

Minutes*

**Senate Committee on Faculty Affairs
Tuesday, February 11, 2003
2:30 – 4:30
238A Morrill Hall**

Present: John Fossum (chair), Kent Bales, Carole Bland, Jesse Daniels, Darwin Hendel, Robert Jones, Theodor Litman, Cleon Melsa, Todd Powell, Dwight Purdy, Kathleen Sellow, Charles Stech, Aks Zaheer

Absent: Carol Carrier, Terence Collins, A. Saari Csallany, William Garrard, Richard Goldstein, Wade Savage, Larry Wallace, Thomas Walsh, Carol Wells, Timothy Wiedmann

Guests: none

[In these minutes: (1) faculty diversity; (2) attitude survey; (3) faculty priorities in the expected budget situation]

1. Faculty Diversity

Professor Fossum convened the meeting at 2:30 and asked Dr. Jones to report on faculty diversity.

Dr. Jones recalled that the administration is required to present annually a report to the Board of Regents on efforts to recruit and retain women faculty and faculty of color. Having a diverse faculty is a goal of the University, articulated by the administration and embraced by the deans. Nationally, this is a challenging problem; about 16% of faculty are faculty of color and about 37% are women—and those proportions have not changed very much in the last ten years.

He reported to the Regents in September, 2002, on faculty diversity, Dr. Jones said, and he distributed copies of his report to Committee members. In terms of the regular faculty, the total number has gone from 3220 to 2948 (up from a low point in 1998 of 2817). Over that period, the University was losing more faculty than it was hiring, but nonetheless the number of women faculty increased significantly (from 20% of the faculty in 1990 to 27% in 2001). The reason for the increased percentage is that of the NEW faculty hired during that 12-year period, women were hired at a much higher rate than their presence in the existing faculty (approximately 33% to 42% of new hires were women; the percentage varied from year to year--in 2001, for example, 39% of new regular faculty hires were women).

The same phenomenon occurred with faculty of color: despite a decline in the total number of faculty, the percentage of faculty of color increased from 7% in 1990 to 13% in 2001, or about ½ of a percent per year. Dr. Jones said he pointed out to the Board of Regents that this has not been happenstance; the increase reflects the deans' commitment to hire the best faculty with attention to people

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

of color. It is also reflected in an institutional commitment of funds. Money is provided to the colleges to hire faculty of color; these bridge funds allow colleges to hire faculty of color when a position is not otherwise available. Dr. Jones related that he has been criticized by the African-American community, which believes the University could do better. In part that is probably true, he said, but his concern is that the hiring numbers might go in the opposite direction if the bridge funding shrinks. Dr. Jones then pointed out that of the faculty of color, in 2001 63% were Asian-Americans, 14% were African-Americans, 15% were Chicano/Latino, and 7% were American Indian. The number of faculty of color has grown in all categories in the last decade. As with women faculty, faculty of color have been hired at a greater rate than their numbers in the faculty generally.

Do the numbers include non-citizens, Ms. Sellew asked? That depends on how people identify themselves, Dr. Jones said. They would be included generally, but not international scholars; these numbers refer to permanent faculty. Professor Zaheer asked whether, if applicants identify themselves as non-citizens, and are Chinese, do they receive the same favorable treatment as a U.S. citizen—even though where they are coming from they are not a minority? If a dean asks for money to hire faculty of color, Dr. Jones said, those faculty would have U.S. experience. The 63% of faculty of color who are Asian-American probably represents some faculty who were born in China but who came to the United States for school; they may not have been born here but the University does not try to identify such individuals—it does not try to control how people see themselves.

Professor Zaheer commented that as budget cuts are made, there will have to be ideas about ways to increase under-represented minorities. Most of the bridge funds are used for African-American, Latino, or American Indian faculty, Dr. Jones said, but they will be used for Asian-American faculty if justified. He said he did not know if the University would be able to protect the funds; the University has tried to do so since 1988, but whether it will be able to do so now will depend on the magnitude of the budget cuts.

The Regents also want to know how Minnesota's results compare with other institutions. Compared to Michigan, Wisconsin, and Iowa, Michigan has done the best job of hiring faculty of color (16% in 2001-02, compared to Minnesota's 13.2, 13.4 at Wisconsin, and 12.6 at Iowa). Minnesota, however, has done better than the others in hiring American Indian faculty.

Dr. Jones reported that the University will also start tracking longitudinally the numbers and percentages of faculty of color by college and campus, which will help in making decisions about targeting bridge funds to areas of the University where there are no or few such faculty. It will also help units be aware of where efforts are needed.

