

Minutes*

SENATE COMMITTEE ON FACULTY AFFAIRS
Thursday, October 6, 1994
Dale Shepherd Room, Campus Club
3:15 - 5:00 p.m.

Present: Daniel Feeney (chair), Daniel Canafax, Carol Carrier, Carol Chomsky, Ann Erickson, Judith Gaston, Kinley Larntz, Richard McGehee, Dianne Mulvihill, Ken Roering, Michael Sadowsky, Anne Sales, Bernard Selzler, W. Donald Spring, Yang Wang

Regrets: Carole Bland, Rose Brewer, Mary Dempsey, Willard Manning, Roger Paschke, George Seltzer, James Stone

1. Welcome and Introductions

Professor Feeney welcomed the returning and new committee members. During this time, the chair passed out a list asking Committee members to list nominations for Hearing Officers and Hearing Panelists for the Grievance Committee.

2. Approval of the Agenda

The agenda was approved as documented.

3. Chair's Report

The chair said that the Compensation Task Force has been established to address the issue of faculty wages. Membership includes Chairman Carl Adams (Faculty Consultative), Karen Karni (Finance and Planning), Daniel Feeney (Faculty Affairs), and others. Professor Feeney also recommended that the Committee should move forward on its plan to meet with the President regarding issues of faculty morale.

4. Overview of Plans and Activities Reports for SCFA Subcommittees

a. Benefits Subcommittee - Daniel Canafax (Subcommittee Chair) said that the group will be considering the submission of a proposal for a frequent flyer sabbatical program. The group will also be discussing benefits issues other than health care.

b. Health Care Subcommittee - Richard McGehee (Subcommittee Chair) said that last year SCFA began to re-examine the issue of separating the University from the state health care plan and creating its own. The administration has given permission for the Subcommittee to conduct a survey of the faculty to 1) attempt identifying current difficulties with the plan being used at the University, and 2) determine the level of interest for construction a separate plan. Dianne Mulvihill and Professor McGehee met with Michael Finch who estimated that the cost of such a survey project would be between \$40 - \$80,000. Carol Carrier said that the administration would not be able to support this large a project. Therefore,

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Professor McGehee is currently attempting reconnect with Professor Finch for the purpose of determining a more accurate figure for the cost of such a project. The Subcommittee is now considering how to constructing the survey in such a way that it will produce valid results without giving the impression that the results were predetermined.

Professor McGehee added that the publication U and Your Benefits stated that Medica Premier now is the lowest priced health care provider in the state, instead of Group Health. This may also effect how University faculty view the current health care coverage.

c. Retirement Plan Subcommittee - Daniel Feeney (Subcommittee Chair) said that the Subcommittee had been examining how to provide more choices in the basic retirement plan for faculty. The Subcommittee was able to convince itself, the University Benefits Office, and the University Treasurers Office that such a pursuit was a good idea. Requests for Proposals were sent out over the summer, were received, and then evaluated by the subcommittee. The criteria for evaluation were:

- 1) What was the availability of funds that were relatively aggressive and their track records
- 2) Was the firm willing to waive fees
- 3) Could the firm handle both old (pre-1989) and new money and keep them separate
- 4) Could they provide appropriate accounting
- 5) Would they work with Minnesota Mutual

Fidelity was the firm that was awarded the account providing three options for the basic plan: Fidelity ConfraFund, Fidelity In Cash Advantage Growth, and Fidelity Over the Counter.

The Subcommittee will be monitoring compliance with the IRS. They also will be examining issues of discrimination between people involved in the Minnesota State Retirement System verses the Faculty/P&A Retirement System.

d. Tenure Subcommittee - Professor Feeney spoke on behalf of Mary Dempsey (Subcommittee Chair) saying that Vice President Infante sent back some of the recommendations regarding tenure timelines addressed last year by SCFA. The difficulty according to the administration was that there needed to be an escape clause for cases that may need to be suspended over the summer. It is hoped that the Subcommittee will reformulate the tenure timelines according to the administration's request and present the changes to SCFA in the near future.

Associate Vice President Carol Carrier added that the administration is at the preliminary stages of looking into providing early retirement opportunities for faculty. She said that these are inducement packages which may replace the current phased-retirement plan. She will bring material to the Committee when they have something concrete.

5. Discussion and Ranking of Issues for Future SCFA Meetings

Professor Feeney said that he looked through the past several years of Committee records to find issues that have yet to be completed. He used these items and suggestions from SCFA members to assemble a tentative list of agenda items for the year. The Committee agreed to address the following items this academic year:

1. Review implementation proposals for sabbatical programs - Dan Canafax agreed to review this with Carol Carrier and then bring it before SCFA.
2. Review desirability of supplemental benefits (cafeteria benefits, offspring tuition benefits, etc.) - Dan Canafax said that the Benefits Subcommittee had chosen to only address several of these options rather than a blanket approach. This subcommittee will present this issue to the Committee this year.

Benefits should be examined with respect to equitable distribution as well. Carol Carries recommended that the Benefits Subcommittee contact the University Education Association at the Duluth Campus for information on tuition benefits.

