

Minutes*

Senate Committee on Faculty Affairs
Tuesday, February 10, 2004
2:15 – 4:00
238A Morrill Hall

Present: John Fossum (chair), F. R. P. Akehurst, Carole Bland, Carol Carrier, Terence Collins, A. Saari Csallany, Jesse Daniels, Janet Ericksen, Patricia Frazier, Darwin Hendel, Robert Jones, Theodor Litman, Kathleen Sellew, Larry Wallace, Timothy Wiedmann, Takeshi Yanagiura

Absent: Richard Goldstein, Wade Savage, Aks Zaheer

Guests: Jackie Singer (Director, Retirement Benefits)

[In these minutes: (1) retirement policy; (2) child care resources; (3) recording telephone calls; (4) the proliferation of web-based surveys; (5) workload policies]

1. Retirement Policy

Professor Fossum convened the meeting at 2:20 and welcomed Ms. Singer to present the retirement policy.

Ms. Singer distributed copies of a set of slides she intends to use in presenting the policy changes to the Board of Regents in March. She noted that she had consulted widely on the changes, including three of the committees of the Senate as well as with the Council of Academic Professionals and Administrators and the Civil Service Committee and their appropriate subcommittees. This is a complex matter that will not be detailed in full in these minutes; Ms. Singer, however, made the following points that are worthy of note.

-- The Regents will be asked to adopt an "umbrella" retirement policy for faculty and staff retirement, which specifies the University's retirement principles, delegates limited authority to the President for administrative-only duties and lists the programs and plans that the University sponsors or to which the University contributes. The Phased Retirement and Terminal Leave programs will be continued as administrative procedures, rather than as a Board of Regents policy. Existing benefits in these programs remain intact.

-- A new section is being proposed to the Board of Regents Policy: *Reservation and Delegation of Authority* to reserve to the Board authority for those items in sponsored, plan-document-governed retirement plans which have a significant impact on the cost structure of the plans.

-- The Regents will also be asked to adopt a formal Optional Retirement Plan (ORP) document. Currently, the ORP is governed by individual vendor contracts, rather than a comprehensive plan

* 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.

document. In general, the new document simply states existing provisions, with three exceptions:

- Addition of University contributions for certain employees
- Ability to add a University-funded matching contribution in the future, if desired.
- Ability to add a University-funded contribution for up to 5 years following termination or retirement, if desired.

Currently, it is anticipated that only the first provision will be utilized, in conjunction with the 415(m) Retirement Plan (see next item). The other two provisions will not be implemented, but will be held in reserve for future needs.

- Finally, the Regents will be asked to adopt the 415(m) Retirement Plan, a new deferred compensation plan established to fulfill obligations already undertaken in three of the University's employment contracts with individuals. Potential University contributions under these contracts total \$160,000, which is are scheduled for deposit to the ORP to the extent permissible by law. After contribution are maximized in the ORP, and additional University obligation will be deposited to the 415(m) Retirement Plan. Participation in this plan is contractually-driven and is anticipated to be limited.

The Committee voted unanimously to support the adoption of the Regents' policy and to forward the information and the policy to the Faculty Consultative Committee.

Professor Fossum recalled that Professor Bland did a survey of senior faculty to ask them what percentage of their income they thought they would need in retirement; most thought they would need 75%, which is about 15% more than one gets from the Faculty Retirement Plan (on average; the actual amount will depend on how much one has in the Plan and how well the funds in which the money is invested do). Ms. Singer concurred and said that is why retirement income is seen as a shared responsibility between the University and the individual. She added that she understands the industry target for retirement income is 85% of earnings before retirement. She noted that if one receives Social Security as well as income from the Faculty Retirement Plan, that would add to the percentage of pre-retirement income one would receive. It is a very competitive plan, she said, but it does not pick up everything.

It would be a good idea to have educational programs for faculty at the time of retirement, but not before. They have a lot of seminars, Ms. Singer said, but they are not always well-attended.

