

Minutes*

Senate Committee on Faculty Affairs
Tuesday, November 28, 2000
3:07 – 5:00
238A Morrill Hall

- Present: Richard Goldstein (chair), Josef Altholz, Avner Ben-Ner, Carole Bland, Daniel Feeney, Darwin Hendel, Joan Howland, (Sandra Archibald for) Robert Jones, Charlene Mason, James Perry, Tom Walsh, Sheila Warness, Carol Wells, Lisa Wersal
- Regrets: Robert Fahnhorst, John Fossum, Cleon Melsa, Larry Miller, Theodore Oegema, Dwight Purdy, George Seltzer
- Absent: Carol Carrier, Wade Savage
- Guests: Bob Baker (Parking and Transportation), Associate Vice President Theresa Robinson (Auxiliary Services)
- Other: Florence Funk (Office of the Executive Vice President and Provost)

[In these minutes: (1) report from the faculty development working group on research productivity; (2) parking priority for probationary faculty; (3) other committee business, including privacy and conflict of interest policies, faculty development leave policy, tuition reimbursement, promotion and tenure letter, and academic appointments]

1. Report from the Faculty Development Working Group

Professor Goldstein convened the meeting at 3:07 and turned to Professor Bland for a report from the Faculty Development Working Group. Professor Bland distributed a handout of several pages.

Professor Bland recalled that the Working Group was jointly appointed by this Committee and the administration with a dual charge: “to recommend what new initiatives should be implemented by the University, or what actions should be taken to remove barriers, to help faculty be most productive . . . and enjoy high morale? Further, how should these activities be coordinated?” The charge was subsequently modified by Vice Provost Robert Jones to include looking at how to increase research and the focus on research (because a number of initiatives devoted to teaching are already underway).

The outcomes the Working Group is looking at are “increased faculty morale and satisfaction, increased leadership skills in University administrators, increased faculty retention and quality recruitment, increased research productivity (e.g., patents and decreased time between promotions), increased sponsored research, [and] increased national status of the University with regard to its research.” After deciding on these outcomes, the Working Group identified a set of five benchmark institutions that have better outcome results than the University; the Working Group wishes to get a set of

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best practices. Data will be gathered and interviews will be conducted with individuals at those five institutions.

Professor Bland then noted the individual, institutional, and leadership components of a productive academic organization, characteristics drawn from “hundreds” of research studies. These same characteristics typify an outstanding teaching institution, she said, but the studies are less certain in their conclusions in that respect than they are with respect to research productivity. The overlap, however, suggests that emphasis on improving research will not harm teaching.

The Working Group has also developed eighteen draft interview questions. The questionnaire is long so the Working Group concluded it would also interview people in highly productive departments at the University and would limit questions of peer institutions to issues above the department level. So there will be, she concluded, a two-pronged approach to interviews.

Professor Goldstein commended the decision to talk to the good departments at the University and the quest for all-university comparisons. Professor Bland said that discussions with peers were also necessary in order to avoid parochialism in the study. She said Working Group members were interested in looking at private as well as public institutions.

Professor Perry, however, said the Working Group would miss an opportunity if it proceeded in the way described by Professor Bland: it would miss the opportunity to understand department variables at other institutions. The Working Group should use the long questionnaire at the University, refine the questions based on that experience, and then interview people at other institutions. It should hold off on a decision not to interview departments at other schools.

Professor Hendel asked what the rationale was for the selection of the peer institutions. There is talk that the University wants to be among the top five public institutions in the country; the list identified by the Working Group is “OK” but it is not the top five. He maintained that the group used should be consistent with other lists developed by the University. Professor Bland said there was a conscious decision NOT to do that but to instead go to institutions that are high ON THE MEASURES IDENTIFIED BY THE WORKING GROUP as important to a productive institution—and also to use institutions that are somewhat similar to Minnesota (e.g., they have a medical school and agriculture). The Working Group also tried to include institutions that had moved up recently, thinking that they be best able to describe the strategies used to increase their status.

Professor Ben-Ner debated with Professor Bland about the methodology that the Task Force will use. Professor Bland maintained that the Task Force does not need to identify the factors that correlate with the highly productive research institution. While probably not all the factors are known, it is known that the ones listed on the handout are consistently found to differentiate a highly-productive research institution from less productive ones. As a result the Working Group seeks to learn more specifically what successful departments do in these identified areas (for example, recruitment, mentoring, or governance, that resulted in them being more productive).

