planetarium shows and telescope making workshops. Knauer, in comparison, has had little or no experience with optical observatories nor with undergraduate astronomy research nor with astronomy outreach, nor has he ever been employed in an astronomy-related position other than as a part time astronomy instructor at UK. Under these circumstances, Troland believes it would be far wiser to offer the position to Gaskell.