

Minutes\*

**SENATE COMMITTEE ON FACULTY AFFAIRS**  
**Thursday, March 7, 1996**  
**3:15 - 5:00**  
**Dale Shephard Room, Campus Club**

- Present: Dan Feeney (chair), Carol Chomsky, Judith Gaston, Richard Goldstein, Roland Guyotte, Richard McGehee, Sam Myers, Kevin O'Laughlin, Bernard Selzler,
- Regrets: Carol Carrier, Robert Fahnhorst, James Stone, Yang Wang
- Absent: Carole Bland, Cheryl Coryea, Mary Dempsey, Kinley Larntz, Carol Miller, Shane Swanson
- Guest: Laura Coffin Koch (Chair, Educational Policy)
- Others: Martha Kvanbeck (University Senate), Matt Tirrell (Tenure Working Group)

[In these minutes are discussions on the conversion to semesters and tenure.]

**1. CONVERSION TO SEMESTERS: A DISCUSSION WITH PROFESSOR LAURA COFFIN KOCH (CHAIR, EDUCATIONAL POLICY COMMITTEE)**

A. Summary of the Conversion Plan by Professor Laura Koch:

There are a significant number of concerns related to the conversion to semesters regarding payroll issues. Among these apprehensions, SCFA was interested in knowing if the payroll schedule would be based on an eight or a nine month calendar? Professor Koch said that Associate V.P. Peter Zetterberg would be willing to provide information on this matter to SCFA if the members are interested.

According to the most recent document, the conversion is expecting to include two, 14 week semesters. Calculations for the amount of instruction is calculated by days (not weeks). This is similar to other Big 10 institutions. Therefore, the foundation of the proposal is to include two semesters with 70-75 days of instruction. The most difficult year will be the first one, 1999-2000, because the number of days will be different for the semesters. Faculty would be requested to return two weeks before Labor Day to begin working with graduate students and preparing for the semester. The actual start-date would float from year to year, ending nine months later. There would be a three week break between the Fall and Spring semesters with classes beginning the third Tuesday in January. Grades for both semesters would be due no later than 120 working hours after the last scheduled exam.

The summer session is expected to be 13 weeks in duration. A three interim period would begin in May for intense/short courses, followed by two 5 week summer sessions. Other variations of this

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schedule are possible. The second summer session would end the Friday before the beginning of the Fall semester. Departments would be allowed to require enrollment in one of the summer session. Professor Koch said that Dr. Peter Zetterberg discovered a number of institutions throughout the country with similar schedule.

B. Issues Related to this Proposal:

- \* If the pay period for faculty begins two weeks before the Fall semester begins, there will be an overlap between the pay periods of the Summer and Fall terms.
- \* It is not sure how this might work if the biweekly payroll system is implemented.
- \* The May interim session could be used as an extension of the Spring or Summer terms if needed.
- \* This University calendar does not match that of University of Wisconsin.
- \* Semesters are proposed to include 74/75 days of instruction with 55 minute classes.

The group continued to discuss the possibilities of the summer sessions and the difficulties of fitting a semesters worth of work in a shorter number of days. Further discussion included the following points:

- \* The University will not begin using Sunday examinations.
- \* Crookston has agreed to match the Twin Cities calendar, although they may have to use the "Standard Seven."
- \* Exemptions from the calendar may be granted by the President's Office (e.g., The Law School must have at least 14 week terms and a two week examination period.)
- \* Crookston is concerned about coordinating their calendar with that of higher education institutions in Moorhead, MN, and East Grand Forks, ND.
- \* Some scheduling challenges may be present in the use of distance education at the coordinate campuses.
- \* The presence or lack of a study day is not crucial.

Additional Points:

- \* Semesters provide more time for student to assimilate the knowledge.
- \* The "Study Day" before finals serves as a mental health day for students.
- \* How will this conversion impact students with jobs?
- \* Classes offering four credit in the quarter system may need to be reduced to three credits per semester.
- \* The Spring semester is likely to begin after Martin Luther King Jr. Day.
- \* The schedule is conducive for allowing faculty and staff to attend national associations which tend to meet in early January.
- \* What will be the expectation of faculty during the January break?

The committee proceeded to present a number of questions to Professor Koch:

- Q Can you explain the motivations behind this conversion? It would seem that the motivation is stimulated by the legislature's call to have similar calendars for all State higher educational institutions, and to develop comparable calendars with peer institutions.

- A Technically, the University was not mandated by the legislature. When the state said it was planning to convert MNSCU, the University began to consider a matching calendar. SCEP is trying to coordinate a calendar that is similar to institutions within and outside the State.
- Q As the changes are considered, the University should evaluate the advantage of the climate weather that Minnesota experiences in the summers and how an additional semester during this period could offer an advantage to this institution.
- A The challenges to this is that there are some colleges that rely on existing summer programs. The College of Education has a significant student enrollment starting in June when teachers are finished with their K-12 teaching responsibilities. Therefore, the 13 week term may be one of the possible options.
- Q Did SCEP talk about the impact this may have on single quarter leaves?
- A No. We planned on having SCFA address that issue.
- Q How does this calendar work with civil service staff as to whether December 23 will mesh with their schedule?
- A We will.

