

Minutes*

Senate Committee on Faculty Affairs
Tuesday, January 24, 2012
2:30 – 4:30
238A Morrill Hall

Present: George Sheets (chair), William Beeman, Ben Bornsztejn, Kathryn Brown, Arlene Carney, Dann Chapman, Randy Croce, Kathryn Hanna, Joseph Konstan, Frank Kulacki, Theodor Litman, Benjamin Munson, James Wojtaszek

Absent: Haojun Caoxu, Barbara Elliott, Jennifer Fillo, Christine Marran, Geoffrey Sirc, Pamela Stenhjem

Guests: Leonard Goldfine, John Kellogg

[In these minutes: (1) data on employees; (2) leaves and sabbaticals; (3) ideas about retirement]

1. Data on Employees

Professor Sheets convened the meeting at 2:35 and welcomed Dr. Goldfine to the meeting to discuss a revised set of longitudinal data on the number of tenured and tenure-track (TTT) faculty and instructional P&A staff and non-tenured/tenure-track (NTTT) faculty.

Dr. Goldfine began by noting that the data needed de-bugging because there were errors in them. His goal, following discussion at the last meeting, was to boil down TTT faculty appointments to "tenure homes." He provided data (averages) for 2003-05 and 2009-11; the three-year averages control for bumps and dips. The reason to gather these data, he recalled, is to determine if the number or percentage of NTTT faculty and instructional P&A staff is overtaking the number/percentage of TTT faculty in departments. He outlined some of the analytical issues that must be dealt with in order to have an accurate depiction of events.

With respect to changes/mergers in colleges, the data treat the faculty and staff as if they were in the newly-organized college all along, Dr. Goldfine clarified in response to a question.

Committee members and Dr. Goldfine discussed some of the fine points of structuring the data and accurately locating employees.

Vice Provost Carney cautioned against use of the term "tenure home," pointing out that tenure is in the University, not a department or college. If a unit is closed, faculty members in it do not lose their jobs.

The original question was whether the Committee had any easy way to monitor whether parts of the University are shifting to NTTT faculty, either by replacing TTT faculty with NTTT faculty or by allowing only the NTTT faculty ranks to grow. These data suggest two patterns: Stable units versus units

* These minutes reflect discussion and debate at a meeting of a committee of the University of Minnesota Senate; none of the comments, conclusions, or actions reported in these minutes represents the views of, nor are they binding on, the Senate, the Administration, or the Board of Regents.

in flux. Where one sees flux, it is a mistake to analyze at the department level until one looks at the college level. If there is a shift at the college level, one can then drill down to departmental data.

Professor Sheets commented that he realizes there are many analytical problems in putting the numbers together and caveats are needed; nevertheless, the larger question the Committee wants to answer is the extent to which there has been a shift in the proportions of regular and non-regular faculty. If the Committee can find the answer to that question, then it can decide how to respond. Thus far he feels the Committee has been spinning its wheels because the discussion can't seem to get beyond technical issues regarding classification and reporting of the data. If the Committee cannot obtain the data needed to answer the question, that fact in itself is cause for worry. If the data cannot be provided, the institution is adrift because it cannot identify the composition of the employee workforce.

Professor Munson said that if the data can be straightened out, a more interesting question is the percentage of courses taught by regular faculty members.

Professor Beeman observed that data are getting out because organizations (e.g., *U.S. News and World Report* and *Barron's*) are calculating student-faculty ratios. Someone is publishing data. They are relying on the federal IPEDS data, Dr. Goldfine explained, which are very accurate and have very specific definitions. The IPEDS data work for comparing across colleges but have limited internal use. They may work for *Barron's* but they do not contain the information that the Committee is looking for. The IPEDS data also excludes the Academic Health Center, Dr. Carney added; they are very clean and very consistent data that scholars use.

Dr. Carney reported that she and Mr. Kellogg are ready to report the data on "who teaches what." Those data are also clean. In general, she observed, legislators are not interested in the teaching data for particular colleges or departments; they want to know the situation for the University overall. But they may in the future be interested in the profile of teaching, Professor Sheets responded, and might, for example, suggest there be more instruction in STEM fields. This Committee should have a good idea of the trends in order to assess them and analyze what is occurring. The global data for the University does not provide the Committee enough information to make judgments.

Dr. Goldfine commented that the proportion of TTT and NTTT faculty in units shifts, and one question is whether the Committee wants a TTT faculty member counted in a department even if that person is not teaching in the department. The question is how to measure each side of the equation; these data do not get at tasks the individuals perform. Professor Sheets said it is important to know if NTTT faculty are taking on a greater share of the instruction over all; once the Committee has the data, it can conduct a deeper analysis. It could be problematic if fewer and fewer TTT faculty members are teaching. But if the TTT faculty have increasing grant responsibilities, Dr. Carney observed, departments could be hiring more NTTT faculty to teach. Professor Sheets agreed but said that before getting to the explanation the Committee needs to know what it is trying to explain. Dr. Carney said part of the answer lies in the "who teaches what" data—and they demonstrate that much of the University's teaching is done by TTT faculty.

