

## SENATE COMMITTEE ON FACULTY AFFAIRS (SCFA)

February 10, 2015

Minutes of the meeting

*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.*

[In these minutes: Discussion on the Development of Better Procedures for Dealing with Partner Accommodations in Faculty Searches, Committee Input to Ad Hoc Subcommittee on Sabbaticals and Leaves, Miscellaneous Committee Business – Award Payments and Gathering Data about Outcomes for Post Tenure Review and Special Post Tenure Review]

PRESENT: Joseph Konstan (chair), Teresa Kimberley, Allen Levine, Teri Caraway, Sophia Gladding, Tabitha Grier-Reed, Robert Kudrle, Frank Kulacki, Scott Lanyon, Peh Ng, Lori Rhudy, Daniel Skaar, Amira Masri, Leah Reinert

REGRETS: Christina Bourland, Joe Price, Theodor Litman, Monica Luciana, Brett Colson

ABSENT: Kathy Brown, Phil Buhlmann, George Sell

GUEST: Professor Marlene Zuk from the Department of Ecology, Evolution & Behavior

OTHERS ATTENDING: Ole Gram, assistant vice provost, Office of the Vice Provost for Faculty and Academic Affairs

1. **Call to order:** Professor Konstan convened the meeting, welcomed those present and called for a round of introductions.

2. **Discussion on the development of better procedures for dealing with partner accommodations in faculty searches** – Professor Konstan welcomed Professor Zuk from the Department of Ecology, Evolution & Behavior, who was invited to talk with the committee about better procedures for dealing with partner accommodations in faculty searches. He then briefly provided the committee with background information on this topic.

Professor Zuk began by sharing information about her background. Prior to coming to the University of Minnesota in 2012, said Professor Zuk, she was a faculty member at the University of California, Riverside (UCR) for a little over 20 years. For the majority of her time at UCR, she was a biology faculty member, but for four and a half years she also held a 50% appointment as associate vice provost for faculty equity and diversity.

Copies of two brochures she developed while working in this capacity, *UCR Family Accommodation* and *Career Partners Program*, had been sent out along with the agenda

and were also distributed at the meeting. The rationale for developing these resources, explained Professor Zuk, was to provide UCR with a way to talk about dual career issues. A lot of people when applying for positions either do not want to raise the issue or do not know how to raise it. The reality is that vast majorities of faculty have a spouse or partner who may not necessarily be an academic, but who are a professional of some sort and would be needing to look for employment once they relocate. As a result, a decision was made to develop a clearinghouse of information that was uniform, standardized and open.

Every faculty member invited to UCR to interview received these brochures in their packet of information about the institution. In her role as associate vice provost for faculty success, equity and diversity, Professor Zuk reported that she would talk with faculty in advance of their interview and provide them with information about UCR resources, policies and programs impacting dual career couples and work/life matters. She noted if a faculty member had a spouse or partner that was looking for a professional position outside UCR that she would help them make a connection with someone in the community who could assist them. While these connections did not always result in a job, taking this extra step made a great impression. In other situations, where the spouse or partner was looking for an academic position and UCR did not have something, she would frequently refer them to the Higher Education Recruitment Consortium (HERC) website - <http://www.hercjobs.org/>, which has the largest database of higher education and related jobs in the world. There were also situations where a faculty members' spouse or partner wanted employment at UCR, and, in these situations, she would shop the CV of the person looking for employment to departments where there could be opportunities.

Professor Lanyon asked Professor Zuk at what point she would start getting involved if a faculty member had a spouse or partner who wanted a faculty position at UCR. She said she would get actively involved once she knew an offer was going to be made.

To address faculty member uncertainties about stopping the tenure clock, family leave, etc., the *UCR Family Accommodation* brochure was developed, which summarizes UCR's policies and programs that would help them balance the needs of their career as well as their family. These resources, noted Professor Zuk, created an open and welcoming atmosphere and were also good recruitment tools.

At the conclusion of her presentation, Professor Konstan solicited members' comments and questions. He said listening to Professor Zuk talk about the resources developed by UCR was refreshing. It was great to see an approach that simply organized the information that already existed and made it visible without requiring huge sums of money.

Salient member questions/comments included:

- Professor Konstan asked Professor Zuk how many people, on average, she met with in a year. Professor Zuk said at the time when she was in this role, UCR was not doing a large number of searches. UCR is slightly less than a third of the size

of the University of Minnesota. She estimated she met with approximately 30 people per year.

