

Minutes\*

**Senate Committee on Faculty Affairs  
Tuesday, September 24, 2013  
2:30 – 4:30  
238A Morrill Hall**

Present: Joseph Konstan (chair), Chris Bourland, Arlene Carney, Randy Croce, Sophia Gladding, Tabitha Grier-Reed, Heath Himstedt, Frank Kulacki, Scott Lanyon, Theodor Litman, Karen Miksch, Peh Ng,

Absent: Teri Caraway, Kathryn Brown, Dann Chapman, George Sell

Guests: Karen Chapin (Employee Benefits), Tina Falkner (chair, Benefits Advisory Committee), Cynthia Murdoch (chair, P&A Senate)

[In these minutes: (1) report of the chair; (2) COACHE survey of faculty; (3) policy on college personnel plans; (4) changes in employee life insurance coverage]

**1. Report of the Chair**

Professor Konstan convened the meeting at 2:30 and reported on several matters.

-- There is need for someone to serve on the subcommittee on sabbaticals and leaves; Professor Ng is the chair.

-- He serves on the University Strategic Planning Oversight Committee; the University community will be hearing a lot about strategic planning in the near future. There are items that people should be ready for: this will be an inwardly-driven process, trying to identify where the University will be in 10 years beyond the usual clichés about teaching, research, and outreach. The provost has said that it cannot be strategic planning if the University says it will do everything; if the proposal is to do something new, then the University must stop doing something else. The charge to the oversight committee is to engage the University community in depth early and a sense that the University should not let outside actors determine where it goes. This is an exciting opportunity that will fail if the faculty and staff do not participate.

Professor Lanyon expressed a concern that colleges and the central administration accept the notion that most important contribution from faculty, staff, and students is in strategic planning—and not on 10 others things. It must focus the effort. Professor Konstan agreed and said he would bring the point to the oversight committee. Messaging will be important—and it is important that the message not consist mostly of surveys.

Professor Lanyon asked if there is a specific deadline for when the process will be done and if an explicit part of a report will be on things the University should stop doing. At a minimum, the report will identify criteria for selecting what the University should stop doing, Professor Konstan said. The

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president has asked for a report to be ready for the Board of Regents next fall, but implementation will start before that because there will be elements of the recommendations that do not require regental approval, that are operations questions. The document will likely identify criteria for determining what the University should invest aggressively in, what should be maintained, and what it needs not do.

-- The chairs of senate committees met earlier in the day and a number of the committees have ambitious agendas. His message was that part of the consulting process is that people feel open to hearing from faculty and others about issues. If Committee members have ideas that should be discussed, they should let him know and he will schedule them or, if they are not for this Committee, will see to it that they are appropriately referred.

## **2. COACHE Survey of Faculty**

Professor Konstan next asked Vice Provost Carney to provide an update on the COACHE survey.

COACHE is the Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education, a large national research project that is a recurring survey of faculty members in higher education administered by Harvard, Dr. Carney explained. While she understands the problem of survey fatigue, her office has only administered one survey since she has been in the position—the COACHE survey of probationary faculty members, in 2005. This year will be the second survey, a new COACHE survey. It will, again, be only for Twin Cities faculty.

Because this is a research project, there are parameters that institutional participants must follow, and when faculty receive the message about the COACHE survey, they will be informed that it has been approved by both the Harvard and Minnesota IRBs. In the 2005 survey the University had a response rate of nearly 60%, which is extremely good, and it showed the importance of the survey content to probationary faculty members, Dr. Carney surmised.

The version to be administered this fall will have a lot of demographic data, Dr. Carney said, so the file the University receives from COACHE will contain a considerable amount of unit data. They will, however, be de-identified and the staff in the Office of Institutional Research are required to sign a confidentiality agreement with Harvard; no cell with fewer than five entries will be reported. The survey has been expanded to include tenured associate and full professors, which will help get at questions of the faculty life course; it will also allow the University to compare, for probationary faculty members, the results of the 2005 survey.

Dr. Carney said she is imploring the faculty to respond. This is a unique opportunity to respond to a comprehensive set of questions; the survey will be open beginning October 14 and faculty members can complete it any time up to early January, 2014. There will be reminders for those who have not done so.

Professor Lanyon urged strongly that if at all possible, reminder messages go only to people who have not completed the survey. Dr. Carney pointed that she will not know who has responded; all she will know is the response rates by college, and acknowledged that it is annoying to receive messages when one has already completed a survey. Professor Lanyon observed that he and others may forget if they've already responded; Dr. Carney said she did not believe it possible to take the survey twice. Professor Lanyon repeated that if there is any way to filter the messages, it is likely the response rate will

be higher. Dr. Carney said she would check; the survey is being administered at about 200 institutions across the country. [Subsequent to the meeting, Dr. Carney reported that respondents who complete the survey to the end, even if they decline to answer certain questions, will not receive reminders to respond.]

