ACADEMIC HEALTH CENTER FACULTY ASSEMBLY

April 13, 1998

Minutes of the Meeting

The Academic Health Center Faculty Assembly is composed of members of the AHC Faculty Consultative Committee elected faculty and academic professional representatives of the AHC's constituent colleges and schools who are members of the University Senate. At any regular or special meeting of the Assembly, a majority of its members shall constitute quorum.

Senior Vice President Frank Cerra called the meeting to order at 12:00 noon.

I. The minutes of the November 25, 1997 meeting were approved.

II. AHC FCC Chair's Report

Cynthia Gross, Chair of the AHC FCC, gave an overview of the process for naming the Nominating Committee for the n AHC Committee on Committees. She directed members' attention to a list of names distributed to them for the Nor Committee to which the following individuals had been appointed by the AHC FCC: Donna Brauer from Nursing, l Rosenberg from Medicine, Thomas Shier from Pharmacy, Jill Stoltenberg from Preventative Science, Deb Swackhammer from Environmental and Occupational Health, and Jim Waddell from Clinical and Population Science. (A representative from Duluth was yet to be named.) She asked that the AHC Faculty Assembly approve the membership of this Nor Committee. This committee would be charged to generate a slate of names, twice as many as should be elected for Committee on Committees, and there would be a subsequent election from that list. The Committee on Committees would be responsible for appointing the individuals to serve on the AHC Finance and Planning Committee and the AHC Faculty Affairs Committee.

Professor Gross then called for a motion to accept the slate. The motion was approved and passed unanimously.

Professor Cynthia Gross explained that, depending on how the governance issue would be resolved at the University Sen level, either the AHC Assembly Committee on Committees or the University Senate Committee on Committees wou nominate individuals to replace the existing members of the AHC FCC as they rotate off.

She then presented an overview of issues on which the AHC FCC had provided consultation last year:

1. Communications: AHC FCC Minutes abstracted for the CAPSULE
2. Creation of Subcommittees on Finance and on Faculty Affairs
3. Evaluation at the AHC
4. AHC Grants
5. Faculty recognition events
6. Memorandum of Understanding & Compacts O&M/ICR Swap
7. Retirement Issues
8. Plans to create an AHC Educational Service Organization (ESO)
9. Governance Issue: Continuing the link between the U FCC and & the AHC FCC, with the appointment of a single provost and the & senior VP for the Health Sciences
10. Diversity task force

    Upcoming Issues:

11. U's Conflict of Interest Policy
12. U-Wide support for faculty development/sabbaticals
13. Post-tenure Review
14. Process for approving Interdisciplinary Programs and Centers

III. Governance Task Force Report Update

Professor Gross explained that one of the recommendations of the Governance Task Force is to discontinue the direct reporting link of the AHC FCC to the University Senate/Assembly. She stated the position of the current AHC FCC that important for the AHC FCC to have a direct link to the University FCC and to be a conduit of information to that group regarding the activities of the AHC. She added that the AHC FCC also matches the structure of the AHC in having a Senior Vice President who seeks consultation from a faculty group.

Professor Mary Dempsey added that the proposals in the Task Force Report aim to give the Senators a more active role faculty governance. The continuance of the AHC FCC would support that goal. To strengthen the tie between the AHC FCC and the University Senate, the AHC FCC members would hopefully be Senators; otherwise, the chair would automatically be a Senator. Also, the University FCC would meet regularly with the AHC FCC chair. She welcomed comments on proposals.

Professor Judith Garrard spoke out against the plan and urged Senators to vote instead for keeping the AHC FCC as a formal subcommittee of the FCC. Her position was that maximum involvement of the faculty representatives should be consideration.

One member directed a question back to the Task Force regarding the upcoming issue of post-tenure review and urged faculty play a very active role in this process. Professor Dempsey assured him that the process was meant to be driven faculty, not administration. Professor Carole Bland, Chair of the AHC Subcommittee on Faculty Affairs, added that committee hopes to work with Jeanette Louden, AHC Director of Human Resources, on issues surrounding the implementation of these policies. Professor Gross concluded the discussion by reiterating that consultation by the AHC FC and its subcommittees would aim to ensure that the processes in question are faculty-led.

IV. Grants Management

Dr. Cerra cited the restructuring of the grants management process and introduced Professor David Hamilton as the Director of the Grants Management Project and WinAnn Schumi as the Project Manager.

Professor Hamilton opened his presentation on the University's vision for grants management by articulating this vision terms of three goals:

 1) To provide the tools necessary for investigators to easily and accurately manage their grants

 2) To provide the tools necessary for administrators to easily provide oversight and monitor compliance

 3) To provide educational experiences for all personnel on regulatory, compliance and ethical issues in research

He went on to address the ways in which the grants management process could be facilitated.