Professor Fossum inquired about providing financial advice. Ultimately the decisions are an individual responsibility, Ms. Singer said, but her office is committed to providing what assistance it can. One problem may be that there are too many choices for retirement plan investment options. She said she sees total financial planning coming, but there has been a problem with potential financial liability for the University if it provides that assistance. She said she very strongly supported the provision of total financial planning because it could help a lot of people.

Ms. Singer reviewed the other retirement programs (terminal agreements, phased retirement, and supplemental benefits, the latter of which is for those individuals who participated in the Faculty Retirement Plan before 1963). Phased retirement is available to anyone age 52 or older who has held a 75%-time (or more) appointment. Professor Hendel asked why age 52. Vice President Carrier said she

could not recall; that decision was made a long time ago, and no doubt there were good reasons at the time.

Professor Fossum thanked Ms. Singer for her presentation.

2. Child Care Resources

Professor Fossum recalled that the Committee had discussed child care resources and the subcommittee chaired by Professor Wiedmann provided a report that has been forwarded to the President. Since that report, there is now a child-care referral service available through the University on the web. That, he said, is one positive improvement since the Committee did its work.

3. Recording Telephone Calls

Professor Fossum next recalled that the Committee had been asked about the rumor that the University records all telephone calls made on University telephones. Associate Vice President Cawley, the University's Chief Information Officer, informed him that he has no knowledge that the University does any such thing. Mr. Cawley did caution, however, that Minnesota law only requires the consent of one party to record a telephone conversation, so someone could record a telephone conversation without the knowledge of someone at the University. Mr. Cawley reported that the University would only record telephone calls as a result of a court order.

4. The Proliferation of Surveys

Professor Fossum said that Professor Hendel had raised a question about the number of web-based surveys that have been initiated lately. This is important given that the PULSE survey will be distributed shortly.

Professor Hendel said that he was just aware of the number of surveys that have been directed to faculty, or to faculty and staff, all of which have good reasons for being conducted, but that he worried about the impact of these many surveys on the likely response rate for the PULSE survey. He said he does not question the value of the various surveys but wondered if there is a process which someone must use to gain access to faculty and staff names in order to send out a survey. With the web, it is easier to do surveys, and also more likely that faculty and staff will be overloaded with surveys--and therefore less likely to respond.

Professor Fossum asked Vice President Carrier what one must do if one wants to conduct a survey. Dr. Carrier said that permission can be obtained from her office or a number of others; it is not difficult. The lists are supplied to central offices that want to do a survey. Is there a policy governing to whom the lists are released, Professor Fossum asked? It may not be written, Dr. Carrier replied, but they do make sure that any survey is for legitimate University purposes. And they do not sell the lists.

Professor Fossum noted that Professor Bland had used the lists to survey faculty who are over 50; what was the response rate, he asked her? About 40%, she said, which is not bad for a web-based survey. The Benefits Advisory Committee also administered a survey, Professor Fossum reported, and received a response rate of 23%, which it was satisfied with.

What is the experience of Committee members, Professor Fossum inquired of his colleagues. Has the number of surveys decreased the likelihood they will respond? Professor Csallany said that she would respond if there are not too many, but if she becomes overloaded, she will not. Anything on email is getting to be too much, she said.

Professor Hendel said that if the names can be obtained from more than one place, there is the question of coordination and who is doing what and when. There is no mechanism to address those issues. At the same time, it is difficult for any office with control of the lists to say "no, you can't do that." This issue has come up in central administrative discussions, Dr. Jones said, and there is a concern about the lack of a clearinghouse for doing surveys in the University. Dr. Carrier said she has spoken with Institutional Research and Reporting, which is overwhelmed with requests for web-based surveys from a large number of offices. It is not bad that offices want information but the number of proposed surveys has increased significantly and there is a need to avoid "survey fatigue." Her office has itself conducted a number of surveys, and she has thought about a steering committee so that Institutional Research and Reporting (IRR) is not responsible for deciding which surveys will be conducted. The web is so easy, she said, that everyone wants to use it. Not all surveys pass through IRR, she said; other offices can also administer surveys.

This will be self-limiting, Professor Bland commented; as response rates drop, there will be fewer surveys. But there is a question of institutional priorities in conducting surveys. Dr. Jones agreed that the number of surveys is getting out of hand and it may reach the point where people do not respond even in those cases when the University needs data.

