

## SENATE COMMITTEE ON FACULTY AFFAIRS (SCFA)

April 14, 2015

Minutes of the meeting

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

[**In these minutes:** IT Governance, COACHE Survey Results, Promotion & Tenure Update, Follow-Up on Information-Gathering Sessions on Best Practices on Recruitment and Retention of Partnered Faculty and Post Tenure Review and Special Post Tenure Review]

PRESENT: Joseph Konstan (chair), Christina Bourland, Joe Price, Allen Levine, Theodor Litman, Teri Caraway, Sophia Gladding, Tabitha Grier-Reed, Robert Kudrle, Frank Kulacki, Scott Lanyon, Monica Luciana, Peh Ng, Brett Colson, Leah Reinert

REGRETS: Kathy Brown, Phil Buhlmann, Teresa Kimberley, Lori Rhudy, Daniel Skaar, Amira Masri

ABSENT: George Sell

GUESTS: Bernie Gulachek, associate vice president, Office of Information Technology; Heather Noble, associate CIO, Office of Information Technology

OTHERS ATTENDING: Ole Gram, assistant vice provost, Office of the Vice Provost for Faculty and Academic Affairs; Derk Renwick, CLA Faculty Affairs

1. **IT governance** – Professor Konstan convened the meeting and welcomed Office of Information Technology (OIT) guests Bernie Gulachek, associate vice president, and Heather Noble, associate CIO. He then turned to Mr. Gulachek to provide introductory remarks. Before beginning, Mr. Gulachek asked that there be a round of introductions. Following introductions, Mr. Gulachek reported that in 2012, a new governance model for IT was implemented. The model was designed to gather input and get ideas from across the institution about where the University's technologists should focus their time and energy in the upcoming fiscal year. In addition to meetings with various groups across the institution, OIT collected data via an online survey ([IT Input Survey](#)). The information that has been gathered is then compiled and rationalized into themes, which are then vetted through the deans and the Operational Excellence group. From this work comes a small list of efforts that technologists from across the institution rally around in order to effect change. Examples from previous year's efforts mentioned by Mr. Gulachek included Enterprise System Upgrade Project (ESUP) Readiness efforts, installation of the Information Security Risk Management (ISRM) program, and rationalizing the use of video conferencing tools to name a few.

Mr. Gulachek solicited members' feedback about their ideas on technology opportunities for the institution, where investments and enhancements are needed, and existing tools and services that are no longer needed. Suggestions and concerns raised by members are summarized below:

- The Aastra classroom management system is too complicated and is increasingly becoming less user-friendly. Additionally, there are problems with the system double scheduling.
- The need for software licensing (institution-wide site licenses) that includes the system campuses.
- Improvements to the financial reporting system, e.g., difficult to get current, believable information about accounts faculty have to manage.
- Moodle - There should be a 'public view' capability so students and colleagues can easily access information about previously offered courses. The Moodle default should be 'public view' unless directed otherwise.
- Wireless – While improvements have been made, there are still some problem areas.
- Web conferencing capabilities that work in rural areas.
- Google Hangout accessibility for the Academic Health Center.
- Google Group 'interoperability' with systems for defined groups of people, e.g., class lists, department lists.
- In-building cellular service signal enhancement.
- Improvements to the University directory.
- Web development services and support:
  - Help for departments, centers, projects, etc. that want to maintain a modern looking/feeling website with their own identity.
  - Help for groups (often research, sometimes educational) that want to develop and/or maintain services delivered through websites, mobile apps, etc.

Hearing no other suggestions or concerns, Professor Konstan thanked Mr. Gulachek and Ms. Noble for their time.

**2. Updates from Vice Provost Levine – COACHE Survey and P&T:** Starting with the Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education (COACHE) survey, Vice Provost Levine turned members' attention to the two documents that had been distributed and highlighted the following information about the survey:

- It is a valuable tool for the University because it includes comparative peer institution data. While 81 institutions participated in the survey, which was administered from November 2013 – January 2014, the University selected the following five institutions to compare its results against - Purdue University; University of Arizona; University of California, Davis; University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill; University of Virginia.
- Developed by the Harvard Graduate School of Education.
- Over 200 colleges and universities have used the survey in an effort to identify the drivers of faculty success and to implement informed changes based on their

results. The COACHE survey assesses how faculty at different career stages (assistant, associate, full professors) experience academic work life.

