

SENATE COMMITTEE ON FACULTY AFFAIRS (SCFA)

September 9, 2014

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: Review of Committee Charge, Agenda Setting for the 2014 – 2015 Academic Year]

PRESENT: Joseph Konstan (chair), Christina Bourland, Joe Price, Kathy Brown, Teresa Kimberley, Allen Levine, Theodor Litman, Teri Caraway, Sophia Gladding, Tabitha Grier-Reed, Robert Kudrle, Frank Kulacki, Scott Lanyon, Monica Luciana, Peh Ng, Lori Rhudy, George Sell, Daniel Skaar, Brett Colson

REGRETS: Phil Buhlmann

ABSENT: Nicholas Poggioli

OTHERS ATTENDING: Assistant Vice Provost Ole Gram, and Professor William Kennedy (Neurology)

1. **Meeting convened:** Professor Konstan convened the meeting, welcomed those present and called for a round of introductions. He noted that an invitation had been extended beyond immediate committee members to solicit topics from the broader University community about issues the Senate Committee on Faculty Affairs (SCFA) should take up this year. The primary purpose for today's meeting is to start setting the SCFA agenda for the 2014 – 2015 academic year.

2. **Review of committee charge:** Professor Konstan turned members' attention to the committee charge (<http://www1.umn.edu/usenate/charges/scfach.html>), which had been sent out with the agenda. He briefly summarized the charge by saying that the committee basically deals with all matters that have an impact on faculty.

Before soliciting suggestions for agenda topics, Professor Konstan announced that the committee's meeting schedule is quite different from previous years. In part, the schedule change is a result of senior leadership's goal of being mindful of and making efficient use of peoples' time. Rather than receiving lengthy reports from administrators at each meeting, guests will be asked to provide members with reports/materials ahead of time so more time can be spent on consultation and having meaningful, productive discussions.

3. **Agenda setting for the 2014 – 2015 academic year:** Professor Konstan reported receiving a few agenda topics via email prior to today's meeting. He then welcomed Professor William Kennedy and asked him to share the topic he would like SCFA to look into this year. After

hearing Professor Kennedy's concerns in a fair amount of detail, Professor Konstan summarized his request that SCFA look into the policies and procedures of the University of Minnesota Foundation and find out the answers to the following questions:

- When a gift is made to the Foundation to support a particular research project, etc., how does the Foundation determine who is authorized to direct the money from that gift?
- To what extent does the Foundation treat the University's management structure as the authority structure over the funds?
- Are there adequate University policies and/or procedures to address issues of whether management authority over funds are free of conflict or interest or are these conflicts of interest able to be managed? Does a department head or dean have the authority to reallocate funds at their discretion?
- Once a fund is established and signing authority is identified, who has the authority to change the original signing authority?

Professor Konstan thanked Professor Kennedy for his suggestion. Before reviewing the pending list of agenda items he drafted, Professor Konstan asked members for other agenda item ideas. Suggestions included:

- Look into why the University assigns legal counsel to those in administration who are accused of possible wrongdoing, however, faculty and/or staff who are doing the accusing are not assigned counsel or support.
- Continue the discussion about faculty caregivers and how to support them. This is an issue that has a significant impact on recruiting and retaining excellent faculty.
- Follow-up on requests for the University to pay for child care under certain circumstances, e.g., special visitors who need to bring a child(ren) with them to work.
- Explore tuition waivers for family members of faculty and staff.
- In conjunction with the Academic Freedom and Tenure Committee, look into the percent of regular versus non-regular faculty by departments and colleges, which are supposed to adhere to set ratios when hiring contract/non-tenure track faculty.
- Look at whether the University's conflict resolution resources, e.g., Office of Conflict Resolution (OCR) are adequate or not.
- Look into the rationale behind why post-doctorate students with fellowships who are bringing in indirect funds to the institution are not University employees, and, as a result, are not eligible to receive employee benefits.
- Continue the discussion about contract/non-tenure track faculty who are on annually renewable appointments.
- Continue to discuss revising the University's sabbatical policy.
- Receive an update on the proposed changes to faculty retirement options, e.g., terminal agreements, phased retirement.
- Get a response from the administration on the recommendations coming out of the Report of the Special Committee on Graduate Education (http://www.grad.umn.edu/prod/groups/grad/@pub/@grad/documents/article/grad_article_469789.pdf).
- Review the strategic planning documents with an eye toward recommendations that will have an impact on faculty affairs.

Next, Professor Konstan reviewed the list of pending issues being carried over from last /previous years:

- Sabbatical policy revision.
- Non-tenure track faculty appointments.
- Faculty caregivers.
- Percentage of regular versus non-regular faculty by departments and colleges, which are supposed to adhere to set ratios for hiring contract/non-tenure track faculty.
- Regents Scholarship.
- Retention and spousal offers.
- Changes in faculty retirement options.
- Post-tenure review (PTR).
- COACHE (Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education) survey results for 2013.
- Unnecessary procedural work that faculty need to do despite the push by administration to be as efficient as possible.
- University's risk profile.
- Promotion of faculty work to the external community.
- Employee benefits in general.
- Standardization and transparency of the faculty pay plan and how merit reviews are translated into pay increases.

Members then prioritized the list of topics/issues they were interested in addressing this year. The topics/issues that bubbled up to the top were:

- Revision of the sabbatical policy.
- Clinical/contract/non-tenure track faculty.
- Post-Tenure Review (PTR).
- Graduate education, e.g., is graduate education financing driving academic decisions?
- Proposed changes to retirement options for faculty.
- Invite a representative from the University of Minnesota Foundation to learn about their policies and procedures for gifts and accounts.
- Faculty access to the Office of Conflict Resolution (OCR).
- Employment status of post-doctoral students.
- Tuition waivers and Regents Scholarship.

Hearing no further business, Professor Konstan thanked members for their time.

Renee Dempsey
University Senate