

Minutes*

Senate Committee on Faculty Affairs
Tuesday, January 29, 2013
2:30 – 4:30
238A Morrill Hall

Present: Scott Lanyon (chair), William Beeman, Ben Bornshtein, Arlene Carney, Dann Chapman, Randy Croce, Sophia Gladding, Joseph Konstan, Frank Kulacki, Theodor Litman, Rishabh Mishra, Benjamin Munson, Joe Ritter, George Sell, James Wojtaszek

Absent: Kathryn Brown, Jennifer Fillo, Carl Flink, Amy Lee, Karen Miksch, Pamela Stenhjem

Guests: Donna Saathoff, Nan Wilhelmson (Office of the Vice President for Human Resources); Professor Chris Cramer (faculty liaison, e-learning, Office of the Provost)

[In these minutes: (1) parental leave; (2) subcommittee updates; (3) retention salary increases; (4) MOOCs]

1. Parental Leave

Professor Lanyon convened the meeting at 2:30 and began by noting an issue brought to the Committee's attention:

Federal Family and Medical Leave act mandates 6-weeks paid leave for new mothers and 2-weeks for fathers; the question is, for B term faculty, is there a DISadvantage to delivering during the non-B-term period, i.e., the summer? Do all the possible funding sources permit one to follow the U policy? And, if you do NOT pay yourself in the summer, is that "fair"?

University policy requires that the 6 weeks of parental leave be taken within 6 weeks of the birth. So if a mother (a faculty member who holds a B term—9 month—appointment) gives birth at the end of spring semester or the beginning of summer, she is not eligible for the paid leave. Professor Lanyon noted that Minnesota law and the federal Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) provide only for unpaid leaves but allow one to substitute paid leave (e.g., vacation) instead. The paid leave is available only during one's regular term of appointment.

Professor Konstan said that it seems like a number of things should be comparable for people on different appointments, such as medical disability. If one is on a summer appointment, or paid by a grant, for all three months of the summer (which is unusual but not impossible), would she be eligible for the parental leave?

Ms. Wilhelmson said that one receives paid medical leave if on appointment and qualifies. One does not receive parental leave if not on appointment.

* 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 Konstan said that many faculty members on 9-month appointments draw a salary from some source during the summer, so are they just out of luck? They cannot charge time to a grant if they are out on disability, so this seems asymmetrical.

Vice Provost Carney demurred. Many faculty members paid on grant funding are eligible for parental leave. And someone on the verge of having a baby is not likely to take a summer appointment. If someone is drawing a 50% salary being paid in the summer by the University, she is eligible for the paid leave. The question is how to deal with, for example, NIH. (Msses. Saathoff and Wilhelmson corrected Dr. Carney; the individual on the 50% salary is not eligible for parental leave.) What about someone on a 12-month appointment but the majority of the salary is paid on grant funds? That woman would be eligible for parental leave because it would occur during her regular term of appointment. But someone with a B appointment who is drawing salary during the summer would not be.

If someone's salary is paid 95% by grant funding, who pays for the parental leave, Professor Konstan asked? Is it obligatory not to charge it to the grant? Vice Provost Carney suggested that that is a question for Sponsored Projects Administration (SPA); Ms. Wilhelmson reported that some grants will pay for a leave and some do not. What about the case of someone paid by the department for teaching in the summer, Professor Konstan asked? Someone paid 100%-time for summer instruction would not be covered? Dr. Carney pointed out that people are not paid that way for teaching in the summer; they are typically paid to teach a course. Professor Konstan said this felt to him like an unfair interpretation of policy.

Professor Beeman observed that summer appointments are often made long in advance and a woman may not even know she is pregnant when she accepts one. But if she does not teach the course, and is not paid, she is not eligible for unpaid leave, Dr. Carney responded.

Professor Bornshtein asked what is wrong with the asymmetry, because it just exists in 12-month and 9-month appointments. The asymmetry is in pregnancy and childbirth versus other forms of disability leave, Professor Konstan said. One Committee member reportedly heard that if one has a B appointment and breaks one's neck in the summer, one is entitled to paid medical leave even in the summer. (Vice Provost Carney, Mr. Chapman, and Ms. Wilhelmson all indicated that that is not true.) Dr. Carney said that if someone on a B appointment has a heart attack on June 1, he or she is not eligible for paid medical leave. Ms. Wilhelmson said that paid leave in the summer depends on one's appointment. Dr. Carney added that if one is sick, one uses sick time, and there is no set number of sick days for faculty members.