- COACHE survey benchmark areas included:
  - Nature of work in research, teaching and service.
  - Facilities, personal/family policies, benefits and salary.
  - Interdisciplinary work, collaboration and mentoring.
  - Tenure and promotion.
  - Leadership and governance.
  - Departmental collegiality, engagement and quality.
  - Appreciation and recognition.
- The survey response rate was 37%. Unfortunately, the survey was sent out at the same time as the Employee Engagement Survey, which likely had an impact on the response rate.
- The survey was used to look at overall satisfaction, autonomy, departmental culture, and areas for improvement.

Next, Vice Provost Levine walked members through the slide deck, which contained selected survey questions and responses for the University and the peer group it selected. Based on the survey results, the University's biggest challenges are in the areas of departmental collegiality and departmental engagement compared to both survey peers and the full COACHE institutional cohort. The University's strengths are in the areas of promotion and tenure, benefits/support/facilities, nature of the work, and mentoring.

Members agreed that it would be more informative to have some of the questions and results broken down even further, including results for peer institutions. Vice Provost Levine reminded members that many issues identified in the survey are not unique to the University of Minnesota but are, to a degree, universal problems for institutions of higher education. Having said this, however, it does not mean there are not real problems that need to be addressed.

Professor Caraway commented that it is important not to just look at the University in relation to its peers but also to look at the scale. For example, while the score on satisfaction with department chairs may be lower than other institutions, the University's satisfaction with chairs is actually higher than it is for higher-level administrators. Also, if the University's score is a bit higher than our peers on a particular question, but the score is low, it might indicate important structural or systemic problems that are worth addressing. Vice Provost Levine agreed.

In response to a comment made by Vice Provost Levine about the low response rate, Professor Lanyon said the University should be focusing its efforts on getting people to take the surveys, rather than conducting a lot of surveys, which yield poor response rates.

Professor Konstan asked if the survey identified one or two issues that are evident priorities for the University. Vice Provost Levine said it is apparent that more needs to be done in the area of leadership development for college and department leaders. Additionally, there is the issue of Post Tenure Review (PTR), which also needs attention.

Professor Konstan added that another important issue identified by the survey that warrants attention is the satisfaction level of associate professors.

Moving on, Vice Provost Levine provided a brief P&T update. He said that he received 135 dossiers, which are in the process of being reviewed. The results will be presented to the Board of Regents on May 7, 2015. Once the results are presented to the Board, letters will be sent out to the candidates. He then gave a quick overview of the P&T process.

**3. Follow-up on information-gathering sessions and next steps:** Professor Konstan asked members what, if anything, the committee is interested in doing as follow-up to the information-gathering sessions on 1) best practices on recruitment and retention of partnered faculty and 2) PTR and special PTR. He also announced that at the committee's next meeting on May 12 it would have another information-gathering session on graduate school funding.

Regarding the session on PTR, said Professor Kudrle, he was amazed by the variety of ways departments handle this immensely important issue. He added that he would think that there would be best practices related to PTR, either at the University or somewhere. Professor Konstan agreed and said not only is there variation from department to department, but substantial faculty autonomy in how the reviews are conducted. Professor Lanyon agreed that best practices should be identified related to PTR, and suggested that it be done out of the Provost's Office with the help of SCFA. Vice Provost Levine said having a discussion about processes would be a good starting point. Ole Gram, assistant vice provost, Office of the Vice Provost for Faculty and Academic Affairs, added that as best practices are identified, it will be important to balance the process of PTR against the increasing demands placed on tenured faculty and department heads/chairs to do it. At the conclusion of the discussion, Professor Konstan asked members if 1) a small group should be convened to look into, identify and catalogue PTR best practices or 2) a statement be written by the committee in support of pursuing identification of PTR best practices with the understanding that the committee will continue to gather additional information next year. Professor Kudrle asked Vice Provost Levine his opinion about whether collecting and compiling this information has value. Vice Provost Levine said he believes there is value in doing this, but it is important to recognize that whatever best practices are compiled will not necessarily work for every unit. The committee decided to convene a small group to work on this initiative. Professors Lanyon, Luciana, Kudrle volunteered to serve on the small group as did Dr. Gram from the Provost's Office.

In terms of the matter of recruitment and retention of faculty with partners, Dr. Gram reported that since SCFA talked about this issue in February, a decision has been made to develop a brochure, which will likely be able to be completed by next fall. When it is ready, it will be shared with the committee.

**4. Adjournment:** Hearing no further business, Professor Konstan adjourned the meeting.

Renee Dempsey  
University Senate