- Professor Konstan asked whether Professor Zuk was also involved in retention cases in this position. Professor Zuk said while it had been discussed, she was not involved in retention cases because retention was handled in another part of central administration. She added, however, that she could see where it would be appropriate.
- As described, noted Professor Konstan, there seemed to be little structure around negotiations related to dual position offers. Did any best practices come out of these negotiations in terms of who pays and how much, etc.? He said he was curious because he could see where some structures could have negative consequences. Professor Zuk said she knew there would be no way to launch this initiative if she asked for money. She added that she was also leery of stepping on the deans' toes. Professor Kulacki recalled that many years ago the Provost's Office had extra money to address these issues. Vice Provost Levine said while the Provost's Office has bridge funding, it is a small pool of money. In Professor Zuk's opinion, the University of Minnesota needs to have standardized procedures for dealing with partner accommodations in faculty searches or it will lose a lot of good people but the question comes down to how best to do it.
- Professor Lanyon suggested that if the University does something similar to UCR it might want to consider specifically instructing faculty applicants to not raise their questions with the search committee but rather to call a designated person. Professor Konstan said this is tricky because the flip side is that the institution does not want to make an applicant feel like they have done something wrong if they want to discuss these matters with their potential future colleagues.

Professor Konstan thanked Professor Zuk for providing this information and participating in a good discussion. She encouraged the University to think about developing a family accommodation brochure first because it is fairly easy to do and then move onto developing a career partner brochure. Update: Since this meeting, the Office of the Vice President for Faculty and Academic Affairs is working with Professor Zuk, the Office of Equity and Diversity, and the Office of Human Resources Relocation Assistance Program on a small trifold brochure similar to the one presented. The Relocation Assistance Program and the Upper Midwest Higher Education Recruitment Consortium (HERC) already provides comprehensive packages for candidates and departments, but there does seem to be a need for a simple brochure that succinctly presents the University's different types of family-friendly policies.

**3. Ad Hoc Subcommittee on Sabbaticals and Leaves update:** Professor Konstan introduced the next agenda item, a discussion led by Professor Ng, chair, Ad Hoc Subcommittee on Sabbaticals and Leaves, concerning revising the Faculty Development Leaves policy. Before beginning, Professor Ng specifically thanked Professors Caraway, Grier-Reed, and Assistant Vice Provost Gram for their work on the revised draft policy.

Professor Ng reminded members that in November 2014, the committee voted in favor of the following:

- Offering a non-competitive single semester leave (SSL) for probationary faculty.
- Offering a one-semester sabbatical at 100% salary.
- Offering a two-semester sabbatical at 50% salary or slightly more.

Professor Ng asked if members had any suggestions to the subsection of the policy dealing with non-competitive single semester leaves for probationary faculty clearer. Professor Konstan suggested making the language in the document explicitly clear when it comes to the logistics for coordinating leaves, etc.

There are units at the University, said Professor Lanyon, where faculty are expected to bring in their salary, e.g., grants. What happens when these individuals go on leave? How are situations like this handled? He added that it is not right that a faculty member earns the right to take a sabbatical, but then has to figure out how to take it; this is not what “earning” a sabbatical means. Vice Provost Levine said often these faculty do not go on leave because they need to attend to their grant, or they work with the granting agency to make arrangements to take a leave. Professor Lanyon noted that the University has a policy that stipulates that faculty earn the right to take a leave, and not being able to do so is an issue. The questions this raises, noted Professor Konstan, are:

- Is it the unit’s responsibility to ensure faculty can take a leave that they have earned?
- What happens in situations when faculty have clinical responsibilities?

Dr. Gram noted that leave participation rates in the Academic Health Center (AHC), in particular, are low, and it is for all the reasons that have been articulated. While it can be worked out for a faculty member to take a leave, it is often a complicated issue. The problem with a faculty development leave system that applies to all faculty in all disciplines is the variation between disciplines and colleges, which can be significant. Sabbaticals are largely modeled on a classic arts and science model, and can occasionally be difficult to make work in the professional schools. Vice Provost Levine added that faculty need to work with their funding agency even if their salary would be covered because the faculty member is the responsible PI on the grant. Professor Konstan said this could also be challenging for an early assistant professor who may not yet have a grant as a PI. While he/she could have the logistical freedom to take a semester leave, there is still the obligation that someone is responsible for his/her salary.

The purpose of leaves, said Professor Lanyon, is for faculty to develop themselves. Faculty in some units are being disadvantaged.