Mr. Croce said there are two facets to the issue. First, the University wants to be sure that if a woman has a child, she can be home with the baby without penalty. Second, the question is about unfairness; if someone has a baby in September and receives six weeks of parental leave, others are not losing anything because of that leave. Dr. Carney pointed out that the University provides a benefit beyond that required by the law (which only requires UNPAID leave).

Mr. Chapman said that Mr. Croce started in the right place: Faculty members on a B appointment are already on leave during the summer and do not expect time off or to be paid if they have a baby or get sick. The provision of the benefit is to ensure that a person who is working has the same time with a baby as someone who is off during the summer.

Professor Lanyon said there is a difference between teaching one course and a long practice of appointing someone to teach in the summer where the B appointment is really an artifact. That feels different. It is about feeling, Mr. Chapman agreed; if someone has had a summer appointment for a long time, it comes to feel like an entitlement—but it is not. Professor Konstan said one must not push that argument too far. There are a number of faculty members in his college who have had 75%-time (or more) appointment in the summer for 15 years or more, as have a number of P&A instructors appointed to teach in the summer. It does not help to say that they get the summer off. An A appointee could take six months without pay to be home with a baby but surely would see that as a financial sacrifice. He said he did not suggest that one can cure the inequities between A and B appointments, but when one learns that leaves are in effect for some but not others who are on B appointments, that seems unfriendly and family-unfriendly.

One way to think about this is that women who give birth in the summer get more than six weeks of leave, Professor Lanyon commented.

Professor Lanyon said that one question is for SPA. Another question, per Professor Konstan, is about the people who have something close to an A appointment even though it is not noted as such on University records. Ms. Wilhelmson said that she would check with SPA.

Mr. Croce said that the ultimate goal is to be sure that women have the time off—but if they lose money they were expecting from a summer appointment, that is harm. Ms. Wilhelmson observed that the 6-week leave is not just for bonding with the infant, it is also to allow time for the woman to recover from childbirth.

Professor Bornsztejn observed that women receive between 12 and 24 weeks in Latin American countries. If the parental leave is not available to people on 9-month appointments, that should be made clear to them when they take the position.

Mr. Croce said that this is less of a problem if someone is not working than if one is counting on the income, but he said that a leave should not ADD to someone's income.

Professor Lanyon concluded that it would simply be helpful for summer benefits to be clarified and said he would schedule a discussion at a future meeting.

2. Subcommittee Updates

Professors Bornsztejn, Konstan, and Munson provided updates on the work of their subcommittees.

3. Retention Salary Increases

Professor Lanyon welcomed Professor Cramer to the meeting. He recalled that Professor Cramer had raised with him a question: "When salary increases to faculty members are justified on the basis of retention, what policies/procedures apply in order to ensure the integrity of the process?" A department's salary structure can get out of whack because of large retention salary increases, sometimes those increases can be gender-based, and they can also be unbalanced across colleges. He said he did not know if the administration tracks retention salary increases.

Vice Provost Carney said that the provost's office has just asked colleges, for the first time, for information about retention salary increases and will do so every year in the future. They are asking for everything about the offer, including salary, space, research support, etc. Up to now all that information was held at the college level and was not provided to the provost. She and Provost Hanson have talked about this issue and have also spoken with the college associate deans for faculty affairs. So she will have the information in the future.

One question is the definition of retention, Professor Lanyon commented. Some colleges will not even discuss retention until a faculty member has a written offer from elsewhere while other colleges require less. That is part of the discussion, Dr. Carney responded. Does the college have a policy on preventive retention? They will also compile information about starting salaries, start-up packages, and the like, and will be able to see differences by gender (they expect to see differences across disciplines).