If departments at other institutions are to be interviewed, Professor Altholz suggested also asking them about the OBSTACLES to research productivity; that would be another way to tell the University what it should be doing. Professor Bland agreed.

If one finds that these institutions have a high percentage of tenured faculty, that would be a positive factor, Professor Wells said. But if one finds that other institutions share that characteristic, is it not then NOT a predictor of excellence? Is the effort looking for what is known rather than an open-ended experiment? Professor Bland repeated that the Task Force is not seeking to add to the already well-known list of characteristics of productive research organizations, i.e., the characteristics of individuals, institutions, and leadership identified in the handout. Rather, it wishes to learn more specifics about how these characteristics are differently manifested in the more productive units.

This is a great project, Professor Howland commented, but the list of factors does not include money. Money drives a great deal, she said, and the Task Force should not hesitate to identify it. That does not just mean rewards, she added; it means investing in junior faculty, for example, and hoping that the investment will pay off later. Money should be explicitly included in the study. And that, Professor Goldstein said, is where the differences will be seen when the Task Force looks at comparisons between public and private institutions. In addition, Professor Bland said, there will be the difference that public institutions have multiple missions.

Professor Goldstein also questioned the institutions selected for the comparisons. He urged that the Task Force also include schools that have made great strides in recent years, such as the relatively new University of California campuses (e.g., Santa Barbara, Irvine, San Diego) and Texas. They have made enormous improvements in a short period of time. Professor Bland said there was no limit to the number of institutions that could be included, depending on the data collection method used. There must be something that defines the peers selected as aspirational for the University or that made quicker progress than would be expected, Professor Hendel contended—there must be some factor that unites the group selected. Professor Bland said both aspirational and improved institutions were selected; these exceed the University on the outcome measures. If institutions are to be surveyed, the number can be nearly unlimited; if they are to be interviewed, it must be a smaller group, she observed. The results will not be credible internally unless the group chosen consists of institutions which the University aspires to emulate, Professor Goldstein said.

Professor Ben-Ner asked what would be learned from the other institutions. Do they have recruitment, orientation, training programs, reward structures, organizational structures that the University could use, for example, Professor Bland responded. Professor Ben-Ner said he did not know what that would lead to and said he did not believe the Task Force could get the answers it needed with the questions it proposes to ask. Is the information needed about the important processes that improve the productivity of the faculty, he asked? It is, Professor Bland said; having good recruitment, orientation, and training programs correlates with research productivity. She said, however, that she was not committed to the specific questions. In fact, they are not the best questions yet; they are only a first draft.

Ms. Wersal said that interviews would be better than surveys because they would flesh out the information. Professor Bland agreed. Who would answer the surveys, Professor Wells asked? At the department level, the department head or chair, Professor Bland said; they have not decided about the institutional level and it will probably be a number of individuals at each institution. Ms. Mason said that both faculty and administrators who work with the issues should be contacted so that there are two sets of results for each institution.

Professor Bland said she would welcome additional comments from the Committee.

2. Parking Priority for Probationary Faculty

Professor Goldstein next welcomed Associate Vice President Theresa Robinson (Auxiliary Services) and Mr. Bob Baker (Director of Parking and Transportation). Professor Goldstein reported that he had spoken earlier with Associate Vice President Robinson and Mr. Baker and had also provided the Committee with information about eligibility for parking priority. There has been considerable discussion about the subject and the ONLY sticking point concerns priority for probationary faculty. He pointed out that none of the members of the Committee were probationary; this is being raised in the interest of the University, not because of self-interest.

Ms. Robinson introduced herself and distributed copies of the Twin Cities parking policies. She observed that some believe there is too much parking on the campus if one believes in buses, walking, and biking, while others believe there is never enough parking. On any given day between 50,000 and 80,000 people come to campus; they feel good when they have 22,000 parking spots available. Right now there are 19,000 spots; the number is down because of construction but they hope to get back up to 22,000 spots (the maximum number that has ever been available). One problem is that in some cases the parking lots have been taken for buildings; it will be difficult to maintain the number of spots at 22,000. Every group at the University—faculty, staff, students, visitors—is under-served in terms of the availability of parking.

Mr. Baker noted that he has been at the University since 1989. Shortly after he came, parking policies were reviewed by a task force appointed by the late Vice President Gus Donhowe and chaired by the late Professor Richard Goodrich. The task force produced the first PUBLISHED set of parking policies for the campus. In 1999 Vice President Kruse asked another task force to revisit the policies to see if changes were needed; this was a broad-based group that understood how parking and transportation systems work. That later group spent time considering the policy that is of concern to the Committee.