Professor Konstan commented that there is no one outcome that everyone would favor. Legislators, for example, want the university to be "efficient" and "flexible," which suggests having more NTTT faculty, but they also want their constituents' children to be taught by tenure-track professors. Faculty, business leaders, parents, and students similarly have different perspectives depending on their interest at the time. He suggested that the Committee look at the "who teaches what" data and then have a

discussion with the colleges where it appears there are questions. Dr. Carney said there are different questions to be posed; she also pointed out that there was a hiring pause, so departments, in order to be able to keep delivering instruction, hired more non-regular faculty than they would in other circumstances. That is why it is a problem to use only two data points at different times.

Committee members noted that the number of faculty members on phased retirement could be significant, and as TTT faculty members retire, they may not be replaced. Dr. Goldfine reported that there about 120 faculty members per year on phased retirement.

Professor Beeman observed that in some areas, a drop in the number of NTTT faculty is not positive. In the arts, theater, music, and perhaps in some of the sciences, there are many specialists in the community to draw on and the quality of instruction could decline when those programs lose NTTT faculty. It is unwise to reach automatic conclusions about the quality of instruction depending on the category of employees delivering it.

Vice Provost Carney said that this is a great university, a research university, that must have a core of faculty members in the tenure stream who are making decisions about the teaching, research, and public engagement directions of the University. If there are too many people hired to teach one course at a time, then there are too many people without a commitment to the institution. Moreover, University of Minnesota contract faculty and instructional P&A staff have faculty benefits, so are not the part-time, contingent faculty one reads about nationally. It would cause her concern if there were a decline in the number and percentage of TTT faculty at the University because they are its core strength—and such a decline is a problem at some institutions. Professor Sheets agreed that hiring temporary faculty to each 1-2 courses per year is a "pernicious practice that is bound to erode" the quality of the University. At the same time, there will be some units where reliance on outside teachers is desirable and necessary, such as architecture, Dr. Carney added.

And an increase in the number of NTTT faculty is not bad if it can be linked to offsetting the time of TTT faculty who are doing research or on fellowships such as a Guggenheim, Professor Beeman said. Temporary faculty help carry out the instructional mission while the TTT faculty can uphold the research mission. Professor Konstan agreed that the Committee must remind itself that 0 is not a good number of NTTT faculty. There are also a number of career educators at the University who do not do research and who are not seeking tenure—and who are also certainly not hurting the teaching mission of the University because the TTT faculty control the curriculum. In some fields, moreover, innovation occurs first in practice, not instruction; if one wants a course in a specialty, it would be a mistake not to bring in an outside expert. That is why it is important to have a narrative along with the data for the units.

In terms of the end to be served by refined data, Professor Sheets said the Committee is interested in going beyond anecdotal information. If it looks at the trends, it may decide to investigate further, depending on what the Committee wants. It may wish to discuss the data with the deans. He said he has no particular end product in mind. It was noted that the Committee on Academic Freedom and Tenure is also extremely interested in these data.

Professor Kulacki suggested the Committee look at the IPEDS and other data and try to reach the end of the semester with an assurance that it will examine the ten-year trend. The discussion can determine where the Committee will go after this spring semester.

Professor Sheets thanked Dr. Goldfine for returning to the Committee.

2. Leaves and Sabbaticals

Professor Sheets returned to an item the Committee has discussed a number of times. One discussion focused on whether it would be desirable to change policy to create a single-semester sabbatical with full pay. Professor Sheets returned to an item the Committee has discussed a number of times. One discussion focused on whether it would be desirable to change policy to create a single-semester sabbatical with full pay. It appears there would be significant budgetary implications for such a change that might threaten the financial viability of the single-semester leave program. His sense of the Committee's discussion was that this was not a practical step to pursue.

Professor Beeman recalled that he brought the issue to the Committee because the single-semester sabbatical has, he said, been sought incessantly by CLA departments. He said he would bring the Committee's view to the CLA Council of Chairs tomorrow. The reason for the interest in the single-semester sabbatical with full pay is because in the social sciences and humanities there is very little research funding available to compensate anyone for teaching, so many faculty members in CLA never take a sabbatical because they cannot afford to. They are happy to compete for single-semester leaves, but there is only a limited number available. He said he believed the Committee should ask for a calculation of what the actual costs of a single-semester sabbatical policy would be, and the cost would need to be modeled on a theoretical participation rate of 100% (although one knows the actual participation rate would fall below that level). The Committee needs to see the calculation to make a reasoned decision. If the proposal is too expensive, the faculty will have to live with the existing situation.

