



A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR OF THE FACULTY AND SENATE CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEES



As I write this brief report, I am enjoying my second term as chair of the Faculty Consultative Committee (FCC). While the learning curve has become less steep, I am still learning on the job. I continue to be impressed by the knowledge and dedication of my colleagues on FCC (several of whom are enjoying their first year as committee members) and of the many other faculty, staff, students and administrators with whom we've met this year. Colleagues on FCC and the Academic Freedom and Tenure Committee are currently working with student groups to further our conversation, initiated in the spring semester, on freedom of expression, and hope to jointly host one or more events early next semester. The FCC also partnered with the Office of the Executive Vice President and Provost to create a task force addressing ways faculty can help address the issues around student mental health. The task force intends to complete

GOVERNANCE WORKING FOR U

The work of the senates is accomplished primarily through their 25 standing [committees](#), as well as numerous subcommittees and task forces. Faculty, academic professionals, civil service staff, students, alumni, and administrators have designated positions on most committees.

Civil Service Consultative Committee (CSCC)

The CSCC received updates from the Office of Human Resources (OHR) on changes to three OHR policies that pertain to civil service employees and the impact the changes in the federal Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) will have on University employees. CSCC also met with President Eric Kaler and Vice President Kathy Brown, OHR, and held a lengthy discussion with Ann Freeman and Stef Wilenchek, two members of the Bias Response and Referral Network, regarding the work of that group and how employees can be engaged in their efforts. The Rules Subcommittee will be considering another set of changes to the Employment Rules this academic year. Key changes are in sections regarding vacation accrual, voting in elections, in-range salary adjustments, the JEQ process, and unit seniority and bumping rights. The Benefits and Compensation Subcommittee devoted its meetings to continued discussions with OHR regarding proposed policy changes and the impact on civil service employees from changes to the FLSA.

Faculty Consultative Committee (FCC)

The FCC has been hard at work this semester: A Joint Task Force on Student Mental Health (JTFSMH) was charged by Provost Karen Hanson and the FCC to make recommendations on strategies for involving faculty in addressing student mental health issues. The JTFSMH expects to submit a report along with its recommendations early next year. Additionally, the FCC, in conjunction with the President's Office, was instrumental in formalizing and making transparent the selection process for the University's faculty legislative liaison positions. The newly appointed faculty legislative liaisons are Professors Michael Oakes, School of Public Health, and Donna Spannaus-Martin, Center for Allied Health Programs. Other topics at the forefront of the FCC agenda are campus climate, the annual operating budget development process, and how best to communicate the University's finances to interested faculty and staff. In addition, the FCC has been working with the Academic Freedom and Tenure Committee on moving forward the "Shield Amendment," a proposed amendment to the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act, which would create legal obligations for faculty as it relates to how government data are collected, created, stored, used, and released.

P&A Senate Consultative Committee (PACC)

The PACC has been in frequent conversation with representatives from the Office of Human Resources around a variety of issues this

their work within the next two to three months, and my colleagues and I are eager to see their work product. The FCC and the Senate Committee on Faculty Affairs intend to host a forum early in the upcoming spring semester that will provide an opportunity for faculty to present their views on the pros and cons of a Twin Cities faculty union. Uncertainty around the timing of the union authorization vote is complicating this effort, but we are optimistic we will be able to host an event that will be informative, dynamic, and, we hope, well attended. Please stay tuned for details. I will close my message with a repetition of my plea from last year, urging you to participate in governance in your unit, your college, and, if the opportunity presents itself, at the University level. We could *still* use the help!

semester, including the faculty unionization effort, changes to the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), and leadership development opportunities for P&A staff. Each P&A Senate meeting this year will center around a theme; this semester, meetings have focused on campus climate (October) and wellness (December). Subsequent meetings will focus on campus safety, policy and compliance, and building partnerships with unit-level human resources staff. The PACC plans to visit the Duluth campus in December in order to connect with constituents there, and visit the other system campuses in the spring.



Student Senate Consultative Committee (SSCC)

The SSCC has identified several priorities for the year, including student mental health advocacy, increasing student safety, promoting diversity and inclusion, addressing off-campus housing issues, and addressing issues of sexual harassment. The SSCC invited Ross Allanson, director, Parking and Transportation Services, to the November Student Senate meeting to discuss the creation of an after-hours reduced-rate parking program for students in order to alleviate student safety concerns on the Twin Cities campus. Additionally, the SSCC proposed two resolutions: a recommendation for revisions to the Administrative Policy on Parental Leave for Academic Employees (in partnership with the Council of Graduate Students), and a recommendation to create an undergraduate research journal on the Twin Cities campus (in partnership with the Minnesota Student Association). The SSCC also proposed a statement (in partnership with the UMD Student Association) encouraging all campuses to adopt pollinator-friendly best practices. The resolutions and statement passed unanimously.