1. Managing the Laboratory From Anywhere

To allow PI's to manage their laboratory from anywhere in the world, several elements have come into play:

- Financial Forms Nirvana, a WEB-based system that interdigitates with CUFS

- CUFS data warehouse that can be accessed on the Web

   The first step was the development of financial reports on the WEB from CUFS data. The greatest problem lies in not being able to accurately encumber salaries and fringe benefits. Isn't the problem that encumbering is done by formula and doesn't reflect changes in staff from month to month, one member queried. Pro Hamilton responded that there are two solutions to this problem, and their accuracy is currently being tested.

   Professor Hamilton shared his frustration about the decision to keep CUFS in place until at least 2000. Dr. Cerra addressed the complaints about CUFS but argued that its function as an accounting system was no problem.

- The on-line purchase request and payment voucher

   The purchase request can be accessed on any screen to partially populate a purchase order form; this is already being implemented. It is easy to use but would require training to complete the purchase request. Responding to several members' concerns about having to rely on someone else to do the ordering, Professor Ham

explained that the training process was still being tested. He promised to return to this question later presentation.

2. Applying for a Grant Using EGMS

Professor Hamilton discussed the technical aspects of the EGMS system, which allows the PI to electronicall fill in a proposal database, generate the proposal forms, and receive the Notice of Grant Award which, accepted, is automatically uploaded to CUFS. He announced that in a year and a half, NIH will be accepti grants electronically, thereby eliminating current problems with fonts and graphics. The University hope become a pilot for electronic grant submission.

3. The Expertise Database

- A part of EGMS that is currently being developed for the Medical School

- Provides up-to-date records of background, honors, publications, research expertise, patents, and industrial relevance.

- Can be accessed through the WEB by Minnesota businesses a well as others around the world

- Will be uploaded to the Community of Science

- Can be used to construct BioSketches for grants

- Can be used to construct curriculum vitae

- Could benchmark faculty scholarship

Some members expressed concern about the privacy of curriculum vitae on the system. Dr. Hamilton explained tha information on the database can be suppressed. Dr. Cerra added that according to the Minnesota Data Practices Act, only a few items are considered truly private.

Another member commented that these databases are only useful if kept current. Dr. Hamilton responded that the Univer hopes to refine mechanisms modeled by the Community of Science that automatically notify the PI when data needs updating.

4. Elements of Oversight and Compliance

- Educational aspects of roles and responsibilities

- Technical Enhancements: CUFS Spending Control, CUFS Object Control and A-21 violations

- Incentives, both positive and negative

- Certified approvers who assess the risk involved in any transaction. The majority are low risk and go directly to the vendor; high risk transactions are deferred to the Dean's Office, which may then choose to pass them on to SPA (formerly ORTA). Dr. Hamilton pointed out that since not all departments can afford certified approvers, the possibility of service clusters that serve groups of departments is being investigated.

Dr. Cerra reemphasized the earlier point about developing tools that enable the PI to manage his/her own grant independent of administrators. Another set of tools would allow administrators to oversee regulation of the grant. He announced th October has been set as the target date for another NIH sight visit, for which he feels the University is prepared. Finally stressed that the internal model used is not an administrative model, but a collaborative effort with faculty governanc Hamilton added that his group reports to the Senate Committee on Research and will report to the FCC as well this spring. He also noted that many members of the faculty have been involved in consultation on this project.

A question was raised about whether a PI could manage the grant independent of the University. Dr. Cerra responded stressing that the model was one of shared responsibility between the PI and the University. He expressed the University desire to break away from the "exceptional" designation and move ahead with electronic developments and expanded authority to reduce delay time.

He went on to address the Civil Suit and announced that the trial date has been set for early October. Work is being done in an attempt to resolve the dispute in a settlement out-of-court.

The floor was opened for questions about the Grants Management process. One member commented on the recent slow-down and the need for back-up when the WEB crashes at deadline times. Dr. Cerra responded that this is part of the Year 2000 project. Another member commented that increasing electronic control over grants was simultaneously decreasing the PI's degrees of freedom. He voiced the need for a procedure to allow the PI access to a formula-based si account to resolve problems that can't be fixed in the main system. Dr. Cerra agreed and stated that this loss of flexibility was being addressed at the policy level. The proposed idea of an attached account is simple but difficult to implement. Carole Bland returned to the question of training on the WEB. Dr. Hamilton replied that there are already some modules up on the WEB and work is being done to add more. He announced that Norma Allewell will lead the faculty education effort.

Dr. Cerra closed by citing the success of the legislative session. He thanked everyone involved and adjourned the meeting 1:30 pm.

- Anya Schwender -

[Return to AHC Faculty Assembly Minutes Page](#)