

Minutes*

SENATE FACULTY AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
Thursday, February 3, 1994
3:15 - 5:00 p.m.
238 Morrill Hall

Present: Carl Adams (chair), Carole Bland, Daniel Canafax, Carole Carrier, Mary Dempsey, Ann Erickson, Daniel Feeney, Roger Feldman, Judith Gaston, Richard McGehee, Diane Mulvihill, Michael Sadowsky, Bernard Selzler, W. Donald Spring, James Stone

Regrets: Rose Brewer, Audrey Grosch, Morris Kleiner

Absent: Roger Paschke, Phuong Phan, Yang Wang

1. Chair's Report

According to Professor Adams the Conflict of Interest/Conflict of Commitment Policy has been put on the February 17 Faculty Senate agenda for action by the FCC. A small subcommittee will be meeting before the Senate does so to make some cosmetic improvements on the document. This subcommittee could choose to delay the action planned for the 17th if it finds more time is needed to work on the policy. A second possibility would be that the Faculty Senate could choose to postpone action if it found such action was necessary. Additional suggestions on the document can be sent to any of the subcommittee members including Professor Adams, Mark Brenner, Ken Heller, or Mario Bognanno. Copies of the latest version of the policy were faxed to each of the SCFA members. A committee member asked if the following suggestion had been added to the document: Individuals who had been engaged in approved activities should be included in the Conflict Review Committees. The chair noted that this point had not been added to date, and that he would do so.

The Ad Hoc Committee on Facilitating Transitions sent its document to Provost Infante. Carole Carrier will attempt to plan a meeting between SCFA, the ad hoc committee, or both, and Provost Infante and Vice President Robert Erickson. She mentioned that Provost Infante is eager to have the senior vice presidents meet with the ad hoc committee or a working group to begin working on the recommendations presented. This time would be used to talk through some of the ideas and to set priorities.

Letter to President Hasselmo on Senior Administrator's Attitudes Toward Faculty Professor Adams met with President Hasselmo to discuss the letter SCFA had sent to the President in regards to senior officer attitudes toward faculty. The President is very interested in meeting with SCFA under the conditions outlined in the January 20 minutes, and was in the process of organizing such an interaction. The chair does not wish to focus on the actions of individual administrators in this process. The President is to contact Professor Adams about this meeting. The chair offered several ways to organize the meeting. One was to present difficult, confrontational questions for the President to answer. Another would be for the faculty to describe how certain administrative decisions/actions made them feel. Discussion continued about how the meeting should be handled.

*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 views of, nor are they binding on, the Senate or Assembly, the Administration, or the Board of Regents.

Carol Bland, Judith Gaston, and Daniel Canafax agreed to work on developing some material which communicates "faculty/academic values," for the benefit of the entire University community. They also will be exploring the possibility of developing additional communication mechanisms between faculty and administration. W. Donald Spring will be assembling a list of incidents where faculty perceived administrative actions as insensitive. Richard McGehee will be developing questions related to the incidents. The chair thought that these items could lead to a constructive interaction between SCFA and the President. Volunteers to assist Dr. Spring and Dr. McGehee are still needed. The chair asked for these individuals/groups to prepare their materials within approximately a week. A special meeting may be held on February 17 (or some other day) if the President agrees to meet with the entire committee on February 24. Professor Adams said that if nothing is scheduled, the committee could develop a plan for its meeting with the President at the February 24 SCFA meeting. A member reminded the chair that the February 24 agenda was already planned to include tenure issues.

2. Report of the Health Care Subcommittee

The chair of this subcommittee, Richard McGehee, presented information regarding the University's involvement in the state health care plan. He said that from January 1990 to May 1992 a task force examined whether University should withdraw from state health care plan. SCFA decided not to support leaving the state policy. Its recommendation was that the administration should work to increase the University's influence in the decisions made regarding the health plan.

The state conducts two sets of meetings to determine its health care policies. It holds negotiations with labor unions. The University has never been allowed to sit in on these meetings. A University representative had been able to attend and present questions at negotiations with health care carriers until recently. (Committee member Dianne Mulvihill was this representative.) Ms. Mulvihill now may only present questions to the state and is given periodic briefings by the state. Dr. McGehee said that this is a loss of influence. The subcommittee went on record to recommend that SCFA send a letter to the senior vice presidents stating that the University had lost influence. not gained it.

Additional information from the discussion included:

- A member said that it is only logical for the University to develop its own health care plan
- A reasonably large number of faculty would be willing to pay for additional coverage which is not possible under the current options through the state plan.
- The unionized employees of the University may want to stay under the state plan because they do have a strong voice in the health care negotiations with the state.
- Unionized employees must remain under the union plan. This is because the union uses its large numbers of people for the purpose of collective bargaining.
- It was noted that University faculty were found to use health care services more than the average state employee and therefore could experience an increase in premiums if they pursued an independent policies.

The draft memo penned by the Health Care Subcommittee states that the University is not receiving better access to health care negotiations with the state. There is a note of separating from the state plan at the end of the memo to bring to the vice presidents' attention that this is an important issue to the faculty. In an effort to determine the University's position on this matter, the chair drafted the following statement to accompany the memo mentioned above:

Based on our understanding, the attention of the senior administrators of the University are required for a positive outcome to be achieved. Would you please let us know what the Universities position on this matter is?

The subcommittee asked for direction on two matters from SCFA. 1. Should the possibility of developing a separate health care plan be brought up again? 2. Access to information on health care plans is an issue that was not addressed by the former task force. Professor McGehee said that substantive information on which programs provide the best quality medical care is currently not available to the individual.

A committee member asked Ms. Mulvihill what she sensed the administration's opinion is on this matter. She said that the faculty have the administration's support on this matter. She continued by saying that the state needs to understand that this is not a minor request. Therefore, it might be helpful to have a letter which could be sent to the state. The memo under consideration is good to attract the University administration's attention. However, the last sentence which mentions the possibility of separation may complicate relations with the state even more. Ms. Mulvihill would like to maintain the level of communication that currently exist between herself and those who represent the state on this matter. In response to a committee member question, she said that the state is responding as they are because they see the plan they administer as their own, and do not wish to vary from this position. A member replied by saying that it is clear that the faculty should pursue a plan for themselves. The task force that addressed this issue two years ago considered an independent plan for the entire University, not just the faculty. Discussion continued on how another investigation of this matter could be improved on in relation to the 1990-92 inquiry.

Two items were presented to the committee for action based on the discussion above:

Ms. Mulvihill and Dr. McGehee are to complete and send the memo to the vice presidents. The chair said that he was willing to have the letter read in a way that was most helpful to Ms. Mulvihill. The committee approved this motion.

The Health Care Subcommittee is to promptly develop a proposal outlining a two/three month review process for SCFA to use in determining if the University should pursue a separate health care plan or not. SCFA may need to ask for extra money from the senate to conduct this initial review. If approved, SCFA will send it's recommendation to the administration. There is to be no discrimination against the use of the University hospital in new policies if separate health care plans are developed. The committee approved this motion.

The chair also asked the subcommittee present an actionable item to SCFA on the information issue: Can the information flow be improved upon so that individuals can be better consumers of what is available?

Miscellaneous Ann Erickson will be joining Michael Sadowsky on the Benefits Subcommittee. More members are still needed.

-- Kevin Gormley