

EQUITY, ACCESS & DIVERSITY  
MINUTES OF MEETING  
FEBRUARY 20, 2012  
Morrill Hall Room 300

[In these minutes: benefits information for pre and post-doctoral fellowship recipients; WFC salary equity recommendations; salary equity study for P&A staff; MLK Day event calendar and outside partnerships; MLK Day public engagement council proposal;]

[These minutes reflect discussion and debate at a meeting of a committee of the University of Minnesota Senate; none of the comments, conclusions or actions reported in these minutes represent the views of, nor are they binding on, the Senate, the Administration or the Board of Regents.]

PRESENT: Irene Duranczyk (co-chair), Richard Graff (co-chair), Lauren Beach, Susan Cable Morrison, Anne Gair, Michael Goh, Louis Mendoza, Michelle Page, Greg Sawyer, Dorothy Schlesselman, Dominique Tobbell

REGRETS: Katie Ballering, Raul Marrero Fente, Kim Hewitt, Christopher O'Brien, Mandi Stebbins, Charmaine Stewart, Janet Thomas

ABSENT: Neil Anderson, Dabitna Chung, Echo Maki

GUESTS: Ann Hagen, Professional & Administrative Consultative Committee, Professor Andy Furco, Associate Vice President for Public Engagement

Professor Irene Duranczyk called the meeting to order and welcomed those present.

**Benefits information provided to Pre-doctoral Fellowship Recipients -**

Professor Duranczyk stated that last spring the committee received an initial report on benefits information provided to pre-doctoral and post-doctoral fellowship recipients. She noted the committee's concern was over the inadequate notice students received about the impact on their benefits when they moved from graduate student employees to pre-doctoral fellows. She then turned to Susan Cable Morrison, who manages graduate assistant services in the Office of Human Resources (OHR), for an update on this topic. Ms. Cable Morrison provided the committee with a chart outlining the eligibility criteria for benefits for postdoctoral associates and postdoctoral fellows, as well as a copy of the postdoctoral associate homepage, and the appendix to the Policy on Paid and Unpaid Leaves for Postdoctoral Associates.

Ms. Cable Morrison explained that the issue arises because the employment relationship with the University changes for graduate assistants and post-doctoral associates when they receive a fellowship. As fellows, they are no longer employees of the University and therefore the benefits structure is different.

Since the reorganization of the Graduate School, the liaison office of Postdoctoral Affairs has been housed under the Office of the Vice President for Research. This office provides new employee and fellow orientation and should inform fellows about the change in their employment status.

Lauren Beach stated that when she received a pre-doctoral fellowship, human resources informed her that her benefits would not change despite acceptance of the fellowship. Ms. Cable Morrison explained that a continuation of Ms. Beach's health benefits was available through the Graduate Assistance Insurance Plan.

She went on to state that for benefits purposes a graduate assistant's primary role is as a student and their secondary role is as an employee of the University. Therefore, the University provides health benefits and family medical leave. But when the graduate assistant or postdoctoral associate receives a fellowship, they are no longer employees of the University and are not eligible for U Plan Medical Insurance or Family and Medical Leave Act coverage.

Ms. Beach raised the issue of fellowship payments being lower than departmental salary requirements, and noted that she receives a stipend to supplement her fellowship. She also indicated that she had received no communication from her department about the impact of accepting her fellowship.

Ms. Cable Morrison explained the process in place for informing postdoctoral assistants and tracking post doctorals' work. She stated that Human Resources Pros meetings are held monthly, and she works with the Graduate Assistants Health Care Plan to provide audit reports with postdoctoral information. Audits for postdoctoral assistants are kept on projects. If postdoctoral assistants are kept on projects beyond three years they must be moved to a research assistant position. She has worked to notify the Human Resources Employee Benefits area about when the postdoctoral assistant relationship ends, so that Employee Benefits can contact the postdoc or their department in order to make the transition smoother. But she noted it is challenging to communicate the benefits information.

