

[In these minutes: Health Plan Task Force Report, Academic Appointments Discussion, Subcommittee Updates]

Senate Committee on Faculty Affairs

Thursday, January 20, 2000

6-101 Basic Sciences

3:00 PM

MINUTES

[These minutes reflect discussion and debate at a meeting of a committee of the University of Minnesota Senate or Twin Cities Campus Assembly; none of the comments, conclusions, or actions reported in these minutes represent the view, nor are they binding on the Senate or Assembly, the Administration, or the Board of Regents.]

Present: Richard Goldstein (Chair), Josef Altholz, Carole Bland, Robert Fahnhorst, John Fossum, Cleon Melsa, Tom Walsh, Carol Wells

Regrets: Carol Carrier, Daniel Feeney, Andrea Hinding, Marti Hope Gonzales, Roland Guyotte, Robert Jones, Charlene Mason, Meghan McCauly, Marcia Pankake, George Seltzer, Geoffrey Sirc, Sheila Warness

Absent: Avner Ben-Ner, Larry Miller, James Perry

Guests: Kent Bales, Dick McGehee

1. Approval of December 7, 1999 Minutes: The minutes were approved as presented.

2. Health Plan Task Force – Presentation by Dick McGehee

Professor McGehee provided the committee with a Work Plan for the Health Plan Task Force, which includes such information as background, purpose, membership, and a timeline.

Background

- The current health care benefits set provided by the University to its employees is developed during collective bargaining between the State and unions.
- The University has no say during the collective bargaining process so it must take what is decided upon without advocating for its own needs and wants.
- The Health Plan Task Force has been in existence for the past two years to consider if other options are available to the University for providing benefits as well as trying to become more recognized by the State.
- Buck Consultants have been hired by the University to consider the University's options.
- The University has never worked with this particular consulting company, but they were hired through a vigorous RFP process and are nationally known as employee benefits experts.

Purpose and Membership

- The membership of the task force has grown since it was first organized to include all employee groups on all of the campuses and cover the additional duties.
- The task force would rather have credibility than power so it has foregone having any authority over making final decisions.

- Instead, the end result will be to gather endorsements for the final report of the task force from the various employee groups around campus.

Timeline

- Currently, the consultants are on campus to conduct surveys, organize focus groups, development possible plan designs.

Comments:

- It is possible that even if the University decides to leave the State's plan, union represented employee groups will remain with the State.
- The task force looked at other institutions' health care benefits packages and learned that not many are satisfied with their options.
- Markets within which the various institutions reside are very different, so it is difficult to compare plans between institutions.
- An article that recently appeared in the Wall Street Journal notes that federal employees are relatively content with their health care benefits, but the cost is quite high for them.
- The federal system is having the same difficulties as the State because the older or less healthy groups all choose the same plan, driving up costs for everyone.
- Even though different demographic groups desire different benefit sets, the State is moving towards one set in order to create a model similar to the Buyer's Health Care Action Group (BHCAG).
- The BHCAG model includes only one benefit set for everyone, with additional options being made available as a person pays more.
- The University will decide whether or not to stay with the State this coming fall.
- If the University does decide to leave, it will take a year to develop a plan, which will be implemented in January 2002.
- The two issues that will determine if the University separates include the ability to develop a plan that would better meet the University's needs and a system that allows maintenance of the plan with employee input.
- Currently, there are 15,000 employees who receive benefits, costing the University \$55 million each year, \$61 million with employee contributions.
- If the University separates from the State, its plan would cover all campuses.
- The University's retirees would have to be included in the new plan if there is separation.
- If the University develops its own plan, it must be compatible between regular employees and retirees so there is a smooth transition between the two statuses.
- The more a new plan varies from what is currently offered, the more problems there will be between the various employee groups on campus, because the union represented groups would still be under the State's plan.
- It is still too early to determine how much a new plan would cost the University and its employees.
- SCFA can assist the task force by receiving regular activity reports and providing reactions to that information.
- Professor McGehee will report back to SCFA in March.

3. Academic Appointments – Executive Summary of the Working Group

Kent Bales reviewed the executive summary of the working group with the committee.

- The original charge of the Joint Committee on Academic Appointments was to develop a way to control the rising number of non tenure-track faculty and create a fair environment for those who are hired.