The 1999 task force was unanimous in its endorsement of the egalitarian approach to assigning contract parking spaces, Mr. Baker reported. One is on the list for one or more facilities and is assigned a contract space in the facility when the name gets to the top of the list. The task force was adamant in retaining this approach. Mr. Baker said he consulted with the Senate Committee on Finance and Planning when the task force report was issued, which group wrote to Professor Morrison advising him of its review. He also consulted with the President and the facilities committee of the Board of Regents. Afterwards, the policies were forwarded to Vice President Kruse for approval. They also worked closely with the Subcommittee on Twin Cities Facilities and Support Services, Ms. Robinson recalled.

Professor Goldstein asked if the question of tenure-track faculty came up in the 1999 deliberations (it did) and if the task force decided not to give them priority (it did). He then pointed out that the policy is NOT egalitarian—some have higher priority for parking, others do not—but that is not his concern. He said he has seen many junior faculty come to the University and turn bitter in their first week because they cannot get parking. If one is tenured, one has priority; if tenure-track, not; the University can lose these people but they are the future of the institution. They are VERY unhappy that they receive no priority. The Academic Health Center is having trouble hiring new faculty; one question candidates raise is about parking. Probationary faculty are a very important group that deserves a place on the priority list.

Mr. Baker said he understood the point and that he had talked to the deans about it. It is a balancing act, he said; Parking and Transportation is an equal opportunity offender because there are not enough spaces to satisfy any group. Following the report in the minutes of the earlier discussion of this topic, he related, he received calls from civil service and P&A staff saying the policy should NOT be changed.

What those people need to be aware of, Professor Walsh pointed out, is that the new tenure-track faculty will in the future be paying their salaries. Ms. Wersal commented that the work of P&A and Civil Service employees supports the faculty. All one has to do is follow the money, Professor Walsh responded.

What about subletting, Ms. Wersal asked? Mr. Baker said that Parking shares information about sublets but does not control it; a sublet is an agreement between two people who dictate their own terms. Typically sublets are within departments. What about establishing a central office for arranging sublets, Dr. Archibald asked? Ms. Mason agreed, saying there could be a central pool. Ms. Robinson pointed out that people who want to sublet a spot usually have others waiting in their department; Mr. Baker said colleges and departments do an excellent job and he would be concerned at any effort to centralize subletting because it is a big project and they would probably "end up mucking it up." College administrators could handle this, Professor Ben-Ner agreed.

In the past, college administrators had spaces, Professor Goldstein recalled. Those were recalled after the 1991 task force report, Mr. Baker said; Parking recovered several hundred parking spots. Some were used for good purpose; others were abused (people saw some receiving free parking from departments and complained that that was unfair). There was also the "rich department, poor department" problem, Ms. Robinson added; the rich departments could pay for spots and give them away to those whom it chose while poor departments could not do so.

One problem is small spaces and bigger vehicles, Professor Ben-Ner pointed out. Has Parking thought about differential pricing for vehicles--cars \$20, SUVs \$30? There would, he acknowledged, be enforcement and policy issues. Mr. Baker said Parking had not considered the option; the problem is assignment of space. Wider vehicles would need wider stalls and Parking would have to enforce compliance. They would have to try to figure out where to put the wide and narrow stalls, and how many, which would be impossible, and University police enforces policy with three monitors for 19,000 spaces; to add the responsibility for wide versus narrow stalls would be impossible for them to enforce. There is no enforcement in ramps and garages because they have access control, and contracts are oversold by 13%; to assign spaces would restrict the ability of Parking to oversell contracts in order to accommodate as many people as possible.

The Committee discussed with Mr. Baker the new faculty emeriti policy and the provision it makes for parking for emeriti faculty; the policy was adopted without consultation with Parking and its requirements will reduce the turnover rate in University parking facilities. Mr. Baker pointed out that it is said, on the one hand, that junior faculty are the future lifeblood of the University, but also that the University should respect the needs of emeriti faculty; to do the latter will slow turnover to make parking available to the former. This is a balancing act, he repeated; if someone "wins," someone else "loses." One possibility would be to allow people to share a spot, but that is not possible if only one admission card is issued, Professor Altholz pointed out. That is the way they can oversell contracts, Mr. Baker said; they know that on any given not everyone will show up. There is differential pricing by facility, he noted;

garages are more expensive than ramps, which are more expensive than lots. (And customers let Parking know when there are a lot of empty spaces, Ms. Robinson added.)