It was agreed that before moving on to the next part of the policy, the committee agreed in this section that it will be important to clarify what is meant by probationary faculty. Professor Konstan said this is a technical issue, to a degree, which varies by unit, but an important one to be clear about. The committee concluded that once a faculty member receives a non-renew, their eligibility for a sabbatical should lapse.

Moving on to the sabbatical leaves portion of the policy, Professor Ng asked for an interpretation of the sentence, “For choosing to take a sabbatical leave of one semester only, the privilege to the second semester (or second half of the year) is waived.” She suggested that given the policy is being revised that this sentence be clarified. Dr. Gram noted that the sentence is frequently misunderstood by colleges. He said the idea behind the sentence is that a sabbatical cannot be split up or the time banked for future use. Professor Konstan said the sentence in the new context of a single semester leave at full pay would be a moot point because there would not be the expectation by faculty that they bank their leave for use at a later time.

Regarding the accountability and eligibility portion of the policy, said Professor Ng, the committee felt strongly that there be evidence of accountability when faculty take a sabbatical. Does the committee want to specify a duration of time within which a report for a leave needed to be turned in? Professor Konstan asked the Vice Provost how often he reads the reports that are turned in. Vice Provost Levine said the reports are read and then filed. Professor Konstan reported that former Vice Provost Carney had pointed out that the institution has no systematic approach for gathering evidence to support the value of sabbaticals. In theory, if all faculty wrote meaningful reports that were turned in, the institution would be able to generate a report to demonstrate the value of sabbaticals. The three-month deadline, however, does not give faculty enough time to write a meaningful report that can show how an individual’s sabbatical benefited the institution. With that said, he suggested extending the deadline to a year. Dr. Gram said the three-month deadline creates additional work on top of all the other reporting that needs to be done; therefore, he suggested folding the sabbatical report into the faculty member’s annual activity report. Vice Provost Levine said he would like the reports to include a statement about how the sabbatical contributed to the faculty member’s program/success. Professor Lanyon said it would be helpful if the Provost’s Office could think through the kinds of information that would be the most useful to central administration and the legislature and then share this with faculty. In Professor Konstan’s opinion, the report should be about a page, and separate from the annual activity report. Update: There are efforts underway to incorporate the sabbatical reporting in the *Works* (<http://academic.umn.edu/provost/works/>) faculty activity reporting system which would help provide aggregate reporting on the benefits to the University and the State of development leaves.

In terms of the consequences for not submitting a report, the current policy stipulates that individuals who do not submit a report will never be able to take another sabbatical, noted Professor Konstan. He then asked for people’s thoughts on this and suggested the clock stop if their report is overdue. Professor Lanyon said he likes the idea of people not being eligible for another sabbatical if they have not turned in a report, but believes there should be a mechanism for waiving this requirement, which should be left to the deans’ discretion. In addition, the committee agreed that the reports be collected at the college level and that tenured faculty on “Special Post-Tenure Review” not be eligible for a sabbatical without a substantive approval. Professor Lanyon suggested the following language, “Status on Special Post-Tenure Review may be used as grounds to deny a sabbatical.” He noted that the goal is not to prevent the college from letting an individual

take a sabbatical, but give the college the right to deny a sabbatical; somehow this distinction needs to be captured in the document.

Next, Professor Ng proposed the portion of the Faculty Development Leaves policy dealing with the Faculty Sabbatical Supplement Program be clarified and made a top priority. The collegiate deans should be given more leeway to use the program to replace faculty who are on a half-year sabbatical. Dr. Gram said to be realistic, the proposal, as written, would create fairly substantial structural deficits in many colleges for a variety of reasons. If the committee wants to move in this direction, said Vice Provost Levine, there would need to be more money. Even if the single semester leave were eliminated, and there were only single semester and full-year sabbaticals, it would change the funding profile for certain colleges. The money is the issue. Professor Lanyon said while he likes the notion of a half-year sabbatical at 100% salary, if it is not financially feasible, then nothing will have been accomplished if there is no room for negotiation. Professor Konstan recalled from the last discussion about 100% salary while on a half-year sabbatical, the committee felt strongly that they wanted the 100% salary. He suggested putting the 100% salary proposal forward, and if practical matters require there be further negotiation then so be it. Professor Konstan wanted it noted that the intent of having the program support the colleges back-filling their instructional needs related to single semester sabbaticals is tied to the fact that the college is funding 100% of the sabbatical. If, in the future, the percentage were changed, the intent would be that the money revert to being supplemental money, and not to overcompensate the college beyond the cost of instruction.

