

**FINAL REPORT**

**1991 STAFF SURVEY**

**PROFESSIONAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF**

**UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA**

**September, 1992**

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### 1991 Staff Survey

Professional and Administrative Staff  
University of Minnesota

A survey of Professional and Administrative staff was distributed during fall quarter, 1991. A total of 2,209 surveys were distributed and 1,365 were returned (61.8% return).

Responses indicated that the three most important issues for the Academic Staff Advisory Committee (ASAC) to be working on were job security, salary increases, and fringe benefits for part time employment. If fringe benefits were available for part-time employment, 74% would consider part-time employment during their career at the University. Over half the respondents (58%) said that it was very important that ASAC continue to work for benefits for part-time employment and an additional 22% said that it was moderately important to do so. Only 6% said that part-time fringe benefits were unimportant. Very few people indicated any interest in part-time employment at less than 50% time if fringe benefits for part-time work were available and the absence of benefits was a major obstacle to reduction in percent time.

Less than half (47%) of the respondents believe the P and A classification is understood by their department, 41% knew of written policies for promotion/continuous appointment in their units, and 45% participate in unit governance committees. Only 55% reported knowing where to direct questions about the P and A system.

Recommendations include continuation of ASAC efforts to secure fringe benefits for part-time employment; attention to all aspects of P and A appointment matters (very few continuous or probationary/continuous appointments, relatively few fixed term-multiple year (J) appointments, many annual (K) appointments); concern about compensation for P and A staff; and continued efforts to promote professional development/professional "identity" for the professional and administrative class at the University of Minnesota.

Academic Staff Advisory Committee  
September, 1992

# FINAL REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

## 1991 Staff Survey

### Professional and Administrative Staff

#### History of the Staff Survey

A long standing concern of the Academic Staff Advisory Committee (ASAC) has been the disparity between fringe benefits for part time and full time staff. Despite several attempts over a number of years, little was accomplished on this matter. The 1990-91 fringe benefit subcommittee of ASAC, chaired by Joyce Wascoe concluded that further pursuit of a policy change was a worthwhile objective; however, the subcommittee was not sure how important this issue was to the class. Therefore a survey of P and A staff was proposed to the ASAC to determine the opinions and interests of P and A staff. Such a survey of all members of the class--on any issue--had never been done.

When funding for the project was provided by Academic Affairs, the subcommittee proceeded to draft a survey which was distributed to P and A staff at the beginning of fall quarter, 1991.

#### Survey Distribution

A total of 2,209 surveys were distributed using the Academic Affairs and Minnesota Extension Service (MES) mailing lists. Approximately 1,860 names and address were derived from the Academic Affairs data base (including University of Minnesota-Waseca) and 350 names and addresses were provided by MES.

The staff survey was not mailed to all staff; certain staff in the class have no benefits as a result of the type of appointment held (the "temporary" appointments of lecturer, teaching specialist, and research specialist) and were not included in the mailing.

Staff with regular faculty appointments were also who were also serving as chair, department head, or director were also not included because part-time fringe benefits are presently available by virtue of their faculty appointment. These persons commonly identify themselves as faculty who happen have administrative assignments rather than members of the "academic administrator" classification. Not wishing to generally exclude academic administrators, the decision was made to survey all other staff with academic administrative titles, regardless of faculty status. Some of these individuals may have been "tenured" faculty as well.

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### Survey Returns - Demographic information

A summary of responses to questions may be found in Appendix A. A total of 1,365 academic staff returned the survey (61.8% return). The respondent demographics were as follows: 54% female, 46% male, primarily full time (92%), 12 month (90%), employees who have worked for the University for 2 or more years (88%), and who were age 30 or older (92.5%).

Academic Professionals were 75% of respondents and Academic Administrators, 17%. Interestingly, 8% (107 people) were unsure as to which they were.

Most staff were on annual K appointments (70%), approximately 15% were on J (fixed term, 2 or more year) appointments, 4% were probationary (continuous), and 12% continuous appointments. This latter number is somewhat higher than expected as it represents slightly more respondents than there were persons recorded as holding continuous appointments. The subcommittee felt that this response category might have been chosen by some academic administrators who also have tenure.

Otherwise, the survey respondent group generally compared favorably to what is known about the class as a whole. The subcommittee was unable to compare coordinate campus survey respondents against the respective campus P and A numbers.

### Survey Returns--Fringe Benefits

For respondents to the survey, the interest and priority attached to fringe benefits for part time employment was clear: if fringe benefits were available for part-time employment, 74% would consider part-time employment during their career. Over half of respondents (58%) indicated that it was very important to them that ASAC continue to work for benefits for part-time employment and an additional 22% felt that it was moderately important to do so. Only 6% of respondents indicated that part time fringe benefits were unimportant.