A VIEW FROM THE INSIDE

*Teresa Jacobson Kimberley, associate professor
Division of Physical Therapy, Department of Rehabilitation Medicine*

*Phil Buhlmann, professor
Department of Chemistry*

Co-chairs, Academic Freedom and Tenure Committee

The Intersection of Academic Freedom and Free Speech

The University of Minnesota has a long history of strong support of academic freedom, which is essential to all aspects of the academic enterprise. In order to advance knowledge, members of the academic community (employees and students) must be free to pose questions and explore ideas in teaching, research, and the arts; learning should be unfettered by political or theological interference (statement rephrased from Report of the Task Force on Academic Freedom, April 2004). As stated in a [white paper by the Academic Freedom and Tenure \(AF&T\) Committee](#), “academic freedom protects university employees from discipline or restraint based on their activities in scholarship, teaching, and service as a part of their University roles” (December 2011). Without the steadfast assurance that academic freedom is valued within all policies and procedures, there is the potential to dampen the unconstrained flow of ideas and critical inquiry. These are the guiding principles we, as AF&T co-chairs for the past three years, use as the committee wrestles with topics in this domain. Our overarching goal is to help refine and clarify policies and procedures related to academic freedom and tenure. Recent achievements include, for example, the development of procedures for unrequested leaves of absence for disabled faculty members and procedures for faculty moving appointment homes.

A current issue that has come to the forefront of AF&T’s attention is related to the collegiate personnel plans, and in particular the ratio of tenured and tenure-track faculty versus academic professionals with primary responsibility for teaching. AF&T has long been charged to monitor these collegiate plans, but its importance is particularly timely in light of campus climate issues and a nationwide trend to decrease the number of tenured faculty. In collaboration with the Senate Committee for Faculty Affairs (SCFA), AF&T developed over the past academic year guidelines for the content of these personnel plans, which previously differed widely in content from college to college due to a lack of specific instructions. We are very pleased to note that Rebecca Ropers-Huilman, vice provost, Faculty and Academic Affairs, is making the collegiate personnel plans a priority and has already

implemented the guidelines developed by AF&T and SCFA. AF&T will be reviewing newly submitted personnel plans throughout the academic year and making recommendations to Provost Karen Hanson.

Free speech is another key topic of AF&T's interests, as it has come up in the context of several recent incidents across campus. There is wide agreement among members of the University that freedom of speech is a key pillar of academic discourse. However, we believe that there needs to be more effort to clarify that freedom of speech is not without its limit. For example, the freedom of speech does not protect threats of violence directed at individuals or groups of persons and it does not protect speech that intentionally and recklessly inflicts severe emotional distress on particular individuals. AF&T joins many others from across the University in working to make clear the importance of speaking up against hate speech, intolerance, bigotry, and bullying while valuing a healthy exchange of conflicting ideas. Limiting free speech is a slippery slope, though, which requires that exceptions are kept at a minimum. There must be an understanding of the importance of free speech in the classroom and beyond to challenge thinking and facilitate growth.

NOVEMBER JOINT FACULTY AND UNIVERSITY SENATE MEETING

Forum on Student Mental Health

Many senate committees are working on the issue of student mental health this year. Therefore, as part of the joint meeting of the University and Faculty Senates on November 3, 2016, the Senate Consultative Committee made the decision to host an open discussion on how instructors can help support student mental health. Speakers, guests and senators sported purple ribbons representing student mental health awareness, which were distributed by members of the Student Senate Consultative Committee. Sue Wick, chair of the Senate Committee on Educational Policy and co-chair of the Joint Task Force on Student Mental Health (JTFSMH), framed and moderated the discussion. Matt Hanson, assistant director of mental health, Boynton Health Service, and co-chair of the Provost's Committee on Student Mental Health, provided background for the discussion, as well as tips on recognizing and responding to mental health crises. In order to facilitate an open dialogue, senators voted to waive the requirement that senators must yield time to non-senators who wish to speak. An engaging discussion ensued with students, faculty, and staff all contributing to the conversation. Suggestions included instructors emphasizing mental health throughout the semester, especially at stressful times such as midterms and finals, and allowing students to drop their grade from one exam or assignment. Details of this discussion will be provided in the minutes of the meeting.



President's Report



President Eric Kaler began his report with a [condemnation of the hate-based incidents](#) that took place in the 48 hours preceding the Senate meeting. He said that these incidents are contrary to the values of the University of Minnesota, which strives to be a safe and welcoming environment for all community members. He then turned to student mental health, and reported that 6.5 full time clinicians and counselors had been added since June, and that the administration remains attentive to this issue. Regarding the faculty unionization effort, he said that while the University respects the faculty's right to unionize, if they so choose, the University does not support adding P&A instructors to the bargaining unit. The University has spent about \$545K on legal fees. President Kaler then updated senators on several key leadership transitions. Finally, he urged everyone to vote the following Tuesday. In response to a question from a student, President Kaler said that the question on the application asking whether the applicant has been convicted of a felony will be removed, and added that the University may transition to the Common Application.

