

AHC FACULTY CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

October 18, 2013

Minutes of the Meeting

[In these minutes: Third Thursdays, Promoting Interdisciplinary Research, Vice President/Dean Candidates]

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

Present: Kathleen Krichbaum (chair pro tem), John Connett, Les Drewes, Robert Kratzke, Sandra Myers, Wendy St. Peter

Regrets: Ned Patterson, Paul Bohjanen

Guest: Tucker LeBien, AHC associate vice president for research

Others attending: Colin Campbell as the alternate for Paul Bohjanen

I). Professor Krichbaum, chair pro tem, called the meeting to order and welcomed those present.

II). Members unanimously approved the September 19 AHC FCC meeting minutes.

III). Moving on, Professor Krichbaum reminded the committee that the October Third Thursday date had been moved to October 24 so as not to conflict with the last interview for the new vice president/dean candidate. The School of Public Health will be hosting the October 24, 2013 gathering. For the November Third Thursday, Vice President Brian Herman will present on MnDRIVE. Professor Krichbaum stated that the committee still needs to identify presenters for the January – April dates.

IV). Professor Krichbaum welcomed Dr. Tucker LeBien, AHC associate vice president for research, who was invited to share his thoughts on how to promote and foster collaborative relationships among faculty as it relates to multi/interdisciplinary research.

Members and Vice President LeBien spent the first few minutes informally talking about the vice president/dean interview. Vice President LeBien stated that if members have comments about the candidates he is confident that the administration will read and value any comments it receives. Professor Krichbaum reported that the AHC FCC plans to draft a letter to President Kaler giving their input.

Professor Krichbaum asked Vice President LeBien to start by talking about what is happening with interdisciplinary research efforts in the AHC and what he sees as some of the challenges, both within the AHC and across the University.

Vice President LeBien stated that he views faculty from two perspectives: 1) faculty who want to tackle the tough questions and actively pursue interdisciplinary research opportunities and 2) faculty who are gratified and challenged by staying within their own domain. Because the University is an institution that values academic freedom, both types of faculty are needed and valued.

Vice President LeBien stated that financial resources naturally stimulate interdisciplinary research and there are a number of internal grant programs with specific requirements for interdisciplinary collaborations e.g., co-PIs from more than one college. Currently, however, these programs only touch a small number of faculty because just a handful of awards are being made. A few obstacles to interdisciplinary research collaborations include but are not limited to:

- Faculty who are not interested in making an effort to find out what other faculty are working on.
- The budget model. Financials and how indirect costs will be handled is problematic for facilitating interdisciplinary research. A policy should be developed to spell out how the financials and other aspects of interdisciplinary collaborations will be handled.
- The “loyalty factor.” There are a number of faculty who are extremely loyal to their primary home (academic department), and are conflicted about whether their department head/dean would look favorably on them investing their time outside his/her primary home.

In response to a request from Vice President Herman to the Council of Research Associate Deans (CRAD), noted Vice President LeBien, another interdisciplinary research challenge identified by CRAD was space. CRAD believes that the University needs to do a better job of creating space that will foster opportunities for interdisciplinary innovation. In addition, CRAD also suggested that the Office of the Vice President for Research consider acting as a convener around trans-disciplinary topics or issues of need, e.g., autism. More needs to be done around interdisciplinary connectivity.

Vice President LeBien reported that shortly after Vice President Herman started in his position he earmarked \$3 million towards a new infrastructure RFP. The RFP solicited applications for high-end instrumentation, etc. The principle criterion for this opportunity was that it had to originate from faculty from an AHC college and a non-AHC college. This RFP will be a catalyst for future interdisciplinary activities around shared resources.

Vice President LeBien then went on to talk about the Gopher Kids Study (<http://www.peds.umn.edu/gopherkids/>) founded by Dr. Logan Spector, which is a success story for the importance of University interactions with the broader community. He also highlighted the interdisciplinary work that is taking place in the Institute for Engineering in Medicine - <http://www.iem.umn.edu/>.

In the remaining few minutes, Vice President LeBien fielded specific questions from members and engaged in a conversation about the importance of promoting interdisciplinary research activities. Ideas/thoughts coming out of this discussion included:

- Billing out space charges to departments or colleges would be a challenge for interdisciplinary research collaborations that proposed faculty relocate on a temporary basis to enhance interactions.
- More should be done to take advantage of the University's presence at the Minnesota State Fair in an effort to engage Minnesotans in the research being done at the University. This is a great opportunity for showcasing the amazing work that faculty are doing. The State Fair is an underutilized resource for the University.
- The lack of technology infrastructure between the Twin Cities and Duluth campuses is a huge barrier for interdisciplinary research and education.

Professor Krichbaum thanked Vice President LeBien for a good discussion.

V). Members spent the remainder of the meeting off the record candidly discussing their impressions of each of the three vice president for health sciences and dean of the Medical School candidates based on a number of key attributes that they felt should be taken into consideration when making this hire. The attributes included:

- A clear vision for the AHC.
- Enthusiasm for the position.
- A strategy for increasing research productivity.
- An understanding of the Medical School/Fairview relationship.
- A global AHC and dual campus (Twin Cities and Duluth) vision.
- Demonstrated leadership qualities.

At the conclusion of the discussion, Professor Krichbaum stated that she would write a draft letter to President Kaler articulating what members thought were the candidate's strengths and weaknesses, and circulate it to members for their input. She reminded the committee that the deadline to comment is noon on Monday, October 21, which is a quick turnaround.

VI). Hearing no further business, Professor Krichbaum adjourned the meeting.

Renee Dempsey
University Senate