For the first time, the survey will also include contract faculty, Dr. Carney said; only those on 100%-time appointments will receive the survey (that is a criterion imposed by Harvard). While there is an extra cost to including contract faculty, the provost and she believe it important to include them.

There are several other research universities in the group that will be participating in the survey, including those with medical schools or academic health centers, agriculture, and so on, so there will be comparable data to consider, Dr. Carney said. This is a unique opportunity to get the faculty voice on important matters.

Professor Kulacki inquired about the extent to which the last survey influenced personnel policies. A considerable amount, Dr. Carney said. They received a 115-page report, which happened to come at the same time that the last strategic planning effort was underway. The results in 2005 indicated that probationary faculty felt isolated in their departments, one result of which her office began the New Faculty Orientation, so there was a "treatment" and a 7-year interval that will allow the University to determine if there has been any effect. There were questions about clarity of the tenure process as well, and virtually no university in the country changed its policy and procedures as much as Minnesota to address clarity and transparency. Again, there was a "treatment" and the University can ascertain if the changes had any effect. Her office also now has more tailored sessions that address concerns of faculty members in different parts of the promotion-and-tenure process. The University has also tried to address the work/life balance for probationary faculty members.

There are still questions on the survey about the two most important things done best at the University and the two done the worst, Dr. Carney said. In the last survey, the two worst were getting grant applications out and mentoring. The former has improved; she does not know about the latter. In terms of effect on policies, Harvard advises institutions not to participate in the survey unless they intend to use the results to review policies—and Harvard also indicated that Minnesota did more than most institutions in using the results. There will also be a lot of demographic questions, so they will be able to analyze the results by gender, ethnicity, and so on. They did an analysis by international faculty last time, and the results led her to start a new faculty orientation for international faculty members. The idea, she concluded, is to obtain the information and act on it.

Professor Konstan asked whether the provost will inquire of the deans what they have done with the data for their college so the effects can be tracked. Central changes would only need a sample, but for changes that can't be accomplished centrally, they will want as many responses as possible so deans and unit heads can see what happens within units, not just what happens across the University. Dr. Carney said that one thing she has done is create a council of faculty associate deans so that she can keep informed about what is going on in the colleges with respect to faculty. The council meets 3-5 times per year; the associate deans can meet each other and discuss issues. This is, however, an interesting point to bring to the provost's attention in her discussions with deans.

Professor Miksch recalled that she participated in the last survey, as a probationary faculty member; will they have the ability to track those who participated in 2005? Dr. Carney said she would check. There are questions about the nature of work (teaching, research, service) that will get at a number

of questions (such as gender differences), and the University can do its own analyses this time (without identifying any of the participants). There will be questions on interdisciplinarity and mentoring as well as questions for probationary and for contract faculty, and on promotion and tenure, institutional governance and leadership, engagement, and climate. The results will provide topics for discussion for this Committee for some time.

What about two-faculty-member families and support for parents, Professor Konstan asked? There will be questions on those issue, Dr. Carney said, and on recruitment and retention. The provost's office is starting to collect data from the colleges this year on recruitment and retention—when they fail or not, what was successful. There will also be questions on global satisfaction, and the University is adding its own questions about e-learning and faculty development efforts.

How long will it take a faculty member to complete the survey, Professor Konstan asked? About 25 minutes, Dr. Carney said, so there is a time commitment, but there will be a significant payoff for faculty at the University.

Professor Lanyon suggested engaging department heads in the discussion; Dr. Carney said she is, as well as a number of other audiences to let the faculty know that this survey will provide important information for action. The University has tried to address areas of concern identified in the last survey; one example is why Minnesota female assistant professors were so much more stressed than their peers at other institution. They did a lot of brainstorming about that result and realized that Minnesota is the only one of the institutions in its peer group that is in a major metropolitan area, so faculty members live all over the area and have to make critical decisions about child care. Except for that factor, there was not much difference between Minnesota female assistant professors and their counterparts elsewhere.

Professor Konstan said the Committee will look forward to learning the results.

### **3. Policy on College Personnel Plans**

Vice Provost Carney next reported on the work of the subcommittee on personnel plans, a joint subcommittee of this Committee and the Committee on Academic Freedom and Tenure whose meetings she and Ms. Wilhelmson from Human Resources joined. [The existing policy, Academic Appointments with Teaching Function, is here: <http://policy.umn.edu/Policies/hr/Hiring/TEACHING.html>.]