One problem for a considerable number of faculty is that they do not need a regular daytime space (they can use transit) but because of research programs need to show up at odd times. They would have to pay a lot of money for hourly parking. Mr. Baker agreed this is a problem. He said it is difficult to have tailor-made solutions with 20,000 parking spaces and 80,000 people but there are options. There are night contracts (come in after 4:00, leave by 8:00 the next morning, and the price is reduced by half). There are also free parking options at five locations on the Twin Cities campus: arrive after 8:00 p.m., leave by 8:00 a.m.)

Do non-University employees receive contracts and where do they fit in the priority list, Professor Perry asked? There are about 200 such individuals (who work primarily for federal agencies), Mr. Baker reported. Ms. Robinson said they will not provide parking for construction company employees, but that is a constant battle with construction companies (and Facilities Management argues that it is hard enough to get people to build buildings without making it difficult for the employees to park).

What would it take to get a change in the policy so that tenure-track faculty receive the same priority as other faculty, Professor Goldstein inquired? If a resolution was passed by this Committee, by FCC, and by the Senate, would that have an impact? Ms. Robinson said that she would not say nothing could be done. It was agreed the Committee would decide at its next meeting what position to take with respect to parking for probationary faculty.

Discussion turned to the provision of parking to emeriti faculty. Mr. Baker said his office had identified about 108 retired faculty with parking contracts and another 42 faculty they were not sure if were retired (and cannot get calls returned to find out), so there about 150 people holding contracts, some of which may not be used. They are being paid for.

The language of the existing parking policy calls for an annual letter from a dean or vice president to renew a parking sport for an emeritus faculty member. Mr. Baker said he did not receive as many of the required letters as he should, and as steward of parking spaces he wants to be sure they are being used; the policy identifies deans and vice presidents as responsible, he said. Committee members suggested that deans and vice presidents are not going to sign annual letters; Mr. Baker said he understood but that without an annual review he will not release the space. It was suggested that the letter might more appropriately come from department heads.

3. Other Committee Business

A. Statements on Privacy and on Conflicts of Commitment and Interest: Professor Goldstein asked Professors Altholz and Walsh to serve as a task force on this issue. He requested that they read the statements from Penn State and University of Illinois and to bring their recommendations back to the Committee. Gary Engstrand will have references for anyone who needs them.

B. Professor Fossum will be meeting with Vice Provost Robert Jones about the developmental leave policy; they hope to have an extension of the current policy, followed by recommendation for a permanent policy to be presented to the Senate at its last meeting of this year.

C. Executive Vice President Bruininks is coming to the next meeting to discuss the question of tuition reimbursement.

D. Professor Goldstein brought up the Promotion and Tenure letter from U of Illinois and said he was not certain what the Committee's position on it was. Professor Perry said he remembered that the essence of the discussion had been that Minnesota should be more positive than the Illinois letter. Ms. Mason recalled that the Committee wanted to recommend sending a SIMILAR letter to Minnesota faculty about to be tenured. Professor Goldstein said the Illinois letter would be sent, with these comments, to the Tenure Subcommittee, which has three new members.

E. Professor Altholz brought up the draft policy on academic appointments. Professor Goldstein said that the policy may have already moved beyond the Committee but that it was not too late to make comments. Professor Altholz discussed a potential problem with the draft policy in that it does not address people who have graduate faculty status in some departments and are referred to as "adjunct faculty" but who have not formally been appointed to adjunct status. He suggested that the policy include some statement to the effect that it does not mean these types of "adjuncts." Professor Goldstein said he had no problem with adding such a comment. Professor Altholz then added that there are a number of people who work in positions that are not "faculty" but hold professorial titles because they could not be transferred or demoted when the campus or department closed, citing Waseca faculty and members of the former Department of Agricultural Journalism. He suggested that it would be important to note that the policy is NOT regulating these people. Professor Goldstein concluded that the key point is to make sure Professor Morrison's group is aware of these items and then they will decide whether to include them in the policy.

F. The next meeting is December 12th. This will be Professor Altholz' last meeting as he will be on leave next semester.

G. The January meeting is the 23rd. Professor Goldstein suggested a change to the 30th as he will not be here on the 23rd, and will ask Gary Engstrand to query the committee members.

Professor Goldstein adjourned the meeting at 5:00.

-- Gary Engstrand (Mary Kosowski on item 3 of the minutes)