Provost's Report

In her address, Provost Karen Hanson first informed senators about the [Provost's Conversation Series](#). "Constructing Community-- Identity, Opportunity, and Place." She also spoke about the Joint Task Force on Student Mental Health, which was formed at the behest of the Faculty Consultative Committee (FCC) and the provost. She then updated senators on the [Strategic Plan](#). Grand Challenges teams and grant recipients have been announced, multidisciplinary courses are being created, and reflection on liberal education is in progress. She also said that diversity will be a priority for graduate education this year, and informed senators about the system-wide strategic planning initiative.

SENATE COMMITTEES COLLABORATE ON ISSUES

Campus Climate and Freedom of Expression

Campus climate and how it intersects with the freedom of expression has been an extremely hot topic on campus this semester,

and many committees addressed the issue. The P&A Senate's first meeting, in October, focused around campus climate and included addresses by Vice President for Equity and Diversity Katrice Albert; Stef Wilenchek, director of the Gender and Sexuality Center for Queer and Trans Life; and Nubia Esparza, senior coordinator, Student and Diversity Programs in the Law School. This discussion was extremely timely, as it took place the day after the campus conversation-turned-protest after the "Paint the Bridge" incident. The Academic Freedom and Tenure Committee and the Faculty Consultative Committee are grappling with finding the balance between freedom of expression and campus civility. The Disabilities Issues Committee and Equity, Access, and Diversity Committee both allotted time to discussing the recent spate of hate crimes, and will continue these discussions next semester.

Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA)

Several groups consulted on the changes to the Fair Labor Standards Act, which were due to be implemented this semester. Under the new rules, many P&A employees would be considered non-exempt, which means that they would need to track their hours. On behalf of its constituents, the P&A Consultative Committee has been in frequent discussion with representatives from the Office of Human Resources. The Senate Research Committee (SRC) has also discussed this issue at length, as a large portion of the P&A staff affected by this change are postdocs funded by soft money grants. The SRC also sent a letter to all deans and chancellors, suggesting that bridge funds be made available for principal investigators currently employing postdoctoral researchers receiving raises to fully or partially absorb these unexpected costs, as well as a letter to faculty with information and recommendations on how to proceed under the new rules.

Bias Response and Referral Network

During the summer, the [Bias Response and Referral Network](#) (BRRN; formerly the Bias Response Team) consulted with the chairs of several committees, including Academic Freedom and Tenure; Equity, Access, and Diversity; the Senate Committee on Student Affairs; the Student Senate Consultative Committee; the Civil Service Consultative Committee; and the Faculty Consultative Committee. Later, the BRRN continued consultation with several other Senate committees. Their discussions with governance leaders led them to propose a change to their name, and to propose adding a faculty member and representation from the Academic Freedom and Tenure committee to the team.

Learning Space Plan

Initiated by the Classroom Advisory Subcommittee, there has been discussion in a number of committees around the idea of having a plan for learning space at the University. This plan would include an assessment of needs in terms of different types, sizes, and layouts of classrooms, and would guide future projects in order to ensure that needs are addressed when buildings are added or remodeled. The plan would also include provisions on disability accommodations and would include informal learning spaces, such as outdoor space and study space. The Disabilities Issues Committee, the Senate Committee on Educational Policy, and the Student Senate Consultative Committee have collaborated on this issue.

SCIT SAYS: PROTECT YOURSELF FROM IDENTITY THEFT

At the November Senate Committee on Information Technologies (SCIT) meeting, Bernard Gulachek, interim vice president and chief information officer, Office of Information Technology (OIT), and Brian Dahlin, chief information security officer, OIT, attended to provide an overview of security and infrastructure at the University. Of great interest to the committee was the option employees now have to opt in to Duo Two Factor Authentication to prevent phishers from gaining access to their University of Minnesota direct deposit and W-2 information. After you opt in, the University's system will require that the person trying to access your W2 or Direct Deposit information has both your password and your phone or device. If you opt in-even if phishers steal your password-they cannot get into your accounts. [Opt in now.](#)

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THE INDIVIDUAL SENATES:

- [Civil Service Senate](#)
- [Faculty Senate](#)
- [P&A Senate](#)
- [Student Senate](#)

THE WEEKLY UPDATE

Are you interested in receiving minutes of University Senate committees? Do you want to know more about what governance is doing on your behalf? Sign-up for the [Weekly Update](#) to receive approved committee minutes.

GET INVOLVED!

To learn more about serving on a senate committee, go to [committee descriptions and applications](#). To learn more about serving on a senate, contact [Becky Hippert](#) in the Senate Office.

POLICY INFORMATION

For the latest information on policies that may affect you and policies currently under review, go to the [University Policy Library](#).

LOOKING AHEAD...**PRESIDENT KALER TO GIVE STATE OF THE U ADDRESS**

The address will be held on March 2, 2017, 3:30-4:30 p.m., Coffman Theater. Watch for public announcements for more information.

SPRING 2017 UNIVERSITY SENATE MEETINGS:

- March 2
- April 6
- May 4