

Minutes*

**Senate Committee on Faculty Affairs
Tuesday, September 18, 2012
2:30 – 4:30
238A Morrill Hall**

Present: Scott Lanyon (chair), Ben Bornsztejn, Arlene Carney, Dann Chapman, Linda Chlan, Jennifer Fillo, Carl Flink, Sophia Gladding, Tabitha Grier-Reed, Joseph Konstan, Frank Kulacki, Theodor Litman, Karen Miksch, Joe Ritter, Pamela Stenhjem, James Wojtaszek

Absent: William Beeman, Kathryn Brown, Randy Croce, Benjamin Munson

Guests: Peter Radcliffe (Office of Planning and Analysis)

[In these minutes: (1) introductions, committee charge, and issues pending; (2) sabbaticals and leaves; (3) faculty salary and demographic data]

1. Introductions, Committee Charge, and Issues Pending

Professor Lanyon convened the meeting at 2:30, called for a round of introductions, reviewed the charge to the Committee, and reviewed the list of issues pending. On the last, he said he will be asking Committee members which issues they individually are most interested and will ask those expressing interest in particular items to lead the discussions when they are on the agenda.

Professor Lanyon reported that the Committee has been asked to identify two faculty members to serve on an ad hoc committee to review and revise the administrative policy *Academic Appointments with Teaching Functions* (<http://policy.umn.edu/Policies/hr/Hiring/TEACHING.html>), which, contrary to what the title suggests, is primarily about collegiate personnel plans, about the college workforce. Vice Provost Carney explained that at present the policy has a one-size-fits-all approach and if a college deviates from the numbers in a plan, the deviation must be reviewed by the Committee on Academic Freedom and Tenure. The numbers of tenured and tenure-track (TTT) faculty and non-tenure-track/tenured (NTTT) faculty have changed a great deal in some units, especially in the Academic Health Center.

Asked when she would like to have a revision completed, Dr. Carney expressed the hope that it could be ready for the administrative and Senate review process by the middle of spring semester.

Professor Bornsztejn asked what the main characteristic of the college personnel plans are. They are not long, Dr. Carney said; they explain what the college does and presents the numbers of TTT and NTTT faculty and other data. The number of TTT faculty has been very stable even though there has been an increasing number of students. They want the document to be user-friendly; what is needed is a discussion of what is really wanted in the plans and the reporting structure for them. If there is to be regular review of the plans, what is the process?

* 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 represents the views of, nor are they binding on, the Senate, the Administration, or the Board of Regents.

Professor Chlan volunteered to serve on the ad hoc committee; Professor Lanyon said he would identify one other member.

2. Sabbaticals and Leaves

Dr. Carney explained that the appearance of this item on the agenda reflects discussions the Committee held last spring about sabbaticals and leaves. There is a Board of Regents' policy, *Employee Development, Education, and Training*, that provides for sabbaticals and single-semester leaves for faculty members, each of which is defined in the policy. The Board policy also provides that no more than 4% of the faculty may be gone on single-semester leaves at any one time; there is no corresponding limit for faculty members taking sabbaticals. Most institutions do not have a separate single-semester leave program, they either have full-year sabbaticals at half pay for single-semester sabbaticals at full pay. What is also unusual at Minnesota is that probationary faculty members are eligible for single-semester leaves (with the approval of the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost) and contract faculty members are eligible at the discretion of the dean.

There are no central funds available for single-semester leaves, Dr. Carney observed; they are funded by the colleges. Her office allocates the number of single-semester leaves to each college each year but some colleges do not use their full allocation (e.g., the Medical School, because so many faculty members have clinical duties). So there are always some left over, which she can give to colleges that ask for them.

Sabbaticals are different from single-semester leaves, Dr. Carney pointed out. The faculty member receives one-half his or her salary; the college retains the other half that is to be used to pay the cost of instruction while the faculty member is on sabbatical. (If there are instructional costs incurred because of a faculty member taking a single-semester leave, the college or department has to identify ways to cover them.) There is a central fund, about \$700,000, available for sabbatical supplements that provides an additional 30% of salary or \$30,000, whichever is less, for faculty members taking a sabbatical (so the cap is \$30,000, 30% of salary for someone making \$100,000). Each college is allocated a dollar amount of sabbatical supplement funding, based on the number of faculty in the college; some colleges do not use the money so she can provide additional funding to other colleges. Some colleges also put in additional funds to subsidize sabbaticals. The fixed amount of money available, the \$700,000, is always less than the amount needed.

