

Minutes*

**Senate Committee on Faculty Affairs
September 26, 1991
Regents Room, Morrill Hall**

Present: Avner Ben-Ner (chair), Carl Adams, Ann Fallon, Daniel Feeney, Roger Feldman, Richard Goldstein, Audrey Grosch, Morris Kleiner, Steve Laursen, Donald Rasmusson, Bernard Selzler, W. Donald Spring, Michael Wade, Gayle Graham Yates, Diane Mulvihill (ex officio)

Guest: Robert Fahnhorst (Employee Benefits)

NEXT MEETING: THURSDAY, OCTOBER 10, 1991, 3:15-5:00 P.M., MALLVIEW ROOM, CAMPUS CLUB

1. Report of the Chair

Professor Ben-Ner welcomed members and asked them to introduce themselves. He then distributed copies of the annual report. Referring members to the list of subcommittee appointments, he asked if there were any problems with appointments, and said that, if not, the composition of these groups will stand. He added that for the full committee the anticipated five meetings per quarter seems appropriate.

2. Agenda for 1991-92

Professor Ben-Ner directed the committee's attention to the list of proposed topics on the agenda announcement and asked for discussion. The first item, Faculty Rights and Responsibilities document, represents a response to comments from the Student Ombuds Service and the University's legislative liaison concerning the lack of documentation of what is expected of faculty, he said. The Tenure Code states rights and procedures, but not responsibilities, and concern has been expressed that even University graduates seem to have little sense of what faculty do. In reply to committee members' questions about the intended purpose of the document, he said that those who suggested it indicated both a substantive purpose of stating what faculty are to do and not to do, and a political or public relations purpose of informing students and external people (the public and the Legislature) of what can be expected of faculty.

In response to questions about the relation of this item to the one dealing with the Legislative audit, Professor Ben-Ner noted that this committee will be able to interact with the audit as appropriate and express its position. A faculty member has been assigned to work with the audit staff. He suggested that working on the rights and responsibilities document could help to clarify faculty positions. Professor Graham Yates said that she had suggested items two and three: Preparation of teaching assistants for teaching responsibilities, and the role of faculty in teaching undergraduates and the undergraduate initiative. Her intent was not to produce a detailed legalistic document on each, but a set of articulated

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principles that would take into account the different kinds of faculty positions and their different percentages of teaching, research, and other responsibilities. Professor Rasmusson expressed concern that the public would expect specifics and that it would be easy to become detailed and legalistic as occurred during work on the Tenure Code.

Professor Grosch noted that if the legislative audit is to occur this year, it would not be possible to have a document ready before the audit report, but that, on the other hand, the audit report may provide information that would be useful in developing the rights and responsibilities document. Therefore, she suggested waiting and making use of the audit data. She said that while there is a need to inform students and the public about the diversity of faculty responsibilities, it is not in the interest of faculty to draft a contractual document. Professor Ben-Ner noted that UCLA had prepared such a document but did not include details such as numbers of hours and days, etc., but instead was geared toward principles.

Professor Adams said that he cannot imagine producing a document with very much positive PR value, but that more internal purposes, such as improving shared understandings of faculty responsibilities, could be served.

Professor Rasmusson suggested that work begin now to define responsibilities as it might preclude someone else from doing it.

Professor Graham Yates added that what could be useful both internally and externally would be normative statements which would clarify perceptions of faculty roles (e.g. counseling, teaching students to do research). Putting these issues, perceptions, and misperceptions on the table could be of benefit. Producing a document would not be the only or necessary end result.

Professor Kleiner raised the question of University responsibility regarding faculty who don't live up to the basic norms and of how this articulation of normative statements would fit with the Tenure Code. Professor Ben-Ner responded that the Committee on Institutional Cooperation has suggested looking anew at tenure codes. He then asked for suggestions on the committee's best move; whether the subject is too fiscally sensitive and controversial or whether it is best to get an early start on the matter.

Professor Adams expressed agreement with Professor Graham Yates point that it is useful to look at the issues and problems, and said that he would be glad to spend time on that, but feels the committee should not promise to produce a document.

Professor Rasmusson said he would be willing to look at modifying the Tenure Code in an attempt to modify tenure in the interest of making the University a more productive place. Other members did not favor opening up the tenure issue at this time.

Professor Grosch agreed that a document would not be helpful for external purposes, but said it is important to address common perceptions of the public, e.g. that all classes are taught by TAs. She said that the committee isn't equipped with the information necessary to draft such a document. She advised against making any effort to change perceptions until the data is available, and added that rushing to produce something in advance of the audit results could give a negative impression. Instead she recommended using the audit in a positive way. Professor Goldstein added that the connection with the Tenure Code is probably too thorny to take up now, but that it is true the Code does not address responsibilities, and that this needs attention. He added that given national trends, the whole issue of tenure codes may be opened independently of this committee.

At this point, Professor Rasmusson made a motion that SCFA proceed with a study to evaluate the need for a document on faculty rights and responsibilities. Professor Spring suggested that in

conjunction with the study, the issue of non-performers might be addressed by the Working Group on Performance Appraisal and Salary Increases. Professor Spring's motion was accepted as a friendly amendment and it was agreed that SCFA's Tenure Subcommittee be asked to conduct such a study. Professor Adams seconded the motion. The motion carried. Professor Kleiner suggested that a linkage with the compensation group may be indicated, depending on the direction the Performance Appraisal Group takes. Professor Ben-Ner will ask the Tenure Subcommittee if they are willing to do the study.

