

THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
REGENTS COMMUNICATION

APPROVED BY THE REGENTS

MAY 19 2005

ACTION REQUEST: Establishment of Visiting Professorship

PROPOSED NAME: Davis, Markert, Nickerson Visiting Professorship on Academic and Intellectual Freedom

EFFECTIVE DATE: September 2005

In 1954, the University of Michigan suspended and then terminated Professor H. Chandler Davis and Professor Mark Nickerson, a tenured faculty member, and suspended but then reinstated Professor Clement L. Markert, for their refusal to give testimony during a visit to Michigan of a group from the U.S. House Committee on Un-American Activities. The national American Association of University Professors censured the University in 1957 and, after a new Regents' Bylaw, 5.09, was adopted, removed censure in 1958.

In 1990, the Senate Assembly created the annual University of Michigan Senate's Davis, Markert, Nickerson Lecture on Academic and Intellectual Freedom and established an Academic Freedom Lecture Fund (AFLF) for its support. Fourteen annual lectures have been given by distinguished visitors under the auspices of this lectureship, which has become widely recognized as a major venue for the promotion of intellectual freedom and discussion of issues related to it.

Academic and intellectual freedom lie at the heart of the University and are key values for our democratic society. As the case of professors Davis, Markert and Nickerson shows, the University must be ever watchful in its protection of these freedoms, continuing to remind itself of their value and their vulnerability. The Davis, Markert, Nickerson Lecture has become a valuable asset toward that end. We now seek to extend the effect of this annual reminder of basic values through the creation of a visiting professorship in honor of professors Davis, Markert, and Nickerson. This visiting professorship, which will be based in the Horace H. Rackham School of Graduate Studies, will allow the University to bring to campus exceptional individuals who have been distinguished by their support and defense of intellectual freedom, to foster broad discussion of these core values. The visiting professors will be on campus for a period of a week or more. They will be expected to be actively engaged in intellectual life at the University, delivering public lectures, participating in courses, and meeting with students and faculty. For each visiting professor, the Graduate School will coordinate activities with the most appropriate academic department, and a student from that department will be selected and supported to work with the visiting professor in a related scholarly effort.

The creation of this visiting professorship has strong support from the Senate Advisory Committee on University Affairs, the Board of Directors of the Academic Freedom Lecture Fund, and the Executive Committee of the University of Michigan--Ann Arbor Chapter of the American Association of University Professors. We are pleased to recommend the establishment of the Davis, Markert, Nickerson Visiting Professorship in Academic and Intellectual Freedom.

Recommended by:



Steven L. Kunkel, Interim Dean
Horace H. Rackham
School of Graduate Studies

Recommended by:



Paul N. Courant, Provost and
Executive Vice President for
Academic Affairs