Much of what the subcommittee discussed last year, Dr. Carney related, was background and at a higher level than policy language, on what the policy should look like. They decided, first, that they needed general principles, because the way the policy is written now, it does not take into account different college workloads for faculty. Workload policy can influence what a personnel plan looks like. Second, they spent much time on the ratio contained in the policy (the "collegiate plan must include a specific supplemental plan for any unit in which the number of FTE contract faculty positions (category 2A) plus the number of FTE academic professional positions with primary responsibility for teaching (category 4A) exceeds 25% of the FTE tenured and tenure-track faculty"). This is a one-size-fits-all model, Dr. Carney said, but there is a distinction between (1) the traditional arts and sciences (including CBS and CSE), education, and business and (2) the professional schools. Virtually every professional school files a supplemental plan every year because they exceed the 25% ratio. Dr. Carney recalled that the Committee on Academic Freedom and Tenure spoke with several deans about the need to use

community members from their professions to help in teaching as well as their use of contract faculty with specific clinical and clinical teaching responsibilities.

So what the policy prescribes is what one would expect for the arts and sciences, etc., and for the non-metropolitan campuses, but not always for professional schools, Dr. Carney concluded.

Professor Konstan asked if the policy speaks to headcount or FTEs. Both, Dr. Carney said, so that one can see the numbers for full-time and part-time instructors. Professor Konstan said that the concept of writing a different threshold for professional schools is challenging (e.g., business has a significant undergraduate enrollment; design has a lot of industry-based part-time instructors even though it may not be traditionally thought of as a professional school). The goals are to protect the intellectual foundations of the University and to deliver instruction with people who have had the appropriate vetting and education and who have academic freedom, but also allow to others to teach as needed to carry out the mission.

Dr. Carney said the policy is being used differently. The focus is on teaching but it is being reviewed as a governance policy to ask the question "is tenure eroding?" But it was not written for that purpose; it was written to ensure that students are being taught by a significant percentage of tenured and tenure-track faculty, in response to concerns about institutions that rely mostly on part-time, non-faculty instructors. The data required by the policy are also examined for the difference between headcount and FTEs to learn whether the University is becoming an institution of part-time teaching staff. The Committee needs to think about what the policy will be used for; if it has a dual purpose, that should be made clear. And although the largest use of non-tenured/tenure-track faculty is in the Academic Health Center, the policy is broader than just the AHC because some other units (e.g., the College of Design) have a large professional component as well.

Vice Provost Carney said the subcommittee had several questions. (1) Are the current appointment codes the right ones? They are changing with the Enterprise Systems Upgrade Program; the University has too many appointment codes, which problem has made the analysis of personnel plans difficult. The University also uses the term "adjunct" differently from a number of other institutions; the University has both inside and outside adjuncts as well as appointments without salary. It will be easier to interpret personnel plans once the new appointment codes are in place. (2) The subcommittee discussed the possibility of establishing different ratios for other schools. For example, the structure of medical education is not likely to change soon, and the Medical School has the largest number of contract faculty; some colleges, however, have very few. (3) The ratio identified in the plan is now calculated by college; should it be by department? The subcommittee felt that a departmental calculation would be too micro a level and not helpful because departments have different responsibilities (e.g., a department responsible for delivering writing instruction would likely have a large number of non-tenured/tenure-track instructors).

Professor Ng asked if the 25% rule is one the University created or if it is an external standard. The University established it, Dr. Carney said. Will it stay with that ratio, Professor Ng asked? That is the question the subcommittee is looking at, Dr. Carney replied, and at the differences across colleges across time. How does the University compare with its peers, Professor Ng asked? It is very difficult to make comparisons because institutions code appointments differently, Dr. Carney said, and do not use the same titles in the same way.

Professor Konstan asked if the policy deals with student instructors. It does not, Dr. Carney said, but when she and Mr. Kellogg report on "who teaches what," they do include graduate students who deliver instruction. One problem is what one calls a "course," such as the difference between lectures and discussion sections. The University has no central requirements about what to call a course, so coding issues get in the way of the best data. What the data do indicate is that tenured and tenure-track faculty teach more semester hours than others because they teach large lecture classes, whereas P&A instructors tend to teach smaller classes. The data on "who teaches what" and the personnel plans cannot be completely connected, Dr. Carney concluded.

