

MINUTES*

SENATE COMMITTEE ON FACULTY AFFAIRS

Thursday, October 26, 1995

3:15 - 5:00

Dale Shephard Room

Present: Dan Feeney (chair), Carol Carrier, Mary Dempsey, Robert Fahnhorst, Roland Guyotte, Richard McGehee, Kevin O'Laughlin, George Seltzer, Bernard Selzler

Regrets: Carole Bland, Carol Chomsky, Judith Gaston, Richard Goldstein, Kinley Larntz, Samuel Myers, Ken Roering, James Stone, Yang Wang

Absent: Samar Barakat, Willard Manning

1. Chair's Report

Professor Feeney said that Judith Gaston was unable to attend the meeting. Therefore, the report from the Faculty Benefits Subcommittee would be delayed until the next meeting.

a. Tenure - There was a discussion about tenure between Provost Brody and FCC earlier in the day. Professor Feeney said that he would discuss this in more detail during the report from the Tenure Subcommittee.

b. Working Groups - Two groups are being assembled to discuss tenure and the transition to semesters.

2. Approval of the Agenda

A motion was approved to accept the agenda considering the deletion mentioned above.

3. Approval of the Minutes

A motion was approved to accept the September 28, 1995 minutes.

4. Tenure Subcommittee Report

Professor Mary Dempsey explained to the committee that the Regents recently passed the Faculty Senate's interpretations and amendments to the Tenure Code allowing provosts to handle tenure and promotion reviews for this academic year. She also contacted the chair of the Judicial Committee, Professor Edward Fogelman. The Judicial Committee is in the process of reviewing its procedures. Professor Dempsey does not expect any significant changes, but encouraged SCFA to be involved in the review process.

Professor Dempsey said that she attended the Regents meeting on tenure which included a presentation by Judith Gappa (Purdue), nationally known expert on current trends in tenure. Professor Ronald Phillips spoke of how tenure is an advantage to society. Professors Ellen Berscheid and Carl Adams also attended

Specific issues of interest to the Regents were:

- * The probationary period

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- * Post-tenure review: The need for funding so that this can be conducted properly
- * Accountability of faculty
- * How to remove non-productive faculty
- * Challenges resulting from hiring non-tenured faculty

Professor Dempsey said that the Regents agreed to the fact that tenure helps to retain quality faculty members so that the University can maintain a competitive edge. One recent study showed that faculty do **not** become less productive after receiving tenure.

Assoc. V.P. Carol Carrier noted that, by and large, the Regents did not express a specific direction they would like the tenure discussion to proceed. They appeared to be at the information gathering stage.

Professor Feeney outlined his perspective of the discussion between Provost Brody and FCC. He said that Provost Brody is interested in "de-coupling" tenure from salary (allowing salaries to decrease if necessary). Key points made by Provost Brody during this meeting were that:

- * There is a need for faculty to be more flexible.
- * The University must be able to response to the market.
- * Consideration on how tenure is awarded should be reconsidered.
- * The Academic Health Center is experiencing significant financial difficulty.

Professor Feeney said that there seems to be too much speculation occurring around the campus regarding various stances on tenure. He added that this is not productive for the faculty or the administration. He proceeded by asking the Committee what it thought should be done next. The committee continued discussing the issue of tenure, the financial constraints of Health Sciences, and Provost Brody's opinions of tenure.

Highlights of SCFA's comments:

- * Some of the faculty related "emergencies" perceived in the Medical School may well be common throughout the University.
- * There are no positive comments about tenure coming from Provost Brody.
- * The proposed changes to tenure in the Health Science are likely to spread throughout the University in the near future.
- * This issue is driven by economics. Nevertheless, this is not the first time that universities and colleges have experienced financial difficulties.
- * There is concern that the concept of tenure, rather than how and to whom it is applied, is being used as a "scapegoat" to explain the financial woes of the Academic Health Center.
- * The manner in which the tenure discussion is taking place at the University needs to be managed better.
- * The great work that has been attributed to the University has been produced by tenured faculty or faculty in pretenure probation appointments.

Assoc. V.P. Carrier asked SCFA if it would like to present its concerns to Professor John Adams (Chair of the liaison group addressing tenure). He, in turn, could express SCFA's position on this issue at the next Regents tenure discussion in December. SCFA said that it was represented by Professor Dempsey. Assoc. V.P. Carrier went on to explain that the second Regents meeting will focus on the status of tenure at the University of Minnesota. The first meeting focused on national trends.

Additional points during committee discussion:

- * There is a concern that some may try to change the Tenure Code by going directly to the Regents and therefore bypassing faculty governance. This could create a legal problem for the University.
- * Tenured professors can be released according to the Tenure Code on the basis of economic hardship within the

- University, not within individual academic units.
- * Was a precedent set for tenure code unit-based interpretation variants when the Medical School was granted a temporary nine year probationary period?
- * These problems cannot be solved in isolation (i.e., outside a public forum)

Professor Feeney said that he would propose to FCC Chair, Professor Carl Adams, that a meeting be convened among Provost Brody, a small number of Administrative representatives, and FCC and SCFA representatives to proactively discuss this issue as soon as possible. Similar meetings with the other Provosts and chancellors would follow later.

The committee decided to reschedule the discussion on the faculty/academic staff advisory office issue.

- Kevin Gormley

University of Minnesota