Another layer of complexity is that retention offers often depend on the ability of the chair or head to negotiate with the dean and the faculty member, Professor Beeman said. He said that while he does not know the practice across the University, in CLA there is preventive retention but the window for the offer is very narrow (if one reaches the point of being invited to give a talk at another institution recruiting you, one must accept the offer and cancel the trip, and if one gives the talk and receives a letter of offer, the college will try to match it—so a preventive retention offer may be less than what one would receive if one gives the talk, but it will still be substantial). (Dr. Carney commented that the retention practice in CLA did not always have such a narrow window.) Former Dean Rosenstone also required that the department provide part of the funding for a retention offer and those funds had to come from the merit pool, and the faculty of the department must concur in the offer. So very complex negotiations must take place in a very short period of time. The chair can drop the ball and sometimes the faculty members leave. He said he would like to know what the practices are in other colleges. Dr. Carney said she would find out. What she has heard informally from faculty members is that the dean didn't negotiate and that there are gender differences in retention offers.

Professor Lanyon said he's also been told that in some units, the faculty are told that there is a University policy against retention offers. Which there most certainly is not, Dr. Carney assured the Committee.

Professor Lanyon said it would be useful if the Committee could shed light on what is a fairly common practice.

Professor Konstan asked if anyone had any sense about what the University's aspirational peers do in terms of making or accepting retention offers. Is there a practice typical at large research universities? It would help to know peer best practices—and whether they retain faculty who are being recruited 20-60-80% of the time.

Professor Kulacki said that retention is a tool that a dean can use to reshape a program. The dean can structure an offer so that the recipient must decide to accept more elsewhere or accept less by staying. This is a "vicious game of personnel management," he said.

The desire to retain someone is also sometimes in the eye of the beholder, Dr. Carney added. Some faculty members in a department will want to retain a colleague and some may not. There is rarely

a kumbaya feeling. And some faculty receive repeated offers. This is, she concluded, an art and there are questions of fairness and equity.

It is only questions of fairness and equity that should be on the table, Professor Munson maintained; retention offers are one of the rare places where bargaining can occur and the institution should not want to shackle deans who may be trying to redo a department.

There are other elements of hiring and retention they want to look at, Dr. Carney reported, such as starting offers. It is sometimes said that women are not as good at negotiating as men are so they end up with less space and lower salaries. When she hears a chair or head make that argument, she inquires why they would try to hire a woman more cheaply than they would a man. They want to look at starting salaries and any rationale for gender-based differences. She said the provost's office understands that there are differences across departments and even within departments.

The degree to which central funds (or funds external to the college) can be reallocated from the provost is a factor, Professor Kulacki said. The chair needs to be able to go beyond the unit budget or there is a significant problem in balancing what is given to one faculty member versus another. Dr. Carney reminded the Committee that in a cost-pool model, there is no central treasure chest from which money can be given out. In her first year as vice provost the University was provided \$6 million to provide to colleges to retain star faculty members; that money was used over a three-year period and is unlikely to recur in the near future.

Professor Cramer said that the issue arose from the gender-equity working group. One concern was that pre-retention offers were murky: Was it really a retention case or the good old boys at work? Gathering data would be a good thing; getting good data could be difficult. Vice Provost Carney agreed that it could be difficult to show problems because the criteria for pre-retention offers are loose. A department might act on the basis of one email from another institution expressing interest in a faculty member.

4. MOOCs (Massive Open Online Course)

Professor Cramer said that he is asking the Committee to begin a conversation about MOOCs, online courses, and the digital enhancement of courses; he was present on behalf of the provost as the faculty liaison for e-learning.

The provost has asked him to perform a couple of tasks, Professor Cramer related. One, superintend the process for Requests for Proposals from departments to enhance their curricula with technology. One question is when should it take extra funding to help a faculty member innovate in teaching and when should innovation simply be expected? His reaction to some of the proposals that came in was "shouldn't you be doing that anyway?" This is not a new question; what is a faculty member's academic responsibility in teaching? What is one's responsibility to experiment and use new technology?

With respect to MOOCs, a number of public research universities have begun to offer them, Professor Cramer said; they are typically free offerings hosted by a provider (of which there are three at present: Coursera, Udacity, and EdX). There is an abundance of hype, excitement, and possible opportunity associated with them; faculty create them, but it is still too early to have much confidence in

any assessment of their future in the higher education spectrum. Enrollment can be 100,000 students or more, but usually only a small fraction finish the course. (One MIT course enrolled more students than there are total MIT alumni.)