One of the issues of concern has been turnover, Dr. Jones observed. Some groups have a vision of the University that was accurate 20-25 years ago but is no longer; it is difficult to convince some that the situation has changed. One misperception is that the University is not hiring faculty of color—and that the ones the University does hire leave as fast as they are hired. The data do not support that claim; faculty of color turn over at about the same rate as the rest of the faculty.

The University is making this progress in the absence of a comprehensive diversity plan, Dr. Jones told the Committee. Once it gets through the current budget difficulties the administration will look at developing a comprehensive diversity plan as a way to create benchmarks. Each time there is a report to the Regents, the University doesn't have much of an idea about how well it is doing (although the

Board is glad to see the numbers continue to increase). Any plan will also broaden the definition of diversity to capture more international elements.

Professor Fossum noted that from the low point in the number of regular faculty, in 1998, through 2001, of 131 net new faculty, 109 were women and 77 were faculty of color. To make major changes will require a period of growth but with faculty demographics as they are, proportionately more retirements are likely to be non-minority, so the numbers can improve as retirements take place.

Professor Fossum asked if Dr. Jones had any idea of the rate of growth in faculty at Michigan. He did not; he said, however, that the numbers there are increasing just as they are at Minnesota. Michigan does the same kind of recruiting that Minnesota does. One major question is critical mass: It is easier for Michigan to attract faculty of color not only because of its prestige as a place to start a career—with which Minnesota can compete—but also because faculty of color can look around and see if there are other faculty of color present. That there are signifies an institutional commitment and they know they can succeed. Michigan generally has a larger African-American population. Minnesota has more of a challenge in that respect.

Is the distribution of faculty of color across all ranks, Professor Fossum asked? It is at the Assistant Professor level, Dr. Jones said, but for Asian-American women and African-Americans, there seems to be a bottleneck at the Associate Professor level. There are too many of both at the Associate Professor level, which suggests there may be need for initiatives to help those groups deal with the additional demands. The University might also hire more people in these groups at the full Professor level and be sure that there is mentoring for the younger faculty. The numbers are not large but they are suggestive.

If there are a lot of women at the Associate level, Professor Bland said, that suggests targeting strategies to get people into senior positions—full professors, department heads, etc. Perhaps the University should bring them in at the top, since they seem not to be coming up through the ranks.

Professor Hendel said that the data about the University are a reasonably positive story about what it has done; external perspectives, however, are often quite different. Is there any current plan to convey the reality of faculty diversity, workload, and contributions? There may be a gap that is not being addressed. That is a problem, Dr. Jones agreed, and it is difficult to communicate with people who have already formed their opinions before they see any data—and the data then fall on deaf ears. They have shared the data with the President's Advisory Committee, taken it to the Urban League, and so on. He said he did not mind criticisms of the University based on current reality; his argument is with views based on what was the case 20 or 25 years ago. For people to take those positions is frustrating—and it only takes a few leaders with that impression to break down communication with an entire community. They try to engage the communities of color with the University, to get them involved, and to see what faculty of color are doing, in order to change opinions. It is important for the University to do that or it will be subject to the same old criticisms.

Dr. Jones noted that the climate within departments is critical to retaining faculty of color; it takes extra effort to mentor them, to ensure that their research is important, and to see that they are not marginalized. These same factors contribute to the general retention rate. He said he is concerned that community perceptions may impair the ability of the University to recruit faculty, staff, and students.

Is the transition from bridge funds to department funds smooth, Professor Fossum asked? It is seamless, Dr. Jones said; faculty of color don't know what funds they are on and it does not matter. In earlier years there were large carry-forwards in the bridge funds for hiring faculty of color; now those funds are used up. Colleges always make plans to get faculty hired on bridge funds to regular funds (with the exception of one case).

It appears that the factors Dr. Jones identified as important in recruiting faculty of color are similar to those identified by Professor Bland as characteristic of research-productive departments, Professor Fossum commented, and it is important that chairs have the information they need. The department head role is critical, Dr. Jones agreed; if that person does not support faculty of color, their numbers in a department will decline.

In addition to model programs, Dr. Jones told the Committee, the University has tried to position itself as a national leader in examining issues related to faculty of color. There is a new book that argues the problem of lack of diversity is because of affirmative action; there are a lot of data that dispute the arguments in the book. The University held a national conference on the recruitment and retention of faculty of color; it was recognized as a unique event. The conference looked at best practices but was also a scholarly forum for those doing research in the area. Dr. Jones described the work of the conference and noted that there was a position paper written by Professor Carolyn Turner (formerly at Minnesota) and Dean David Taylor (General College) that he said he would provide to the Committee.