Professor Wiedmann said that when he receives a survey, he asks himself how responding would benefit him and how long will it take. There must some cost to these surveys, he said. The PULSE survey cost about \$45,000, Dr. Carrier said, because they decided to send it to all employees, so there is staff time involved. The costs are in designing a survey and doing the programming, Professor Bland said; using the Internet costs nothing. There is a cost to the University in the time that each employee takes to fill out a survey, Ms. Sellew observed. IRR does not charge for its service, Dr. Carrier said; Professor Bland said that it could.

Are there different response rates to paper and web-based surveys, Professor Fossum asked Professor Hendel? Initially there were higher response rates for web-based surveys because they were novel, Professor Hendel said, but that has passed and in general the number who respond has declined to about the same level as for paper surveys. There is a parallel issue for students, he pointed out. What about validity measures, Professor Collins asked? Where there is the option of using either the web or paper, Professor Hendel said, the results appear to be the same.

Professor Hendel commented that if there were an office that knew in advance all the surveys that were planned for the next year, it could be planful about administering them. There would still be legitimate exceptions that would need to be made on short notice. A committee would be useful, Professor Bland said. And a master calendar, Dr. Carrier added. It would also be helpful if the various survey results could be linked together, Professor Bland said, although there would need to be consent from those who took the surveys.

5. Workload Policies

Professor Fossum said that another area in which he has received questions has been workload policies. He did a little research and found that in this very decentralized institution there are large differences across units. Some units have a policy, some do not. One heated issue has been whether the change to semesters was workload-neutral in CLA. There are expectations, written or not, with respect to teaching, research (which can be sponsored or non-sponsored), and outreach/service. Where there are policies, they tend to focus on teaching and are more vague in the other areas. In some cases, the policies include an expectation about the percentage of time people will spend on certain activities. In many units, however, there is little or no language about expectations and how they are related to evaluation or what the relationship of the expectations are to the tenure code. There is an increasing emphasis on workload in a number of units, given the current budget situation, and there tends to be a relationship between workload policy and generation of income. He said he would like to know of workload policies developed or implemented in the colleges.

Professor Collins said that in his college (General College), the faculty decided when the University changed to semesters that a course is a course and workload is defined by courses; they are to teach four courses over the year. There is flexibility on how those courses are distributed. Is there any expectation about generating tuition dollars or research funds, Professor Bland asked? There is not, Professor Collins said. He added that they do not have 1-credit or 5-credit courses.

What about research expectations, Professor Fossum asked? Have there been discussions with respect to sponsored versus non-sponsored? Professor Bland said that to the best of her knowledge, there are no written guidelines in the Medical School, but there is an expectation one will generate sponsored funds. There is some expectation that one will generate a certain percentage of one's salary, Professor Litman added. Professor Csallany agreed, and that expectation has been in place for a long time, although it is probably emphasized more now than in the past. There are also fewer courses than there were with quarters, she said, and sometimes the courses do not have enough students so the faculty try to bring in more money from other sources.

Professor Hendel said that each college is supposed to have a workload policy or guidelines; could one find them in Morrill Hall? Drs. Carrier and Jones said they could not; that requirement dates from at least ten years ago. Professor Hendel said he has the sense that things are changing. There are proposed changes in the guidelines in his college (Education and Human Development) and similar changes being considered in other colleges. The overriding concern is that these policies seem to be driven more and more by the bottom line, especially in tuition and research. This may not be new in the Medical School but it is in many other units.

Professor Fossum said he has increasingly heard that workloads will be revenue-driven because the University lost a substantial amount of its state subsidy. That is clear in the Carlson School of Management. There are also competitive pressures that limit how much the University or its units can charge, so the only way to replace revenue is to increase the number of students. With a fixed faculty size, increasing the number of students can only mean an increase in class size. He said he expects that there will be an increase in workload expectations, with a shift to more student-credit-hour generation and away from the number of hours in the classroom. And an understanding that if a class does not reach a certain size, it will not be offered.