Professor Rasmusson suggested that before deciding to act on other items on the list, it would be well to determine what other major matters will come before the committee. For example, he asked about responsibility for moving the health plan and other issues forward. Professor Ben-Ner responded that the health plan issue will come before this body when the work of the Health Plans Task Force and Performance Working Group is complete, and now there is time to proceed with other matters.

Professor Graham Yates said that her concern in item two, Preparation of Teaching Assistants for Teaching Responsibilities was to look at the role of preparation of TAs and see how the present TA program is working. With regard to item three, Role of Faculty in Teaching Undergraduates, she thought the variety of faculty roles should be considered in relation to the Undergraduate Initiative to see what the University could be doing better. She suggested that a questionnaire or hearings might be a method of gathering information on this. Professor Adams observed that it would be a simple matter to determine how many graduate students are teaching "in a faculty role." If this is being done there is a need to be sure it's being done right. A statement on the preparation of such TAs and quality of delivery would be useful. Professor Feeney suggested that the Senate Committee on Educational Policy might be the more appropriate body to consider this.

Professor Graham Yates responded that she had been considering the professional aspect of the graduate students' work as teachers; the other aspect, the delivery of teaching, is more related to the SCEP mission. The committee agreed that Professor Ben-Ner will ask SCEP to address this issue.

With regard to the fourth item, the Legislative Audit, it was agreed that discussion related to item one is sufficient for the moment.

Item five, Internal Consulting, can be considered only after material from Academic Affairs is provided.

Item six, Review of the Faculty/Academic Staff Advocacy and Grievance Advisory Program, also requires more information. A suggestion was made to assemble information collected by the subcommittee and evaluate the need for the program and the program director's role. Professor Ben-Ner added that timing is important because the University Grievance Officer position is up for review in January and this program should be reviewed at the same time.

Item seven, Receiverships of Departments, is carried over from last year's agenda, Professor Ben-Ner said. It concerns the limits on administrators' power to appoint people with tenure to departments in trouble, and will be on the agenda for the October 24 meeting of SCFA.

In summing up the matter of potential agenda items, Professor Ben-Ner called committee members' attention to an article in the Daily. He said he had received a phone call from a faculty member concerned about the racist assumptions in two articles published on September 25 in the Minnesota Daily, which he felt constituted a verbal attack on him. He suggested members look at the articles for possible future consideration. Professor Ben-Ner was asked by committee members to handle the matter as he felt appropriate.

3. Report of the Faculty Retirement Subcommittee

Copies of Academic Affairs draft document on Phased Retirement were distributed with the request that they be read for future discussion.

Professor Goldstein presented the report of the Faculty Retirement Subcommittee. He said that the report on investments goes to that subcommittee first. Last year the subcommittee recommended dropping one investment option due to poor performance. The report from Minnesota Mutual has been designed to get most of the information, except that on TIAA, on one page. The general goal is to have the reports stated in terms of net asset value. The basic plan gives a guaranteed amount; the remainder is in portfolio form.

The subcommittee is considering a change in the general account, which includes about two-thirds of the University's investments. There have been concerns about the general account because of its relation to the health insurance industry. The latest plan is to segregate the University's investment in the general account to a very specific set of holdings, separating it from the general assets of the insurance company. Safety is a real concern, he said, because people invest in the general account because they consider it safe. Under this plan, the insurance company will still guarantee the principal; the yield may suffer somewhat, but not significantly. He added that Roger Paschke thinks that the younger faculty are putting too much into the general account. He added that the University investments are doing fairly well in relation to the over-all economy, and the general account serves the needs of faculty who are risk adverse.

Professor Rasmusson expressed appreciation of the work that Employee Benefits has been doing to inform and educate faculty. Professor Selzler added that the presentations made on the Crookston campus were well received. Other committee members suggested that the similar informational efforts on the Twin Cities campus would need to be presented to smaller units in order to have more impact. There was discussion of whether people stay with their original option by choice or from inertia. Professor Spring said that a few are vitally interested, but most pay no attention to the market or related issues.

In response to a question about the difference between TIAA and Minnesota Mutual's approaches, Diane Mulvihill said that TIAA is designed mainly for an annuity and Minnesota Mutual is more flexible and has the advantage of roll-over at retirement. In answer to Professor Ben-Ner's question of whether there is any value in writing to faculty who have never joined the plan or never changed their allocation of investments, she said that those who are inactive get regular notices of their account status. There is no way in their data base to pull out inactive investors. It was suggested that information could be put in the Employee Benefit newsletter.

In relation to the option of retaining group insurance at retirement, it was noted that some universities that pay health benefits for retirees are now trying to stop doing so. The purpose of the plans is changing, and phased retirement and terminal leave policies will affect this change.

Professor Ben-Ner concluded by saying that phased retirement and terminal leave will be considered by both this committee and the Faculty Consultative Committee. It will be taken up at the next meeting. Carol Carrier has warned that the time frame is short. He asked that meanwhile members forward their comments to Martha Kvanbeck.

Catherine Winter