

Faculty Consultative Committee (FCC)
February 16, 2017
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 represents the views of, nor are they binding on, the Senate, the Administration, or the Board of Regents.

[In these minutes: Improving the Advising and Mentoring of Graduate Students; Senate Research Committee Update; University's Participation in the Coalition on Intercollegiate Athletics; Legislative Session Update; FCC Statement on Immigration Executive Order; Constitution and Bylaw Changes]

PRESENT: Colin Campbell (chair), Joseph Konstan (vice chair), Catherine French, Dan Feeney, Kathleen Krichbaum, Michael Kyba, Susan Wick, Robert Blair, Shawn Curley, Janet Ericksen, Greta Friedemann-Sanchez, Ruth Okediji, Amy Pittenger, Peter Tiffin

REGRETS: Monica Luciana, George Trachte, Peggy Nelson

ABSENT: Michael Oakes, Donna Spannaus-Martin

GUESTS: Jan Morse, ombudsman and director, Student Conflict Resolution Center; Associate Professor Doug Ernie, College of Science and Engineering; Professor Perry Leo, College of Science and Engineering

OTHERS ATTENDING: Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate Education Scott Lanyon

1. Improving the Advising and Mentoring of Graduate Students: Professor Campbell welcomed Jan Morse, ombudsman and director, Student Conflict Resolution Center, and Associate Professor Doug Ernie, College of Science and Engineering, and called for a round of introductions. Following introductions, Ms. Morse turned members' attention to the [advising report](#) that was sent out along with the agenda.

By way of background, Ms. Morse said in about 2006 or so she noticed an increase in the number of students coming to her office, the Student Conflict Resolution Center (SCRC), with concerns about offensive, hostile, intimidating behavior, which was interfering with their ability to work and learn. After checking with other ombudsman colleagues to see if they were seeing the same thing, she decided to collect more information via a 2007 survey on academic harassment. Then, in an effort to garner diverse University perspectives and respond to this problem, the Work Group Promoting Academic Civility was created in 2008. The Work Group is comprised of faculty, staff and students who work on how to respond to reports of academic harassment within the University community. The first survey was conducted in 2007, and it was subsequently followed up with surveys in 2011, and 2014 - http://www.sos.umn.edu/acad_resources.html. Survey results indicate that about one third of students are experiencing or witnessing offensive behavior.

Recognizing that it would not be possible to stop all incidents of this kind of behavior, the Work Group in conjunction with the Graduate School talked extensively about factors contributing to a student's success and concluded that advising was the key component to a student's success. This conclusion was supported by data from the Ph.D. Completion Project report. As a result, the Work Group talked about supporting good advising and improving advising at the University. A number of resources were developed and these can be found on the SCRC [website](#). Examples of a few of these resources were distributed to members. Ms. Morse then highlighted information from a 2016 University-wide survey on the advising experiences of graduate students along with other information related to efforts that are underway to improve the advising and mentoring of graduate students at the University, which included the following:

- The 2016 survey response rate was about 15%.
- Earlier career Ph.D. students are happier with their advisors than are later career Ph.D. students.
- Roughly 18% of early career survey respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed with a statement that they are satisfied with the amount of guidance provided by their advisors, and this figure rises to 35% for late career Ph.D. students. Additionally, 6% of early career survey respondents indicate having significant difficulties with their advisors and this number rises to 18% for late career Ph.D. students.
- Approximately 60% of student respondents indicated that they did not know where to go to get help in dealing with their advisor.
- The Work Group Promoting Academic Civility developed the following statement: "The University of Minnesota is committed to providing outstanding educational experiences, and a positive and supportive environment in which to work and learn." It was noted that when offensive, hostile, and intimidating behaviors occur, it interferes with people's ability to do well. In fact, 80% of respondents in the 2014 survey on academic harassment who experienced these destructive behaviors said that it 'somewhat or completely' prevented them from doing their best work.

Questions and comments from members included:

- Do you find it surprising that 35% of late career Ph.D. students are not fully satisfied with their advisors, asked Professor Tiffin? Vice Provost Lanyon said he is not surprised, but disappointed. Professor Tiffin said he would be interested to know what proportion of students are satisfied with being in graduate school. There are a lot of people who start growing up in graduate school and become dissatisfied with being there. Professor Campbell agreed, and said he is not sure what can be done given the external factors are what they are. He added that he is appalled by the statistic that 60% of graduate students did not know where to go when they were experiencing problems with their advisors.
- Professor Kyba said he believes it is natural that a students' level of discontent rises over time, and said he would not necessarily view this as a problem. In response, Ms. Morse noted that there are departments that have a culture of strong advising as a value. For example, she said that the College of Food, Agricultural and Natural Resource Sciences (CFANS) created a 'Best Advising Practices for Graduate Student Success' document, which appears to be working well for them. She added that she has noticed a measurable drop in the number of CFAN cases that come to her office.