Any further comments can be sent to Professor Koch at <kochx001@maroon.tc.umn.edu>.

## **2. TENURE DISCUSSION**

A committee member said that the University Faculty Alliance are developing are growing level of support on campus to enter the faculty into collective bargaining. This may have a significant impact on SCFA because this may demonstrate that there are a growing number of faculty who have little confidence in the Administration and in faculty governance. Is the governance structure working appropriately?

This committee member added that a recent memo from President Hasselmo only mentioned the Tenure Working Group in reference to tenure revisions, and did not refer to SCFA or its Tenure Subcommittee. Therefore, is SCFA wasting its time spending such a considerable amount of time discussing tenure when the focus of the discussion has become the Working Group? A SCFA member said he perceived that the Working Group was developed without any consultation from SCFA, and continues to operate outside of faculty governance.

The tenure discussion is being driven by a particular problem in a specific unit, said another committee member. The University should seek to address this problem first before it touches on an issue that could permanently affect all faculty.

It was noted that there are a series of issues driving the tenure discussion, including the health sciences financial problems, legislative interest, and the movement at peer institutions. The proposed changes to the Tenure Code are not the panacea for dealing with the problems in the Academic Health Center. Professor Feeney described the details of the payroll system in the medical center in that faculty are paid with a base salary and a clinical augmentation. Lack of patients has led to some revenue shortfalls in the practice plan(s) which brings up the concern about base vs. augmentation in the Tenure

Code. This problem is compounded because some faculty contracts in the Health Sciences apparently list the base and augmented salaries as one sum. Therefore, administrators in the Medical Center are interested in developing definitions for "base salary." The group said that this type of change may not require change of the Tenure Code.

Highlights from this continuing discussion:

- \* All meetings about tenure with Sr. V. P. Infante or President Hasselmo have included Professor Mary Dempsey (Chair, Tenure Subcommittee).
- \* The Tenure Working Group has met regularly with SCFA.
- \* It seems that the governance system is working reasonably well given the fact that the University community has responded to SCFA deliberations.

The group continued talking about the proposals to resolve the problems at the Academic Health Center and how this relates to the tenure discussions. Following discussion items were as follows:

- \* Even if the Senate is doing a great job, faculty have a right to organize collectively. There is no law against this.
- \* FCC recently invited a representative from the Bureau of Mediation Services to detail the process that would occur if the faculty were to unionize. This representative said that deliberations on the Tenure Code would need to stop several months before elections could be held.
- \* Dean Cerra (Medical School) is not interested eliminating tenure. He believes that academic freedom needs to be protected. In addition, he added that the practice system is in dire situation such that the Medical Center is \$10-11 million dollars in the red for this year so far with a reserve of only about \$6 million.
- \* It seems that the key issue is what is "base salary" which could be handled with an interpretation of the Code rather than an entire revision.
- \* The trend of downsizing seems to have hit the University in full force with the tenure debate.
- \* If faculty holds controversial views among their peers, they could be removed under the proposed revisions to the Code.
- \* The language for the post-tenure review has not been constructed.
- \* Only 25% of the University's resources address teaching efforts. (Professor Feeney said he would try to find the document supporting this information.)
- \* Pressure from the Regents and the legislature seem to be driving the discussion more than faculty governance.
- \* SCFA must be willing to speak against the revisions if it believes that the changes are inappropriate.
- \* The orderly process has become much more complicated in recent months.

Professor Feeney said that he would provide more details from his discussions with the Administration about the tenure. He proceeded describe all that he knew about the revision process. He added that a group of four lawyers were currently working on the first draft of potential revisions (Two of the lawyers are University faculty, one from General Counsel, and one from Health Sciences). The SCFA members provided the following responses:

- \* There needs to be some give-and-take if changes occur. SCFA is in an uncomfortable position of having to submit to changes which may offer few potential benefits for the faculty. On the other hand, collective bargaining offers a means of slowing down the process and providing a means to negotiate systematically. This appears very attractive given the current state of affairs.
- \* It could be possible that the changes only apply to the Academic Health Center since that is where the problem exists.
- \* If the Academic Health Center can opt out of the University calendar and decline on voting for collective bargaining, they should be able to have separate changes to the Tenure Code.

The group continued discussing the process that is proposed to address the fiscal problems at the Health Center. Professor Feeney said that he would try to get information discussed in a recent meeting with Dean Cerra for SCFA members. Committee members recommended that the details of this SCFA meeting should be forwarded to those drafting the changes to the Tenure Code. Another committee member recommended that SCFA's next step should be to receive a report from the Tenure Subcommittee, and then possibly present a motion for action on the Tenure Code revision process.