Last year there was discussion in this Committee about the possibility of allowing half-year sabbaticals at full pay, Dr. Carney recalled. There is no limit on the number of sabbaticals that can be taken; faculty members are eligible for them after six years of service. Faculty members are probably more likely to take a semester sabbatical if they receive full pay and the sabbatical is not competitive (which the single-semester leaves are). So how can the University change the sabbatical options without upsetting the financial applecart?

Dr. Carney reported that she has spoken with Provost Hanson about half-year sabbaticals and learned that Indiana, Provost Hanson's former institution, does have half-year, full-salary sabbatical, but all the funding is provided by the colleges. It is not clear how that would be accomplished here; one could reduce the administrative cost pool charges to leave money in the colleges for sabbatical funding, thus eliminating central funding. If the single-semester leaves are eliminated, what would be done for probationary faculty members? Many colleges like probationary faculty members to take single-semester

leaves. If the system is to be changed, it cannot just be tweaked, Dr. Carney opined, and any proposed changes will have to be clear about the financial implications.

Dr. Carney commented that at some institutions, the governing board has restricted the number of sabbaticals and leaves the faculty can take. She also observed that there are financial differences across colleges, and across the CIC most institutions are probably similar to Indiana, where leaves and sabbaticals are financed at the college level. She said that it also appears that Minnesota is the only institution to offer single-semester leaves to probationary faculty.

Professor Konstan said he was stunned that the existing policy is not a draft but is indeed current policy. There are a number of internally-conflicting provisions, he said, and there would be value in cleaning up the policy. He noted that while a sabbatical is a "right," it is only awarded if the work is deemed worthy. Who decides if it is worthy? If every faculty member were to take a one-semester sabbatical every six years, departments would have to figure on having a faculty one-twelfth smaller than it is now. That could lead to larger classes and fewer small classes, assuming no additional funding were available.

It would be better if the sabbatical were seen as a development leave, Professor Konstan continued, something joint with the faculty member and the University, so a 50/50 split is reasonable. That changes the perception from what it might be if 100% of salary were paid. It would be a shame if probationary faculty members lost eligibility for the leaves.

Professor Kulacki urged keeping the plan simple. He also pointed out that in small departments, faculty members are not usually interchangeable parts, so to have many on sabbatical at the same time could be disruptive; denial of a sabbatical could be in the interest of graduate and undergraduate education in the department. It might be better if sabbaticals were more competitive.

Professor Ritter noted that not many faculty members take sabbaticals or single-semester leaves. He also inquired about the distribution of the sabbaticals taken; are the small number taken relatively evenly distributed or is there a smaller fraction of faculty taking them whenever they could. It was a socio-economic issue when the Committee discussed the topic last spring, Dr. Carney said: Faculty take sabbaticals if they can afford them. She referred to one table of data on leaves from 2001-2011 and noted that the number of single-semester leaves being taken was quite stable. Some faculty members take every possible sabbatical and single-semester leave to which they are entitled; others never take one. Some do not take one because they become department chairs and go into administration; some do not take one for financial reasons, and some do not take one for other reasons (e.g., they do not want to do so when they have small children). Dr. Carney said she surmised the number taking a leave would go up if the policy were changed; if the Committee were to develop a revised policy that permitted more leaves, it might raise reasonable questions at the Board of Regents. Is a leave an entitlement or should it be evaluated? Should everyone be eligible? Should someone who receives a sabbatical be required to show its effect on teaching or scholarship? Must they have a plan? (The last is required by the policy.) Those reasonably raise the question whether the University has articulated why sabbaticals are offered, Professor Ritter responded.

Dr. Carney said there also is a question about whether the policy ought to allow one to take a sabbatical year, return for one year (which is required by the policy), and then retire. By the same token, it makes sense not to give a sabbatical to a faculty member on phased retirement. She tells the Board of

Regents that these are not vacations, they are working experiences to revitalize a faculty member so he or she can do a better job.