Professor Konstan inquired of Professor Miksch (co-chair of the Committee on Academic Freedom and Tenure, AF&T) what discussions AF&T has had that this Committee should be aware of. Professor Miksch said that this Committee (Faculty Affairs) is looking at personnel plans while AF&T is charged to look at them for tracking the number and percentage of tenured and tenure-track faculty. When colleges provide plans, there is very little information in the current policy regarding what information should be provided by the colleges in the personnel plan. AF&T believes there needs to be consultation before a plan comes forward for review; it is often not clear whether anyone in the college was consulted about it. In addition to the ratio questions, there is a need for guidance to the colleges on developing the plans. The subcommittee believes the colleges need to be asked why they are exceeding the ration, to be asked to think about the question. She agreed with Dr. Carney that there are data issues, and it is helpful to have a subcommittee drawn from the two committees because everyone needs to be looking at the same data.

Professor Miksch said that AF&T wants a more transparent process, a way for colleges to report what they are doing without being onerous.

Professor Lanyon said he agreed with the suggestion about changing the ratio for professional schools, because if they are held to a standard they cannot achieve, they can go way beyond it. It would be better to set a reasonable standard and then hold them to it. Professor Konstan said that is one possibility; another is to ask a college to justify a standard for the long term, and if the goals are set tightly, there would have to consultation if they are to change. He said he worries that if a policy sets criteria that are not clear, schools could try to move into a different category. If there is to be a change in the policy allowing for long-term exceptions, the boundaries must be tightly drawn. Professor Lanyon said that all colleges should be held to the 25% ratio where possible and that standards should be set individually for colleges that are not expected to meet the 25% ratio.

Professor Kulacki said when research drives faculty work, it can have a significant impact on how classes are staffed. Over time there is probably a golden mean but there can be blips from year to year. Dr. Carney said colleges should not be evaluated annually but over time. And that, she added, is where the workload policy comes up. In CLA, faculty are expected to teach four courses per year; in other colleges, with different expectations, faculty may be expected to teach fewer courses, so would not be teaching as many students. The policy, she reiterated, was written about instruction and is now about guarding tenure. The policy needs a new name, and when it is done, it needs to reflect what faculty governance and the administration want.

Professor Konstan said the Committee would return to this topic later in the year.

#### **4. Change in Employee Life Insurance Coverage**

Professor Konstan now welcomed Ms. Chapin, Dr. Falkner, and Ms. Murdoch to the meeting to report on a change in employee life insurance coverage provided by the University. He said he had received a message about the change and it did not seem important, but it is a change in benefits that he thought the Committee should talk about.

Ms. Chapin distributed copies of a handout and began by explaining that two types of changes are being made, both of which have been reviewed with the Benefits Advisory Committee (which includes employees from all categories). One set of changes is due to the PeopleSoft upgrade (the Enterprise Systems Upgrade Program); the University is striving to use "vanilla" PeopleSoft without significant changes being made to the underlying code. The other set of (positive) changes is due to the results of a recent Request for Proposals for life insurance coverage for employees.

The changes as a result of the PeopleSoft upgrade include a change in the full-time employee Basic Life benefit changed from 100% of salary to 115% of salary, Ms. Chapin reported. This insurance is paid for by the University. The rounding for calculating the benefit has been changed from the next higher \$5000 to the next higher \$1000. The Basic Life maximum has been capped at \$200,000, which may affect the faculty as much or more than any other employee group. The part-time life benefit has been changed from full to the part-time equivalent. The \$5,000 - \$25,000 additional Basic Life benefit for faculty and P&A staff has been eliminated (which paid an additional amount, up to \$25,000, to bring someone closer to or up to—but no more than—\$100,000 in life insurance coverage). The one-month death benefit paid through departments has been eliminated. This is not really a PeopleSoft-required change, Ms. Chapin said; the problem is that it has been inconsistently given, and many people have done estate planning to avoid probate—but then receive this additional benefit that sends the estate into probate. They have had requests to get rid of this benefit, although some people would want it to continue.

The majority of employees will benefit from these changes, Ms. Chapin concluded. Those who do not, who lose some coverage, may move the basic insurance to supplemental insurance without the need to provide proof of good health. The \$1 million total supplement life maximum will apply to existing supplemental life amounts plus basic life amounts transferred; there are no other policy maxima that apply.

The second category of changes, due to the Request for Proposals, include a \$10,000 newborn child benefit for the first child (which applies prior to enrolling, for up to 60 days, and automatic coverage for a second child for those who enroll the first child—and not available to the second child if the first is not enrolled), child life is added to open enrollment without evidence of good health (that was required before), a new term life portability benefit (in addition to the whole life conversion option when someone leaves the University, an option more attractive for younger employees and one that ends at age 70, at which time the former employee could move to a conversion policy), and \$25,000 open enrollment for 1-1-2015.