In light of the circumstances relayed by Ms. Beach, Ms. Cable Morrison stated it might be necessary to look more closely at ways to make the transition smoother for graduate assistants moving into predoctoral fellowships. She stated that communication about the impact on benefits varies from department to department.

Professor Michael Goh asked if the policy requiring notice for nonrenewal has helped the situation. Ms. Cable Morrison responded that if there is a nonrenewal most departments provide notice. Additionally, postdocs are generally funded on grants so there is a definite end date for their appointment.

Ms. Beach noted she is aware of situations where parental leave was cut short and unpaid as a result of change in status from postdoctoral associate to post doctoral fellow. Ms. Cable Morrison stated that parental leave is a benefit offered by the University to its

employees and whether it is offered under a fellowship is grant specific. She stated further that part of the problem lies with faculty who do not understand the change in the nature of the employment relationship when fellowships are received.

Ms. Cable Morrison stated that she covers issues of benefits for postdoctoral associates at the postdoctoral associate and new employee orientation. Professor Dominique Tobbell pointed out that the intervention point might need to be with the primary investigator, faculty department chair, or the individual coordinating the program. Ms. Cable Morrison stated she is open to suggestions on how to convey the information. Professor Tobbell suggested having information on benefits changes sent to the directors of graduate studies, department chairs, and grant primary investigators. Ms. Beach suggested the information provided should be specific to the common types of fellowships sought.

Ms. Cable Morrison stated that the OHR website has a managers tool kit that provides benefits information and that she could work with the Sponsored Projects Administration (SPA) to create a primary investigators tool kit with information pertaining to the postdoctoral experience.

Anne Hagen agreed that an e-mail could be sent from SPA to students who receive grants or fellowships. Professor Graff stated that the information should be very clear, that primary investigators should have the information, and that fellows should be informed ahead of time about the impact on their benefits resulting from a change in their employment status.

Professor Tobbell asked if the information about benefits changes could be made part of a mandatory training to be completed prior to being eligible to apply for fellowships. Ms. Hagen noted that the associate deans for research groups were responsible for providing information to primary investigators.

Professor Duranczyk agreed that a system should be set up so that students seeking fellowships do not feel punished when they receive them.

Ms. Cable Morrison stated she would look into placing information for students about benefits changes on the Graduate School website and look into creating a primary investigator's toolkit for the SPA website.

#### **Discussion of Need for Salary Equity Study for Professional and Administrative (P&A) Employees**

Professor Duranczyk stated EAD was interested in learning whether P&A staff believed there was a need for a salary equity study similar to the one recently completed by the Women's Faculty Cabinet for the faculty. Ann Hagen, a member of the P&A Consultative Committee, attended the EAD meeting to discuss the issue. She stated the PACC had not gathered salary equity data, but there is a feeling that salary inequities may exist between male and female staff, and the PACC is interested in ideas on how to explore this issue and learning what resources might be available.

Professor Duranczyk briefly explained the *Rajender* lawsuit and the reasons for the WFC salary equity study. She stated the Provost's Office funded the study. EAD briefly discussed funding for the a P&A salary equity study, and concluded that the Office of Human Resources would be the most likely source because P&As work across all areas of the University.

It was also suggested that the study should start by colleges and job classifications and the larger job codes should be first. It was noted that the WFC did not initially include the Academic Health Center, and it might be necessary to initially exclude it from a P&A study as well. Professor Duranczyk stated that one difficulty in conducting a P&A study is the salary differences that exist because the pay scales vary between the colleges.

Ms. Hagen stated that currently the PACC is focused on receiving multi-year contracts for P&A employees and the renewal notice policy, but they may also consider pursuing a salary equity study. Professor Duranczyk offered EAD's support on all of these issues.

#### **Update on WFC Recommendations Regarding the Salary Equity Study**

Professor Duranczyk provided EAD with copies of the final version of the joint WFC and EAD Recommendations Regarding Salary Equity at the University of Minnesota. She noted the WFC would be meeting with Provost Hanson and President Kaler in mid-March to discuss the recommendations.