Professor Konstan said he was supportive of the proposal and is not in CLA. A large number of faculty members do not see it feasible to take a traditional sabbatical with reduced pay; they find a part-time job elsewhere (i.e., a university or company that will make up the difference in pay). That seriously constrains the types of sabbatical activities they would engage in. The University should do two other things in parallel with examining the cost: First, ask what the benefit would be to the University (the academy traditionally believes that recharging batteries makes for better scholars and teachers; one could look at teaching evaluations and at research productivity after faculty members have taken a sabbatical); and second, this need not be an all-or-nothing proposition, and perhaps 85-90% of salary could be covered.

Professor Munson agreed that this would be a good study, if only to defend the idea of renewal, and would provide data rather than anecdotes. The study results could be useful if there are questions raised about the value of leaves and sabbaticals. The Committee could also develop a recommendation on offering the single-semester sabbaticals and how they might be funded. Professor Hanna recalled that she had also noted previously the provision in the union contract with Duluth faculty that permits one to receive 75% of salary the year of a sabbatical and 75% the year after one has the sabbatical; that level of salary would be doable for some people but would be financially neutral for the University.

Professor Konstan agreed that the study should be done and noted that it must be clear that these investments in sabbaticals and leaves deliver value to the University, not just money to faculty members. The Committee should be seriously concerned if the number of faculty members taking sabbaticals drops too low for the faculty to be recharged, and if the value of recharging can be demonstrated, the University should design a sabbatical program to support it.

Professor Sheets asked Dr. Carney her views regarding a program similar to what Professor Hanna described. She said that the idea is intellectually fine; the biggest problem might be the transactional costs in terms of tweaks to payroll and tracking systems. She said she did not know what those costs might be—but that is not a reason not to think about the idea. Professor Hanna commented that there surely is research literature in higher education on the value of sabbaticals.

Professor Sheets then noted that this is a matter of particular concern to the faculty on the Morris campus because they have difficulty hiring people to replace those who go on leaves. Professor Wojtaszek explained that allowing the option of a single-semester sabbatical could alleviate the problem of having to cover an absent faculty member's load for a full year with limited funds available to hire replacement faculty. He said he liked the idea of an intermediate level of funding for a semester sabbatical (such as the 85% suggested earlier in the discussion) as an additional alternative. The main concern is that when someone is gone, there are serious issues of staffing. When someone goes on sabbatical, it is rare that their replacement position is fully funded, so a department receives only 50% of the absent faculty member's salary; to recruit someone to relocate to Morris, to fill in for only a semester, at a very low salary, presents a challenge.

The sabbatical policy is part of recruitment, Professor Beeman said; he is always asked about it when recruiting new faculty members. When a candidate comes from a school with a more generous policy, the University's is unattractive, and people have been hired away from the University because a competing institution has a more liberal leave policy. On the flip side, Professor Munson observed, the University's policy helps in recruiting new faculty members because it has a more generous single-semester leave provision.

Vice Provost Carney said she would try to have a cost analysis of the different models done for the Committee. One thing the policy does not deal with is someone who takes a sabbatical and then goes on phased retirement. The sabbatical should be a benefit to the University, not a prequel to retirement—but faculty members have pointed out that there is no language in the policy that bars taking a sabbatical and then going on phased retirement. She has not approved such sabbaticals, however, because she interprets the policy as requiring a full year of 100% effort from someone who returns from a sabbatical.

Professor Sheets turned now to the sabbatical/leave guidelines he was asked to forward to the deans and ask for reactions. He said he concluded that was not the best way to proceed; one of the associate deans contacted earlier indicated his college was quite happy with the procedures it uses, so he is not sure what he would get from the deans in response. The Committee took the view that the practices should be consistent across the University, the recommendations are voluntary, and seem to be reasonable, so he is not sure he should canvas the deans. He recommended instead that he forward the guidelines to the Faculty Consultative Committee and let it decide how to proceed. The Committee concurred.

3. Ideas About Retirement

Professor Sheets next asked Committee members if they had ideas for retirement incentives for older faculty members. He said that Vice President Brown has indicated that her goal is not to persuade people to retire but to recognize that there are impediments and the University could be helped in saving money if individuals are not replaced. What are the possible incentives? There is a set of benefits in place: Phased retirement (full benefits for phase period plus two years of health coverage) and terminal

agreements (full salary and benefits for a year plus two years of health coverage). Professor Sheets noted that he has suggested previously that the terminal agreement should be more available as an incentive.

Professor Hanna suggested that the University could do a better job of making faculty more aware of the phased retirement option. There are areas of the University where faculty are unaware of that option.