The respondents reported that the most influential factors in a choice to work part time were: renewal opportunities--additional education--professional work, more leisure time and travel, and pursuit of a second career.

While most academic staff would choose a reduction in percent time of their current 9 or 12 month contract, a few people indicated an interest in working full time for a contract period of less than 9 months. As to the reduction in percent time, very few respondents chose less than 50% as their preferred reduction; more chose either half time (29%) or three quarters time (67%) as their "ideal" part-time employment level.

The academic staff responding to the survey also provided a perspective on several other issues of concern to ASAC and Academic Affairs. In terms of the number of first choice preferences, the issues of concern to staff were ranked as follows:

- job security
- salary increases
- benefits for part-time employment
- professional development
- opportunities for promotion
- more participation in University governance.

Less than half of the respondents (47%) believed the P and A classification is understood by their departments, 41% reported they knew of written policies for promotion or continuous appointment in their units, and 45% were given the opportunity to participate in unit governance activities. Slightly more than 1/2 of the respondents reported knowing where to direct questions about the P and A system.

A P and A manual is held by 85% of respondents but only 64% reported written job descriptions; less (57%) stated that they received a written annual performance review (NOTE: written performance reviews were not required for all academic staff until 1992-93).

Results from the total group--cross tabulation of responses.

The subcommittee felt that it would be helpful to have a cross tabulation of responses to examine a possible "unexpected" connection between items. Ron Matross (Student Support Services-Data and Reporting Services) served as consultant to the committee in preparing data for cross tabulation, suggesting appropriate statistical tests of significance, and preparing response summaries by coordinate campuses.

In preparing the responses for the cross tab analysis, a number of response categories for several of the items was reduced. The reduction from 4 or 5 item response categories to a smaller set (2 or 3) was possible without drastic loss of information from respondents.

There were many tables provided to the committee; we concluded after review and discussion of these findings, that there were no unexpected results or new themes emerging from the cross tabulated items. Two brief summaries of statistically significant results may be found in Appendix B.

## Results--from Coordinate Campuses

The subcommittee obtained tables of results from coordinate campuses as part of the cross tabulations analysis (Appendix C). As above, the number of response categories was reduced. These response changes have been used for all coordinate campus reports.

### RECOMMENDATIONS:

Based on the survey results, the subcommittee offers the following recommendations to the Academic Staff Advisory Committee:

1. Continue all efforts to secure fringe benefits for part time academic staff (the original question the survey was created to address).

A proposal was drafted by the subcommittee, approved by ASAC, and forwarded to the President of the University on April 14, 1992. The ASAC has received a draft proposal on retirement benefits for persons at less than 100% time which has been developed by central administration. As we understand it, this proposal will be subject to further review prior to implementation.

2. Continue efforts concerning job security, salary increases, professional development, and opportunities for promotion for academic staff. These are priority issues for the class.

Several persons offered written comments (all written comments have been reproduced in Appendix D) which expressed grave concern over related issues:

very few staff hold continuous appointments;

staff were concerned about reduced use of probationary (continuous) appointments for new hires;

concern was expressed about moving staff from fixed term multiple year (J) appointments to annual (K) appointments and perceived resistance to J appointments -- frequently resulting in staff serving for many years on K appointments; and

perceived reluctance by Academic Affairs to formalize an alternative form of multiple year J appointment which has worked extremely well in certain units--the fixed term, annually extended appointment ("rolling J").

3. Develop plans or methods of assistance to staff and unit administrators who do not understand the P and A classification or who do not know where to direct questions about the P and A system. Units vary in the extent to which the following "basics" might be made available to their P and A staff: orientation, job descriptions, written performance reviews, criteria for promotion, career development, mechanisms for conflict resolution, award programs, and single quarter leave.

ASAC might wish to consider special assistance which might be helpful to divisional/collegiate P and A groups. Many of these groups are now beginning to meet on a regular basis and may need assistance in getting started or in their work on issues. Regular communication with division/collegiate groups might help insure that the annual ASAC agenda was relevant to the needs and interests of staff as well.

4. The subcommittee wishes to comment on the opportunities to accomplish the above recommendations that may be possible with the new merger of Academic Personnel and Civil Service Personnel into a single organization (Human Resources). Depending on priorities and funds available, there may be significant changes that would positively affect academic staff that could be accomplished in this new organization. Alternately, we also fear the possibility that the P and A class could be "merged" as a matter of convenience or as a result of budget restrictions. We believe ASAC should work toward identification and achievement of the advantages offered by this new organization for academic staff yet remain alert to possible negative consequences, as well.
5. Finally, the subcommittee wishes to express thanks to all persons who assisted in the development, production, and analysis of the 1991 staff survey. The support and cooperation we have received as we have completed this project has been most appreciated.

**NOTE: APPENDICES WILL BE DISTRIBUTED SEPARATELY TO ASAC**