On the issue of communication and people not believing what the University has done, Professor Bland inquired if the arguments would be more persuasive if made by other faculty and staff of color. It would be more difficult to charge that THEY are not telling the truth, she suggested. Dr. Jones agreed.

Mr. Powell commented that the demographics of Minnesota have changed dramatically in the last 25 years if one thinks about the growth of Hmong and Mexican-American populations in the state.

Professor Fossum thanked Dr. Jones for his report.

2. Attitude Survey

Professor Fossum noted that Human Resources is working on an attitude survey and is developing different surveys for different groups at the University. He was asked to inquire of the Committee what attitude areas are important to include, and in particular what kinds of things should be measured longitudinally, because they expect to repeat the survey periodically. Human Resources was especially interested to know the Committee's views on survey questions that should be addressed to faculty members.

Professor Hendel recalled that during the development of the institutional measures there were a number of discussions about the kinds of questions that should be included in a periodic survey of faculty and staff. One such survey was conducted in 1997 and the intent then was that the questions would be repeated periodically. Some of the questions on the 1997 survey would not be as pertinent now.

Professor Bland reported that she had done a survey of the Medical School faculty on their perceptions of individual and organizational leadership features that the literature associates with productivity and satisfaction. She said she would be glad to provide those questions. What one puts in

the survey, she observed, depends on what one wants to get out of it and who will look at the results. One subject of interest is retention, Professor Fossum said. That is largely affected by satisfaction and commitment, Professor Bland said. Who will receive the data and use them, she asked? They will be collected and analyzed by researchers commissioned by Human Resources, Professor Fossum replied, and the results will be provided to the Committee in order that it can see where attitudes are positive and what areas need work over time. The idea is to take the pulse of groups of people to identify where there needs to be work done. He noted that the Carlson School has been conducting such surveys for a number of years.

Will it be a sample or include the entire population of the group, Professor Bland asked? (The entire universe) That will permit analysis by departments, she noted, which can help identify needs for department leaders.

Professor Zaheer suggested that the survey should take off from Professor Bland's work on the determinants of productivity and satisfaction. That will also allow the University to track satisfaction over time. Professor Bland pointed out that there is not a straight-line correlation between satisfaction and productivity: It is possible to have satisfied faculty who are not productive, and vice-versa.

This is a very important area where the University would benefit from knowing more about faculty attitudes and experiences, Professor Hendel said. But it is not possible to ask all the questions on one survey or it would be too long. There is a group working on student surveys; they do regular surveys and then ask more questions of a smaller group. Work-life issues will be one important area to ask faculty about, but he said he hoped the survey would be broad-based and get at all kinds of issues. There is a history of surveys at the University in many different areas; he said he hoped this could be a coordinated effort.

The intent is to conduct the survey, of at least some employee groups, this spring, Professor Fossum said. Vice President Carrier will review the proposal with the Committee.

3. Faculty Priorities in the Expected Budget Situation

Professor Fossum next raised the question of the expected budget cuts. He said that one could expect a sea change for the University; ten years of change could be compressed into two and the budget could decline by 13-14% if funds are not raised from other sources. In addition, there will be increased health care costs of perhaps \$20 million over the biennium, and other avoidable cost increases must be paid (bonds, utilities, new building costs, etc.). The result is that the budget could decrease, between now and 2005, by \$280 to \$290 million.

Tuition increases are likely, however, the rate of increase necessary to bridge a gap this large over the two-year period would be approximately 85%.

[Note: Since this discussion was held, the Governor's budget recommendation has been issued and calls for a reduction over the biennium of \$185 million; with anticipated unavoidable increased costs, the actual difference between the originally-projected budget and the actual state funds will be significantly in excess of \$200 million, although not in the \$280 - \$290 million range that was mentioned at the meeting. This difference, however, does not substantially alter the currency of the discussion that followed.]

Professor Fossum noted some possible impacts on faculty pay and benefits, such as multi-year salary freezes or reductions in benefits (e.g., reduced University contribution to retirement plan or increased employee co-pays for health insurance, although in the latter case it is probable that co-pays would be pretax deductions). There would also be possible impact on working conditions, he pointed out, such as lack of support for research (e.g., reductions in assistantships), larger class sizes, hiring freezes, and consolidations and/or closures. These possibilities raise questions, he said: What is absolutely essential to preserve and/or build during this financial crisis? What is the rank order of priorities after the essentials? What is the core of the University and what should receive investment? What needs protection and preservation in faculty employment conditions so the faculty can contribute to the teaching, research, and service missions?

The Faculty Consultative Committee is working on these issues and trying to help decide where the University should go. The Governor [has] suggested freezing salaries; the President has suggested the University look at benefit levels such as contributions to retirement plans, health care, and so on. What should be the priorities, Professor Fossum asked Committee members?