Professor Caraway commented that if the revised Faculty Development Leaves policy is approved, the single semester sabbatical would be the default option, and the timing of sabbaticals would need to be made clear because as currently written the policy is being interpreted differently by different people. Professor Konstan suggested the language be clear about whether a person taking a single semester sabbatical can take them every six and a half years or every seven years. Professor Grier-Reed said she believes the current policy is written with the academic year in mind. However, if the policy is revised to include 100% salary for a single semester sabbatical, it would make sense to think in terms of semesters as opposed to a default academic year.

Professor Skaar asked whether a sabbatical can be shorter than a semester? For some clinical faculty it would be difficult if not impossible to take a full semester leave. Professor Konstan said this is a good question that the ad hoc committee should explore. Using the verbiage “up to a semester” may provide the same benefit for faculty who need to structure their time differently.

Before moving on to the next agenda item, Professor Konstan asked members their thoughts on having this policy be an academic personnel policy belonging to the Provost’s Office rather than a Human Resources policy. Members as well as Vice Provost Levine agreed this would make most sense.

#### **4. Committee business:**

a. Award payments – Professor Konstan reported receiving complaints from faculty who have won awards that have a stipend because fringe is being deducted from their stipend. He noted that he does not recall any consultation or discussion about this change. Dr. Gram noted that this issue has to do with fringe simplification, a matter on which the Senate Committee on Finance and Planning (SCFP) had recently been consulted. Previously, when an award was paid out as salary, fringe was taken out, but at a rate of about 20%. Now, however, under fringe simplification, the fringe is taken out at the full rate of 33.8%. There are two ways to get paid on awards 1) in salary with fringe and taxes taken out, or 2) the full amount can be deposited in a research account, which is not taxed.

Professor Konstan asked whether the 20% fringe was always taken out or paid by the sources that gave the award. It could have been, said Dr. Gram, that recipients received the full amount of the award that way, but this would have happened at the unit level. If the units had followed the instructions they had been given the fringe would have been deducted unless a unit decided to make up the difference. Provost Konstan said the issue is that for faculty who receive an award amount and suddenly the amount goes down or has unexpected deductions, it makes it look like the University is misleading them, and treating them poorly. He added that there appears to have been no communication to faculty who were impacted by this change and this was a big mistake. Dr. Gram agreed that it was unfortunate that some award recipients from previous years were not made aware that this change would occur as a result of the fringe simplification process. He added that some units decided to make up the difference and others did not. Dr. Gram said going forward the language in the award letters will make it clear what happens if an award is paid out as salary rather than deposited in a faculty member's research account.

Professor Ng asked if deducting the full fringe rate from the awards is saving the University money. Eventually, there will be some savings, said Dr. Gram, but right now there is a deficit because some faculty have been grandfathered in. Given there will be some savings, the provost has committed to expanding the number of awards and increasing their visibility. Professor Konstan said this is an example of distributed decision making impacting some faculty and not others, depending on if their unit took care of it for them or not. A number of faculty were caught off guard by the implications fringe simplification would have on their award.

b. Gathering data about outcomes of Post Tenure Review (PTR) and Special Post Tenure Review (SPTR) – Professor Konstan said there is a sense that the current PTR system is not satisfactory at least in some circumstances. The complaint is that it is a heavy weighted process. Professor Kulacki added that based on his experience, the process is not clear and the nudge to improvement is not apparent. He suggested getting a report from each collegiate unit about how many PTR are conducted annually and how many end up in SPTR. Based on the findings, the committee may want to articulate its position on the process. The way the policy

is drafted, said Professor Konstan, there is no distinction between PTR and the annual review in its implementation, but at the unit level there sometimes is a distinction. He asked members if they 1) would be interested in hearing from department heads from across the University with different practices to determine what is working and what is not, or 2) invite some associate deans to share aggregated information about faculty reviews and get their input on what is and is not working. In Professor Kulacki's opinion, he would like the committee to delve into this issue further. The implementation of the Strategic Plan, noted Vice Provost Levine, should include discussions around this issue. He suggested Professor Konstan discussing this with the Strategic Plan implementation team. Professor Konstan said he would be happy to do so with the help of Vice Provost Levine helping to identify the appropriate person/people to contact. Professor Lanyon said because so much of this is implemented at the department level, he would suggest inviting department heads first.

5. **Adjournment:** Hearing no further business, Professor Konstan adjourned the meeting.

Renee Dempsey  
University Senate