Some shifts in workload are not consistent with the tenure code, the University mission, or how one defines performance in other areas, Professor Fossum said. More and more people are willing to do survey work to support graduate students, Professor Csallany said--they are doing things they are not interested in but that generate revenue. There is also college and department pressure to do things that bring in indirect cost funds, Professor Bland said. As well as to do more industry research, Professor Csallany added, which is very different from 20 years ago. Part of the issue is IMG, Professor Collins said, which the University has had now for a number of years. Units that were reliant on tuition confronted IMG early and have grown used to it; those units that relied more heavily on state funds are now confronting a decrease in that source and the need for increased tuition revenue. There may be a growing realization of the increased dependence on tuition and the need to work through that understanding.

There may be two parts to this, Professor Fossum said. Units were responding to IMG but there may be other outside difficulties (e.g., in the Academic Health Center). There are pressures on almost all units to increase the amount of external funding. This is an important issue, he said, because on the one hand there are performance expectations in the tenure code, and those move the University forward. On the other hand, faculty must operate in a day-to-day environment that drives decisions in a direction that is not good for the University in the long term. How can the University avoid having workload policies that drive out its ability to be a high-quality university in the long term? How can it put together something that fits with the tenure code and with the long-term interests of the institution?

Professor Akehurst asked what Professor Fossum was referring to in the tenure code. The code is explicit on what is required for promotion and tenure and it requires each unit to set standards, Professor Fossum said. If the standards are established, and if a unit has a workload policy, is the policy consistent with the standards? What he is hearing, he related, is that there is a disconnect between the tenure code performance expectations and how faculty are evaluated, and the work people are asked to do. Professor Akehurst said that part of the disconnect with the tenure code may be that the 7.12 statements departments are required to develop may not reflect the long-term goals of the University. Workload policies are often set by colleges, not by the unit or central administration. One could see a change in the tenure code standards as a result of these pressures, Professor Bland said; a department may want to keep a "rain maker." Professor Csallany noted how expensive graduate assistants are and that there are great pressures to generate enough money to support them; sometimes one agrees to do things one would not have done 20 or 25 years ago simply in order to generate funding.

When he came to the University, Professor Wiedmann said, he thought he was supposed to be creative in teaching and research. The idea of counting money, publications, percent time teaching is all nonsense. The bottom line is that the University must operate and must be fiscally solvent. They have a wide range of people in his unit (College of Pharmacy) and he thinks about them as parts of a quilt--one must have all the pieces or there is no blanket, but the pieces are not all the same. A workload policy should apply to the quilt as a whole, not the individual pieces. That is another philosophy, to meet expectations as a group, Professor Bland agreed, but she pointed out that the tenure code is not written that way. If it is a group that meets the expectations, with some individuals doing more teaching and less research, the individuals doing more teaching will be at a disadvantage. One must do some research, Professor Wiedmann responded. Dr. Jones agreed, saying that all must do a minimum level of research or teaching, but said that there is flexibility; they always operate on the assumption that not every faculty member will have the same portfolio. Some may not teach undergraduates; some do less research and

more teaching. Post-tenure review supports this approach; faculty interests and priorities change over time. A quilt is made of pieces of different sizes and colors that fit together.

Professor Csallany said she has been at the University 25 years and finds that as time goes on, people are more and more put into narrow boxes, which kills creativity. She said she was pessimistic about the future if there is increasingly less money and more administration and not time to think and do what is most important.

Professor Litman asked how this discussion of workload policies relates to the findings presented last year about the most research-productive departments. Some had workload policies where all the faculty were "triple-threat," while some had a distribution of work along the lines that Dr. Jones described, Professor Bland said. Things can work either way. Professor Csallany said that generating money is now built into the system. If she needs to replace equipment, she feels like a small company look for funds to pay for this or that. There is never talk about this but it is always expected.

Professor Fossum asked if this discussion should be extended to another meeting and individuals invited in to talk with the Committee in a month or so. The Committee agreed that it should be and that he should.

Professor Fossum adjourned the meeting at 4:00.

-- Gary Engstrand

University of Minnesota