**Dr. Audrey Fisch – Comments regarding Emeritus Status to the University Senate on March 20, 2017**

I rise to ask the Faculty and Professional Staff Affairs Committee to reconsider its decision in the area of granting faculty emeritus status.

The committee report indicates that this year 3/6 applications for this honor were rejected. I have no access to information about those applications, and I value the committee’s judgment. But I worry that this action reflects a broader, misguided move away from a spirit of respect and generosity on our campus towards past contributions.

Emeritus status is an honor that costs the institution nothing. Our guidelines are broad – reflecting an openness to recognition of the wide ways in which faculty may be deserving of emeritus status. We do not, for example, currently require faculty to have achieved the rank of full professor in order to earn emeritus status.

Faculty wishing to receive this honor submit a CV and letters of recommendation from peers. Traditionally, we honored these retired faculty at our convocation, a tradition that I fear disappeared when our regular celebration of convocation disappeared.

It certainly is true that times have changed. Our standards for emeritus may change in the coming months. But they have not yet changed, and I hope they will not.

And I would caution that this award represents a moment of generosity that we would be ill advised to squander. It costs us little to honor our retirees. They have served NJCU, and at this stage in their lives, they are in a position to serve as external advocates for NJCU. We can cement their attachment to the institution. Or we can institute new, more stringent and competitive standards, and sort our retirees into the deserving and undeserving.

I think this is a mistake.

In August 2016, the Chronicle of Higher Education, as part of an article detailing data on donations, cautions, “Universities never know which of their professors might give them millions.”

While college presidents “commonly give 10 percent of their annual salary to their institutions’ capital campaigns, and many give another $5000 to $10000 to their institutions annually …. When it comes to making major donations, the most generous professors far outdo presidents.”

Who among us will contribute to NJCU in our silver years? Who will promote and champion our institution in tangible and intangible ways from afar?

Those who have been “rejected” for faculty emeritus by their greener peers and new administrators are far less likely to be our angels. And we need as many angels as we can.

Surely we can afford to be more generous.