Professor Konstan concluded that the increase to 115% compensates approximately for the loss of the one-month death benefit; so the biggest loss not associated with the cap is for those with salaries under \$100,000 who lose the \$5,000 - \$25,000 benefit. For those above \$200,000, the loss is greater and

those employees will see a potentially substantial cost if they wish to continue insurance as supplemental. The cost will also increase because the supplemental life is age-rated, Ms. Chapin pointed out.

Professor Konstan asked Ms. Chapin for data on employees in different salary ranges, and Ms. Chapin reviewed information from the higher salary brackets with the committee.

Professor Konstan asked Committee members if they wished to make a statement about the changes. He said he appreciated the fact that increased costs do not fall on lower-paid employees but added that changes to PeopleSoft are not a compelling argument for benefit changes. Ms. Chapin said that they looked at peer institutions; the University's life insurance provisions, even after the changes, are above those of its peers.

Professor Kulacki asked if the Enterprise Systems Upgrade Program would allow patches to address problems with the changes. Dr. Falkner pointed out that the University modified PeopleSoft a great deal when it first purchased it in 1999 in order to reflect what the University was doing; this time it intends to use the "vanilla" version in order to become more efficient, and that includes removing modifications to the system. So the price the University pays for more efficiency is in some fringe benefits, Professor Kulacki commented.

Professor Konstan pointed out that PeopleSoft could have handled a change to 150% of salary rather than 115% without a patch. The benefits can be made more or less generous. His interpretation is that the changes were made with the aim of keeping the overall University cost the same and of minimizing the effect on lower-income employees and the fewest number of people. Ms. Chapin confirmed that the changes are cost-neutral for the University.

If they are cost-neutral, why change, asked Mr. Himstedt? It was the way the University was using PeopleSoft, Dr. Falkner explained. It is not cost-effective to maintain it the modifications in PeopleSoft. It is cost-neutral to the expenditures on life insurance for employees but it is not cost-neutral for operating costs to maintain system modifications in place now.

Professor Lanyon asked if they had any sense how the \$200,000 cap on life insurance might affect recruiting. Ms. Chapin said a few people of the 17 employers in the benchmarking study of Big 10 and research universities had unlimited coverage, one had \$300,000, and rest were at \$200,000 or less. If one assumed those without a maximum had a cap of \$500,000, the average Life benefit maximum would be \$132,000. If one didn't include those without a maximum, the average Life benefit maximum would be \$77,000.

Professor Konstan outlined three options for the Committee:

- the committee accepts the proposed changes as reasonable but not perfect
- the committee does not like the proposed changes and wishes to adopt a statement saying they are unwise
- the committee has heard about the changes and does not feel strongly about them, but will neither bless nor oppose them.

Mr. Croce asked what the judgment of the Benefits Advisory Committee was. Dr. Falkner said they did not have a lot of discussion and touched on only a few points. They were sensitive to the fact



that there are winners and losers but recognized that this is the reality and that it does benefit lower-paid employees. Ms. Chapin also indicated that there were not any significant comments from the P & A Benefits and Compensation Committee or the Civil Service Consultative Committee.

Professor Ng asked if Employee Benefits will announce the change of the \$25,000 additional life in 2015. Ms. Chapin indicated that the open enrollment for the \$25,000 supplemental life will be for 2015, but said the remaining changes will occur for 2014 and they will be announced in the October newsletter. Employee Benefits has been focusing on changes in health care, for obvious reasons, and the changes in insurance need to be made in 2014 because the PeopleSoft conversion will occur before 2015.

Committee members voted (6-1-1) in favor of the third option Professor Konstan presented: the Committee will neither bless nor oppose them. Ms. Chapin reported that everyone will be advised by individual letter of the life insurance changes and given a form to make changes they wish to make. They will do their best to ensure that no one loses life insurance unless they choose to. The letters will come during the open enrollment period.

Professor Ng commented that Morris faculty salaries are low and many of her colleagues will see the loss of the \$25,000 in additional life; she suggested that a letter go out earlier than open enrollment. Professor Konstan noted that these minutes will also be out; the Morris delegation to the Senate could alert their colleagues they should be aware of the change.

Professor Konstan thanked Ms. Chapin and Dr. Falkner for their report and adjourned the meeting at 4:30.

-- Gary Engstrand

University of Minnesota