- The joint committee developed two areas of accountability: centralized and decentralized.
- Centralized accountability would include providing an annual report through the Compact process to the Executive Vice President and Provost.
- Decentralized accountability would include each unit developing and abiding by a plan.
- The joint subcommittee also developed a ratio of tenured versus non-tenured faculty for the University to follow, but included exemptions for flexibility.
- A working group of faculty, academic professionals, department heads, and deans was developed over the summer to create something agreeable to both faculty and the administration.
- The final report of the working group does not include a plan or ratio to control numbers, but it stipulates each unit is responsible for developing and following its own plan.

Comments:

- The revised classification system under this plan does not achieve the needs of the University.
- Under this system, anyone can be hired as an academic professional and become a faculty member if the title is designated under a separate contract.
- The classification process will make it impossible to identify faculty.
- The current fact sheet available about the University does not distinguish between faculty and academic professionals when it provides the number for them.
- The working group's report does not address any of the issues the joint committee raised in its report.
- In the working group's report, clarifying point #10 insinuates that deans will continue to determine faculty numbers.
- Those issues that were not addressed by the working group, but raised by the joint committee, should be made known to the FCC.
- The options in the working group's report do not cover all of the classes that need to be included.
- The roles of faculty are being diminished and becoming unclear as this issue continues.
- The second concern listed on the working group's report is unfounded because the joint committee's report never mentioned anything about releasing current employees.
- Dick Goldstein, Carole Bland, Cleon Melsa, and Kent Bales will draft a letter to FCC that outlines SCFA's concern with the working group's report and ask for committee input before it is delivered.
- The letter should include concern with the working group's membership and lack of adequate faculty representation.
- Any concerns already raised by the FCC could be echoed in the letter sent to that group.

4. Faculty Development – Update by Carole Bland

Professor Bland informed the committee that Robert Jones would like to develop a long-term, comprehensive faculty development program.

- Dr. Jones has organized a working group that will assess needs, learn what's currently available, and develop a proposal to the legislature for funding of a sufficient program.
- Faculty development includes any activity or initiative that increases the ability of faculty to accomplish goals.
- The Senate and administration will act upon the final plan.
- More members are needed on the working group so please provide suggestions to Nicole Boldt as soon as possible.

- The Board of Regents' Faculty, Staff, and Student Affairs Committee is scheduled to discuss this topic at its March meeting. Professor Bland should be invited to that meeting to discuss the faculty perception and progress on this issue.

5. Subcommittee Updates

Benefits Subcommittee

Professor Fossum informed the committee that the subcommittee met in December to determine its priorities and goals for the academic year. They include:

- Developing a permanent policy on faculty development leaves.
- Eliminating the waiting period for faculty to enter the retirement investment program.
- Investigating the possibility of providing tuition benefits for children of University employees.
- Learning about the discount programs available to University employees.

Charge Review Subcommittee

- The committee received a copy of the proposed amendments to the current charge to the committee and will discuss them at the next meeting.

Survey Review Subcommittee

- Darwin Hendel and Carole Bland were supposed to develop a set of major questions and who would be responsible for following up on them for the committee to review.
- Darwin Hendel will no longer be handling surveys on campus so his successor will be asked to take his place.
- Both will be invited to an upcoming meeting.

Tenure Subcommittee

- A report on the status of post-tenure review will be provided at an upcoming meeting.
- Information should include whether or not all units have submitted procedures and if any reviews have been initiated.

SCFP Salary Review

- Professor Fossum informed the committee that Peter Zetterberg has collected information from the Big 10 schools about their faculty salaries.
- Other information gathered is about how salary decisions are made across the University, and there is great variance among units.
- The AHC Finance & Planning Committee is conducting a survey with AHC department heads to learn how merit pay is determined. All responses will be made available in a February edition of an AHC publication.
- Jim Perry or Steven Gudeman will provide a report at an upcoming meeting.

6. Chair's Report

Intellectual Property

- The CIC has issued a report about intellectual property as it relates to instructional materials.
- Professor Altholz will compare the report to the University's Intellectual Property policy and inform the committee as to whether or not any issues need to be addressed.

Agenda Items

- Any issues that members would like addressed by the committee should be forwarded to Dick Goldstein or Nicole Boldt.

7. Adjournment: Professor Goldstein adjourned the meeting at 4:50 PM.