It is an open question why a university would want to offer MOOCs beyond wanting faculty members to experiment, Professor Cramer commented. He said he is glad to try offering one, but in the future the University has to ask what the goals are, what more it should do, and what would constitute "success" in terms of justifying the investment of resources in MOOC creation and maintenance.

A MOOC typically costs about \$50,000 to create; most of the cost is in staff time. A question for this Committee, Professor Cramer said, is what the University should assess in order to decide whether to continue offering MOOCs. There is no revenue model yet but there is considerable venture capital behind the MOOC providers. Institutions can offer certificates for completion (which require proctors to verify identity); credentialing MOOCs is also a big question, although earlier in the week an accrediting body in the northeast had certified 5 Coursera MOOCs as meeting its standards for credit. It's the wide open Wild West, he said.

Another question is about faculty compensation, Professor Cramer said, and another is about academic freedom. Some colleges consider online education to be revenue-generating and the dean will not like to give away courses for free. Should the University allow faculty members to give away teaching for free? Should there be a University policy? If a faculty member teaches a MOOC, does that count in his or her teaching load? Can a MOOC be offered at any time? MOOCs usually run about 7 weeks, and a faculty member cannot interact with all 100,000 students, so there is often some means of crowd-sourcing student questions and interaction with a course "concierge." The question of how much credit a faculty member receives for offering a MOOC clearly has not yet been envisioned in policy.

Professor Beeman said he taught an online course in 1985, so MOOCs have been around for a long time. The technology was limited then but the learning outcomes were excellent—and faculty members devoted about 300% more time to those courses than to normal courses, so they require substantially more effort. No one then would have thought of offering a MOOC unless he or she were tenured—faculty members were told that they would not achieve tenure if they wasted time on fooling around with electronic courses. Effort and faculty recognition are two big factors, he agreed.

Professor Kulacki said he had a similar experience. The revenue model was untenable. One question is the extent to which MOOCs figure into the way the entire University will be judged. When one looks at what the legislature asks of the University, what will MOOCs do to the metrics? He said he was not sure that the University can do what MIT will do.

Professor Munson asked what motives there are for developing MOOCs. He said he is teaching a course that meets the liberal-education math requirement, a version of a course developed at Ohio State with the goal of making it a MOOC. His goal: Everyone sees the costs of higher education rising and rising, so he would like to offer a math course that serves the greater good. Hence, MOOCs have the potential to contribute to the lives of people who cannot afford higher education.

Professor Cramer reported that the University of Wisconsin has announced it will award credit for competency for substantially less than students pay in tuition. There will be a cost, but less than attending the university.

Professor Konstan said that he knows there is a plan for a second wave of University MOOCs in areas where the University has a niche. The question about policy is premature; the Committee can discuss it but should not create policy because no one really knows if the benefit of MOOCs will be reputational, outreach, a recruiting aid, or a huge waste of money that doesn't even help the University's reputation.

None of this is new, Professor Konstan said; faculty are bribed into writing lectures by external organizations and the products are called textbooks. Universities have set policy to allow that to happen. Faculty do have the responsibility to incrementally improve courses, but to ask for radical changes or to create new ones are efforts the University should budget for and provide released time or a summer appointment. If the University wants to get good people to offer MOOCs, it must figure out a way to release them from other obligations in order to allow them to do a good job. One cannot simply update the reading list and then offer a course to 100,000 students. If there is an institutional benefit from MOOCs, he concluded, the University should identify a way to do them right.

Professor Ritter said that he believed face-to-face interactions cannot be replaced. But that doesn't mean some aspects of his course couldn't be improved by incorporating all or part of a MOOC offered by one of his colleagues at Harvard. It could be a different kind of course "flipping," for example. So he thinks the University should figure out how to use MOOC techniques to enhance local teaching (e.g., build a course on campus with face-to-face interaction around a local or remote MOOC and give credit for it). That could make faculty members more efficient in teaching and might be one way to respond to the pressure to keep tuition low.