Professor Kulacki said that if the administration devolved the \$700,000 to the colleges on some basis, he expected that would sharpen the deans' attitude toward the issue. There could be an expectation of a sabbatical as a right and there could be an expectation that there would be an improvement of the college. Dr. Carney agreed. She pointed out that she has no control over the funding, she only dispenses it. A couple of Committee members commented that they had no idea about the supplement funding; Dr. Carney said the colleges are expected to inform faculty members about it.

Ms. Fillo commented that there appears to be the view that if a single-semester sabbatical at 100% salary were an option (rather than only a one-year sabbatical at half pay), more faculty members would take it and the program would cost more. But such a program could also be beneficial for departments, who would only lose the faculty member for a semester—at the same cost. Dr. Carney said she would still only be dispersing a certain amount of money to the colleges, so they would have to decide if they would use it for instructional costs.

Professor Bornshtein asked about the proportion of those who took sabbaticals versus the proportion of faculty members who were eligible; Dr. Carney said she did not have those data and they would be more complicated to produce. The number of eligible faculty members will change each year. In any event it would be much larger than the number of faculty actually taking sabbaticals, Professor Lanyon said. Dr. Carney agreed. If one assumed perhaps 2400 faculty members eligible, and all took the sabbaticals to which they were entitled, there would be 400 faculty members on sabbatical each year. The actual number is less than 200 per year.

Professor Konstan said that sabbaticals come from the Biblical rule about letting fields lie fallow every seventh year in order to increase productivity. But there is very little data captured about the productivity that results from sabbatical activities that energize the faculty member. The effect could be more research, it could be better teaching evaluations, it could be increased employee satisfaction and a more motivated faculty member. If the institution does not measure and promote the benefits, everyone will simply talk about the costs. There is also nothing magic about six years; it could be that eight years would be better and would allow a higher percentage of pay; if more faculty used it, that would be better for the institution.

Professor Flink noted that CLA gives chairs a one-semester sabbatical when their terms are over, and if they serve two consecutive terms, they receive a year off. But those are not sabbaticals in the sense being discussed here. Taking on a leadership role means one does not have the opportunity to take a sabbatical. Those CLA leaves are non-teaching semesters, not sabbaticals, Dr. Carney commented. The problem in a small department, Professor Flink said, is that if someone takes a leave after being chair, and perhaps then a sabbatical, how does the department handle someone being gone an extended period? There is a disincentive not to take the leave and sabbatical but the department is hurt if one does.

An equity issue that is increasing is the number of married/partnered individuals and both are faculty members, Professor Lanyon commented. They take a financial hit if they must both reduce their salaries by 50% to take a joint sabbatical.

In terms of a semester versus a year, Professor Lanyon said, is it in the academy's best interest that faculty members take a single semester? In some disciplines, having a full year is important, and the Committee will want to be sure that the sabbaticals provide a good benefit for the University. The Board of Regents policy provides that a semester is a year at half pay; does that limit the college? Dr. Carney noted again that one can obtain an additional 30% of salary (to a maximum of \$30,000), and if one has grant funding, one could earn 100% of one's salary. One cannot earn more than 100% of salary. It would be problematic if a college made available additional funding (e.g., for teaching while on sabbatical). To go to another institution and do a lot of teaching misses the point of a sabbatical, she said, unless it is a teaching sabbatical focused on the scholarship of teaching.

Dr. Carney agreed with Professor Konstan: Institutions do not do a good enough job of documenting the value of sabbaticals. It would be important for faculty members to document what they have done if there were to be a policy change proposed to the Board of Regents. She said she can identify individuals who will talk about the benefit in terms of improved teaching or a change in approach or epiphany in their research. Professor Lanyon said that as a department head, he is not in a position to give faculty members advice on what it is best to do on a sabbatical; it would be great if the University could identify what works and what doesn't for sabbaticals.

Dr. Carney inquired about the extent to which the Committee believes it important to investigate a change in the sabbatical policy. Professor Lanyon said he believes it critically important to institutions to keep faculty members productive their entire career. In his college the system is broken—faculty members rarely take sabbaticals—so it is worth reconsidering the policy.