Is anyone talking about general principles, Professor Bland asked? Guidelines that people can agree on? That would provide a more systematic basis for reductions than trying to deal with a long list of possible areas. There is a movement to adopt a set of principles, Professor Fossum said; this Committee could help. Her report, he said, demonstrates that the ultimate strength of the University is in its departments. There needs to be thought about how to keep faculty from being recruited away and how to recruit faculty to fill positions that become available because of retirements, about how to encourage flexibility to encourage people to retire, about how to preserve research support so departments can retain faculty critical to their mission.

Dr. Jones noted that there is a draft of a set of budget principles that will be presented to the Regents in March. He said he was certain that the President and Provost will want to consult on the principles.

In developing a plan, Professor Hendel said, it will be important to see what happens at peer institutions, and especially peer public institutions. The University of Minnesota is not alone in facing this kind of situation. It must also keep in mind competition with the private institutions; they have seen a decline in their endowments but those declines do not compare with the budget cuts in public institutions. There is a general concern about the competitiveness of public universities in providing research and doctoral education. There is also the question of whether it is a good idea for public institutions to operate on a "high tuition, high aid" philosophy, something that is being discussed widely in the state.

Mr. Powell said that his concern about budget reductions is that there has been an increase in enrollment in post-baccalaureate programs that could be lost to private institutions. There have been a lot of advertisements in the state by private institutions. He said he was also concerned about the impact of a salary freeze.

Ms. Sellew observed, vis-à-vis a salary freeze, that it is easier not to get something than it is to take away something that people already have. At the same time, a salary freeze may mean more to people than a reduction in their retirement plan contribution. That depends on age, Professor Bland said. At the same time, these are relatively easy questions; Professor Fossum has asked about protecting the best departments; does the University keep everything or cut bait on some?

The draft budget principles say that cuts will not be across the board, Professor Fossum said. A freeze or reduction in benefits would be across the board. There are other ways that decisions can have a negative effect on working conditions. There will be some pain; the question is what pain would be the hardest to bear or which would be the worst if one had to bear it for a longer period.

Professor Bland said that attention must be focused on the whole institution and what must be preserved to maintain the integrity of the colleges. There will not a good result if departments are left to their own devices in making the decisions. There are several ways this can be addressed, Professor Hendel said. How much can be addressed by growing? The biggest potential in this respect is undergraduate programs, given the number of applicants and the improvements in undergraduate education; how many more students can the University accept and continue to provide a high-quality education? There may not be a lot of excess capacity in graduate programs. Some professional schools might be able to charge more, Professor Bland said.

Has there been any discussion of growth in undergraduate enrollment, Professor Hendel asked Dr. Jones? In a general sense, the University cannot grow out of this problem, Dr. Jones replied. PART of the strategy might be to grow in areas where it can; the President will expect colleges and departments to look at growth opportunities. Applications are up significantly for most colleges, so it is an option to consider.

What about hiring, Professor Fossum asked? There will be people leaving; what should be the University's stance? A moratorium on hiring? That is a more painless option than cutting benefits or a salary freeze, Professor Zaheer commented. It is easier to hold what one has than it is to take away something so it could make sense to have a hiring freeze--but that will affect departments differentially, and some do need to grow. Professor Litman surmised that there would be a combination of these efforts in order to maintain the University's position where it needs to.

Professor Fossum reported the timeline of events, noting that the Faculty Consultative Committee would be having an extended budget discussion on February 20, after the Governor's budget recommendations have been released, and it is likely this Committee will be asked for its views thereafter. He said it is important that FCC know what the Committee thinks is critical for faculty. He recalled having gone through a similar situation at Michigan, with cuts of similar magnitude; Michigan emerged stronger than it was before because of the decisions it made (concluding that the state was the least dependable source of income). The president at Michigan told new deans that more depended on performance; as a result, productivity was much stronger than before. Michigan also cut a lot of activities it did not believe were central to its mission and that did not make money. There were also department reviews and two were eliminated because they were not competitive with peers.

All of this makes more sense than across-the-board cuts, Professor Bland said. These kinds of decisions do not have an immediate pay-off but they would be better for the University in the long run. The Michigan example seems compelling, she said. It depends on how the institution handles the decisions, Professor Fossum observed. What was the final percentage of state funds to the business school at Michigan, Professor Zaheer asked? Zero, Professor Fossum said--the same as to other professional programs. Dr. Jones said the President has indicated that everything is on the table; there will be some across-the-board cuts and some cuts that will be more targeted.

Professor Fossum adjourned the meeting at 4:20.

-- Gary Engstrand

University of Minnesota