Professor Konstan asked if anyone knows how many faculty members who start phased retirement would back out of it if they had the opportunity. A significant element of the resistance to electing phased retirement is fear—that one has made a mistake in choosing it. There are three groups of faculty considering retirement: Those who wonder what they will do with their lives once they retire (and who have no financial reason not to retire); those who fear retirement for financial reasons (but do not have reason to do so); and those who do have good reason to worry about retirement for financial reasons. In some fields, those with emeritus status can earn money working for the department, while in other fields one cannot. He wondered if there is a way to structure phased retirement so that someone who has elected it could, up to the end of the first year, change his or her mind. A number may not choose it because they fear they'll have five years of regret during a five-year phased retirement.

Dr. Carney noted that there is a program called the Encore Program through the College of Continuing Education that has seminars about the next stage of life following retirement.

Professor Konstan asked if much would be lost if the University allowed someone to back out of phased retirement no later than the end of the first year. Dr. Carney said that some faculty members are using Recess as a tryout for phased retirement with no commitment to retire. Recess appointments are year by year for faculty and staff; one can reduce effort to a certain percentage but retain 100% of benefits (some P&A staff, for example, have found attractive an 80%-time appointment, which means they work four days per week rather than five).

What is unique about Recess appointments, in contrast to an agreement with an employer to cut one's time, Mr. Chapman explained, is that one can reduce one's appointment to 50% time and retain full benefits (whereas ordinarily, if one falls below 75% time, some benefits are lost; in the case of Recess appointments, retirement contributions are made on the basis of actual salary paid.) Professor Konstan said that if such appointments were bundled together and promoted as a way to try out phased retirement, it might work better. If the decision to retire is already made (with the right to undo it after a year), then psychologically the faculty member can come to accept and embrace it. It would lose that benefit of commitment if the University were to require the faculty member to make the retirement decision after the year of Recess.

Professor Litman inquired if anyone knew the number of individuals who opted for a Recess appointment and then went into phased retirement. Dr. Carney said the Recess program is new and she is unaware that there are any data (yet).

Another hurdle to retiring is the slow pace of hiring, Professor Munson commented. Sometimes faculty members do not want to leave their departments high and dry—that is a significant factor with a number of faculty members. Phased retirement can be used to cover classes and so on until a replacement is hired, Professor Sheets said. That could be part of a conversation, Professor Hanna said: A faculty member could say to a chair or dean that if he or she can be assured there will be a replacement, and if so, retirement could be more attractive. Professor Konstan recalled an agreement in his department that a

person would be allowed to teach a course for a certain number of years; it would be possible to have an agreement that someone would teach a course for five years or until the department hires a replacement. The University is not obligated to go out more than a small number of years, but such agreement would cover graduate students in process, undergraduate students, research, and ego issues. He said he was not sure the University had a mechanism to execute such agreements except through a handshake. Professor Beeman related that he has seen some strange proposals along these lines; there is no obligation on the part of the University to accept them.

Sometimes there are also selfish reasons for staying, Professor Sheets said; a potential retiree wants to insist on the nature of the replacement. He said he believes departments should have the right to hire whomever they wish.

Professor Beeman said that at his former institution, faculty members were offered a terminal two years and had to be out the door at age 66. The offer expired within a year.

Professor Hanna asked if there are other options the University is considering, and if this is being brought up because something is broken. Vice President Brown had joined the meeting and responded that she is not saying anything is broken. But she (and others) has seen a number of baby-boomers getting close to retirement and she wants to know what they think about retirement and what would be helpful for them. From a Human Resources standpoint, the goal is to help people make the transition to retirement in a respectful manner and in a way that is helpful both to the institution and the individual.

Another idea that would be an incentive, Professor Sheet said, would be a guarantee to continue health benefits for two years. Or, it was added, a commitment to provide a certain amount of dollars to help pay for post-retirement health. On the latter, Mr. Chapman said that is what the RIO (Retirement Incentives Option) does, but that is not ongoing; it is available to all employees when it is offered.

Professor Konstan said that one also never reads about the accomplishments of retired faculty members; they should be reported in a place where not-retired faculty members would see them.

Workspace for retired faculty members is also greatly appreciated, Professor Beeman said. Some institutions have created centers for retired faculty members that allows them to keep up their scholarly work and that alleviates the concern that they will be cast off into the void. Professor Konstan asked if a retired faculty member can keep control of non-sponsored funds—or if they all revert to the department; that would make a difference for some who want to remain professionally engaged, traveling to conferences, buying new computers, etc. They can continue to be PIs on grants, Vice President Brown reported.

Professor Sheets thanked Committee members for their thoughts and adjourned the meeting at 4:35.

-- Gary Engstrand