Professor Kulacki inquired if there is any constraint on the University, inside or out, that motivates this discussion. Dr. Carney said there was not; the discussion arose in the Committee because of concerns that the University's policy is unfair vis-à-vis other institutions and because of problems in the process of awarding supplements. The difficulty is that there are always more good ideas than there are funds to support them. The question is whether the colleges are using fair systems to award supplements. That is what started the discussion. Professor Kulacki said that he assumes department chairs and deans receive training and that he does not see a lot of friction in his department. Sabbaticals tend to strengthen dossiers—they do work.

Professor Konstan alluded to a suggestion made last year as a possibility the administration could embrace, that if someone commits to a sabbatical, he or she could spread the salary reduction over two or three years. Dr. Carney recalled that suggestion had come from Professor Hanna, based on an option available to faculty members at Duluth; it sounds simple but would mean a significant change in payroll and there is nothing in the policy about it at present.

Professor Lanyon commented that his department has 24 TTT faculty, 15 of whom are eligible for a sabbatical. That situation is probably not unusual and provides a perspective on what some changes might be. Professor Konstan said that in his department about 29 of 35 faculty are eligible for sabbaticals but almost no one takes them; they often go to industry with pay so take a leave; many of the rest find they cannot afford a sabbatical, in part because the sabbatical supplement does not pick up as much of the salary for those who are paid more.

Dr. Carney said she did not know how sabbaticals would mix with the proposed entrepreneurial leaves; the impact of the latter will likely be higher in some disciplines than others. The question, she

repeated, is whether the Committee wishes to propose a change in policy. There was a robust discussion last year and some were passionate about the need for a change. She said the Committee can talk with Mr. Kallsen in the Office of Budget and Finance about doing some modeling, including retention of the single-semester leave for probationary faculty members. That option would be welcome at Morris, for example. If such a proposal were to be brought to the Board of Regents, it would have to identify how people were chosen to receive them. Professor Ritter said it appears that there is enough discomfort with the policy that the Committee should consider it further. Professor Lanyon said he would also talk with the Faculty Consultative Committee, which is also interested, and suggested that there could be a joint subcommittee to work on the issue.

Professor Wojtaszek noted that the policy also allows for sabbaticals for contract faculty members, at the discretion of the dean. That possibility has just come up at Morris; how common are sabbaticals for NTTT faculty? The vast majority are granted to TTT faculty, Dr. Carney said; only a very small number of NTTT faculty take them.

Professor Lanyon said he would ask for Committee member interest in serving on a subcommittee and thanked Dr. Carney for her help in the discussion.

3. Faculty Salary and Demographic Data

Professor Lanyon welcomed Dr. Radcliffe to the meeting and turned to Dr. Carney for comments.

Dr. Carney related that both this Committee and the Committee on Academic Freedom and Tenure frequently request data. Sometimes the requests are different, sometimes they are conflicting. Dr. Radcliffe is Executive Director of the Office for Planning and Analysis; Institutional Research reports to him. The question for discussion today is whether, instead of many different ad hoc requests and reports, sometimes on short notice, it would be helpful for the administration to know what kinds of reports the committees want each year and what "big picture" data are needed. One example that has worked for this Committee is the "who teaches what" data that she and Mr. Kellogg present each year; it has very specific categories and they can present the same report each year. What data do the committees want?

Committee members discussed with Drs. Carney and Radcliffe the various kinds of data that are needed. The categories included salary and demographic data, IPEDS data, and various elements of each. It is not possible to have exit interview information; there were exit interviews a few years ago and they were difficult and expensive to obtain—and many faculty members declined to be interviewed. Retention data will become more available in the future because Dr. Carney's office has just begun to ask the deans about retention. Among the data elements mentioned were departures, starting salaries, previous experience, year of final degree, start-up packages, gender and ethnic data, phased retirement, spousal recruitment, and teaching loads.

It was agreed that this Committee and Academic Freedom and Tenure would appoint a joint subcommittee to identify recurring data needs.

Professor Lanyon adjourned the meeting at 4:30.

-- Gary Engstrand

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