3. Monitor faculty retirement plans performance - This is reviewed quarterly, published in the Daily, and listed on Gopher under "Human Resources and Benefits."
4. Review rules on initial eligibility for faculty retirement plan.
5. Discuss recommendations of the Heath Care Subcommittee.
6. Review recommendation of the Academic Integrity Committee - Don Spring said that this committee met several times during the summer and has progressed on the "Conflict of Commitment" document. A shared draft is expected in November and will be handled in the same manner as the "Conflict of Interest" document.
7. Continued Discussion of strategic planning efforts
8. Consider development of a faculty newspaper - Professor Feeney said that Carole Bland is interested in addressing this issue and therefore will include it on an upcoming agenda. Several Committee members said that they thought Footnote, published by the Faculty Consultative Committee, could be expanded to become a faculty newspaper.
9. Discuss handling of confidential documents, particularly letters, in light of current Minnesota Data Practices Act solicitations - Dr. Feeney asked the committee if it should consider making a statement regarding the protection of personal material sent from a faculty member to another, etc. The Committee agreed that much material is not held "in confidence" as it should, and would like to address this issue.

Another committee member said that a more equitable for administrators and faculty review should be constructed. Currently, the University requires that a faculty member must sign complaints about an administrator while faculty are subject to anonymous review. The committee agreed that a group, including a legal representative, should investigate this matter. Judith Gaston, Bernard Selzler, and Ann Erickson along with assistance from Carol Carrier agreed to examine this issue. The chair for this new subcommittee will be announced in the near future. This group will deal with developing a beginners guide to the Minnesota Data Privacy Act, and administrative review.

The Committee decided that issues regarding litigious reprisals resulting from peer reviews should be handled by the Tenure Subcommittee.

10. Discuss what the University could do to make faculty and staff feel more positive about the University and their employment - The chair recommended that the Committee should attempt to constructively deal with the issue of low morale. One committee member recommended coupling this with the idea of a faculty newspaper. Another asked what body in the University is responsible for dealing with/monitoring faculty morale. (There did not seem to be a clear answer for this question.) The Committee agreed with one member who pointed out that the community impression of the University is not as prestigious as in the past.
11. Role of teaching portfolios and peer review in tenure decisions - The chair recommended that Carol Chomsky should speak with Mary Dempsey regarding this matter.
12. Revisit the tenure amendment regarding the preliminary proceedings/formal actions - This has been returned to the Tenure Subcommittee.

Additional Items to Address:

Carol Carrier said that the senior administration of the University has determined that tenure decision will be made at the provost/chancellor level. This policy varies from the language in the current Tenure Code, and therefore will need to be altered to conform to this new structure. This also calls into question the role of the Senior Vice President of Academic Affairs, if any, and the role of the Graduate School. Professor Feeney will speak with Mary Dempsey concerning this matter.

Anne Sales requested the Committee to consider examination of the upcoming amendments the Regents Policy on Academic Freedom and Responsibility. Professor Feeney said that he would obtain a copy of the amended policy to distribute to all members for discussion at the next meeting.

The Committee determined to address the following issues without including them specifically on meeting agendas:

1. Review desirability of re-establishing a faculty/academic staff advocacy office - Associate V. P Carrier said that Maureen Venters staffed the office which served in this capacity receiving only a moderate amount of faculty use. The office was then discontinued when she left the University. These responsibilities were then transferred to Faculty/Staff Assistance Office. A Committee member said that the new University grievance procedure appear to be handling these issues well. Another added that money may be available for a 1/2 position through SCFA funds. Professor Feeney added that Nick Barbatsis and Clarence Carter have been very accessible for faculty to determine if a faculty should file a grievance and explaining the subsequent process to such an individual. The chair will talk to the Director of the University Senate Office to determine the status of the former list of faculty advocates. He will also contact the Faculty/Staff Assistance Office to see if they would be willing to serve in an advocacy capacity for faculty/academic staff, as well as maintain the advocacy list. Professor Feeney will report back to the Committee regarding this issue.

2. Review revision of Judicial Committee Rules of Procedure - The main issue concerning SCFA is if the Judicial Committee is completing cases quickly enough. One committee member recommended that Mary Dempsey (Tenure Subcommittee Chair) should speak with the chair of the Judicial Committee to gather information about its streamlining process.

6. Research Committee Resolution

Professor Feeney explained that last year SCFA and the Senate Research Committee held a joint meeting where the later committee presented a resolution on research. SCFA approved the resolution under the condition that the Research Committee would dramatically improve its grammar. The statement was drafted to deal with the issue of loading faculty with so much work during the year that they are unable to conduct research needed for promotion and/or tenure. One committee member said that the resolution was poorly worded. The Committee proceeded to discuss the need to improve the grammatical structure and clarity of the statement. The Committee determined that this statement seemed to be a response to unit's Work Load Policy on various campuses. A motion was approved unanimously stating that SCFA finds the resolution to be unclear and prefers not to endorse it. Nevertheless, the Research Committee may bring the resolution to the Senate floor if it so chooses. The chair said that he would write a letter to the chair of the Research Committee explaining SCFA's opinion.

-- Kevin Gormley

University of Minnesota