#### **Update on Search for Vice President for the Office of Equity and Diversity**

Professor Duranczyk stated that she is on the search committee for the Vice President for the Office of Equity and Diversity. She reported that the timeline for the search might be moved back to May because there are a number of vice presidential level positions open around the country. It is believed that moving back the timeline will broaden the candidate pool. She also noted her concern that the Vice President for OED will be reporting to Vice President Robert Jones rather than directly to the President. She expressed concern that this might impact the candidate pool, and asked Associate Vice Provost Mendoza how OED perceived this. Associate Vice Provost Mendoza stated OED was aware that the reporting line was slightly different than that of the former Vice President of OED, but he did not believe this indicated a major shift in the power relationship. The new Vice President of OED would be a member of the President's cabinet and be at the decision making table.

Professor Duranczyk stated nominations for the Vice President of OED could be submitted on the search website or directly to the executive search firm of Greenwood/Asher & Associates Inc.

#### **OED Update on Martin Luther King (MLK) Day Event Calendar and Outside Partnerships**

Associate Vice Provost Mendoza updated the committee on OED's progress on two aspects of EAD's MLK Day Resolution 1) creating a central calendar for MLK Day events and 2) creating outside partnerships for MLK Jr. Day events. Associate Vice

Provost Mendoza provided EAD with a copy of the OED website which included a page for the MLK Celebration and list of several community events occurring on the weekend of the MLK holiday. He also noted that due to budget cuts, OED had scaled back on external events and did not have funding to create new events.

Professor Graff expressed concern that several on-campus activities such as Residential Life's social justice camps were not reflected on the OED website. Associate Vice President Mendoza stated OED has been working on a new website for two years, but had been delayed because of difficulties finding a visually accessible web site host. He stated when the new site is in place more information about MLK Jr. Day events could be placed on the site.

### **Update on MLK Day Proposal to the Public Engagement Council**

Professor Andy Furco, Associate Vice President for Public Engagement stated that EAD submitted a proposal to Public Engagement Council (PEC) to:

- Create a centralized website for all MLK Jr. Day events
- Create strategic partnerships with community organizations hosting MLK Day events
- Put in place a system for the broad communication of MLK Day events
- Establish a day of service on MLK Day

PEC discussed this proposal at its February 8 meeting and although many members of the PEC were enthusiastic about it several difficulties were identified:

- Hosting an event on a University holiday would implicate bargaining unit faculty and staff
- Any activities would have to be voluntary
- If the events were on campus or used campus facilities this could raise issues of liability and would require staff to work on a holiday

The PEC suggested two alternatives. Hosting a series of events around MLK Jr. Day when the University is open and sponsoring a service pledge drive. Sponsoring a service pledge drive was seen as the most viable and best alternative for meeting EAD's intent.

Elements of the service pledge drive could include:

- Individuals pledge service hours
- Done along side the community fund drive
- Launch it on MLK Jr. Day
- University of Minnesota might be able to piggyback on the General Mills MLK Breakfast and pledge drive

Professor Furco stated further that the Office of Public Engagement is committed to assisting with communication.

Professor Duranczyk noted that Minneapolis Community and Technical College (MCTC) sponsors an MLK Day of Service on the MLK Jr. holiday weekend, and she is interested in learning how they overcome the issue of union employees working on a holiday.

Professor Furco stated that Greg Mellas is the Director of Community Engagement at MCTC. He stated further that there is no concern if individuals volunteer for a day of service, but if service is required and University of Minnesota facilities are used employment and liability issues arise.

EAD members were enthusiastic about the idea of the service pledge, but continued to be interested in exploring other models for creating a day of service. Professor Furco indicated he could draft a recommendation for the service pledge proposal.

Due to a lack of time the discussion ended. Hearing no further business, Professor Duranczyk adjourned the meeting.

Dawn Zugay  
University Senate Office