Professor Bornshtein asked what professional degrees could be awarded using MOOCs. Professor Cramer thought none; MOOCs right now carry no credit, only certificates. Professor Bornshtein commented that presumably an organization hiring an engineer would distinguish between credentialed and non- or less-credentialed professionals. His second question was what the University will do to compare and assess MOOC students' performance. Has that been explored? Students in most MOOCs receive certificates, Professor Cramer noted again, and there are companies that act as proctors. There are those who believe MOOCs are a way to generate initial interest on the part of a student which might lead him or her to enroll at a given school and eventually they could earn a degree.

Professor Bornshtein also observed that the College of Continuing Education has been the home to these kinds of offerings. That is because prior efforts have predominantly regarded online offerings as serving a small distance education need, or a small population of non-traditional students, Professor Cramer said, and it may be that in the near future, such methods will be mainstream in every college, not just the College of Continuing Education.

Professor Bornshtein asked if there is any agency that is accrediting MOOCs. Professor Cramer reported that the Gates Foundation has provided funding to the American Council on Education which, as he noted previously, recently certified 5 MOOCs as credit-worthy.

Mr. Croce said that part of the University's land-grant mission is to spread knowledge. He said he works in a program that thought, 25 years ago, it was unethical to charge students for more than the program operating costs. Because state funding for the University has been cut, they must charge more. MOOCs could be a great way to demonstrate what the University has and could be funded centrally to

offset departmental expenses in order to benefit the entire institution. He also recalled that the state had a governor at one time who pointed to online education and said that campuses were no longer needed. Mr. Croce said he also believes there still needs to be face-to-face teaching.

Mr. Mishra said the discussion has been about how the University will get faculty members to offer a MOOC, compensate them or provide released time, and so on—is there any question about the demand side? Are students interested in these courses? Professor Cramer said they have discussed that question but only had three weeks to identify 5 courses, so the list was dictated by those who were already close to having a course ready to become a MOOC. As Professor Konstan mentioned, there will be a second wave for those interested in exploring offering a MOOC and there will be more time to make choices. There are areas in CFANS and other colleges where Minnesota would have very good offerings but he said that one reason to offer MOOCs is for the reputation of the University.

Professor Cramer said he did not believe that brick-and-mortar institutions will go away but there is a tier of such institutions that should perhaps be worried. They are in the middle range, their classes are not different from those at other institutions, and one can ask if their in-class sessions are so much better than MOOC offerings.

Professor Beeman said that the MOOC model is a computer company model: Offer the course at no cost, get people hooked, and then charge. It would be helpful to know what the companies have in mind. Certificates may be fine for certain kinds of courses, but many courses are not amenable to MOOC-like instruction. If one asks students how they got interested in a field, it is almost universally because of the interactions they had with one faculty member.

Professor Cramer provided a set of questions prepared by Dr. Rubinyi in the provost's office. Dr. Rubinyi reported that the MOOC evaluation committee is considering the following initial set of questions (which is not meant to be a comprehensive list), and that the evaluation committee would be very interested in faculty feedback as to which issues should be addressed in the evaluation.

1. How does the University of Minnesota's partnership with a national MOOC project expand the reach and reputation of the University of Minnesota?
 - a. Admissions – Is there any evidence that an increased number of highly qualified undergraduate and graduate student applicants are drawn to the University based on this effort?
 - b. Is the University seen as a more progressive, innovative institution, offering high quality education based on participation in this effort?
2. How can we use the enhanced learning analytics from MOOC student assessments to reformulate how key concepts are taught within a course?
3. What can we learn about how to structure video/lecture segments for the most effective learning outcomes?
4. What can we learn about building better online assessments?
5. How can we leverage what we learn from the MOOC project to inform the design, development, and delivery of more conventional online and blended courses?

6. How practical is it to repurpose the video segments created for the MOOC for resident instruction (blended/online)?
7. How well suited would U of M MOOC offerings be for advanced Minnesota high school students?
8. How can MOOCs be used as part of the content for U of M courses in a "flipped" classroom design?
9. How much time and effort are required, and what are the best practices for providing design and production support for the development of MOOCs?

These issues merit considerable faculty thought, Professor Cramer advised, particularly with respect to making recommendations about what outcomes would be considered to represent success for the University with respect to MOOC activities.

Professor Lanyon thanked Professor Cramer for joining the meeting, said the questions that had been raised would be back on the agenda, perhaps two or three times, and adjourned the meeting at 4:30.

-- Gary Engstrand

University of Minnesota