- Regarding the information about the standard 50% assistantship being 20 hours/week, on average, when school is in session, is inaccurate, said Professor Konstan. The Office of Human Resources (OHR) has made it clear that assistantships continue even when school is not in session, that assistants do not get vacation, and that assistants are expected to be here on the first day of work even if school is not in session if that is when their appointment begins. It will be important to check with OHR as to the accuracy of some of the information that is being disseminated, particularly as it relates to international students. Ms. Morse thanked Professor Konstan for this information and said she will check with OHR about it.
- Has the 'Best Advising Practices for Graduate Student Success' document been sent to the DGSs, asked Professor Curley? Not yet, said Ms. Morse, and noted that she and Karen Starry from the Graduate School recently finished the conversation of the CFANs document to a generic document that all schools can use. The generic document is being vetted to different groups to get their feedback, and, after that is done, it will go on the SCRC website and be distributed more broadly.
- Professor Curley asked if the survey data has been broken out by colleges or programs? It will be, said Vice Provost Lanyon. He noted that after he and Ms. Morse meet with the associate deans from each college, they should be able to get at program-level information.
- Professor Ernie commented that while he agrees that the maturity level of students can have an impact on their satisfaction with their advisors, it is important to know that not all advisors keep students apprised of their progress/status, and additionally not all programs provide annual progress reviews, which helps students know where they are at in their program.
- Professor Pittenger asked whether a 15% survey response rate is considered good, and also if advisors are given training. Vice Provost Lanyon said he is aware of one college that does provide advisor training, but most do not. The intent of the survey is not to point fingers at advisors, but it is intended to inform the University, and, the Graduate School in particular, that faculty advisors need to be given tools. He added that many of the issues that arise between advisors and advisees are that they each have different expectations. Regarding the question about the response rate, said Ms. Morse, the Office of Measurement Services said this level of response was reliable. In terms of faculty advisor training, she concurred with Vice Provost Lanyon that there is little training. She recalled when the old Graduate School was in place that it offered a two-hour training session for faculty, which would fill up quickly. Some of the resources on the SCRC website came out of discussions from these training sessions.
- Professor Friedemann-Sanchez noted that the National Center for Faculty Diversity and Development is holding a training session on mentoring on April 14. Now that the University has an affiliation with this organization, she suggested asking them to hold training sessions here. Vice Provost Lanyon said a few people from the Graduate School plan to attend this training session with an eye toward using the information provided more broadly at the University. He added that he has been talking with Vice Provost for Faculty and Academic Affairs Ropers-Huilman about ways of incorporating advising training into the new faculty training. Helping faculty be more effective advisors is a high priority for the Graduate School.

- Professor Konstan said to actually change faculty advisor behavior will require time and effort, and, in the long-run, may even result in some faculty not being advisors. Ms. Morse agreed that making these changes is not free per se, but it is relatively inexpensive compared to other costs such as lawsuits. Vice Provost Lanyon added that the cost of not doing anything is very high.
- Professor Okediji said when units are admitting graduate students they should be encouraged to think about what advising resources they have and what they should put in place. Units should be thinking about the start, middle and end game when it comes to their advising resources.
- Professor Krichbaum commented that she likes the fact that the ‘Best Advising Practices for Graduate Student Success’ document outlines both students’ responsibilities as well as faculty responsibilities in the advisor/advisee relationship. Ms. Morse agreed that this relationship is a joint enterprise.
- Professor Curley suggested that graduate student orientation take place over an extended period of time so that they get the information they need when they need it. Vice Provost Lanyon agreed and added that because students, faculty, DGSs, and the graduate program coordinators all play a different role in this process that training tools should be developed for each of these groups.
- In order to address a problem and how to advise advisors, said Professor French, it would be helpful to know a little more about the problems the students are experiencing and when those problems occur. Currently, the survey is discretized between early career and later career graduate students, and it was stated that later career students indicate they are less satisfied with guidance from their advisers. A reason could be that the longer students have been here (e.g., > 6 years), they may feel that their graduation is being delayed. Something like this could skew the responses for all later career students. Without a finer sorting of students within their career, and comments from the students clarifying their responses, it is difficult to interpret the results. Vice Provost Lanyon said ultimately the purpose of a survey like this is to get at this level of granularity for the various programs at the University. Professor Tiffin said that actions taken in response to the survey results need to be program specific rather than a one-size fits all orientation for graduate students in order to be helpful. Vice Provost Lanyon said while he believes there could be some University-wide things done for advisors in terms of tools, etc., because the University is so diverse when it comes to its graduate education, coming up with University-wide solutions is probably not the best idea. However, recognizing University issues that exist broadly are worth pointing out.
- In order to make progress with this effort, said Professor Konstan, there is some quantitative data that is needed: 1) What percentage of complaints are coming from graduate students who are not succeeding and leaving the University versus people who are succeeding but voicing their complaints; 2) What is the distribution of complaints against the distribution of advisors; 3) What can be done to get graduate students to complete their respective programs quicker.
- The Dignity Project, said Professor Wick, can be universally applied, and could help with improving student mental health at the graduate and professional levels.
- In response to a suggestion from Professor Kyba about doing the survey on an annual basis in order to get longitudinal data, Vice Provost Lanyon said the intent is to wrap this survey into the grad SERA survey in order to get comparative data, and the Grad

SERA survey is done every other year. Vice Provost Lanyon said he would bring this suggestion to the graduate students to see how they would feel about being surveyed annually, and, if they are open to it, he certainly would be open to it as well.

In light of time, Professor Campbell thanked Ms. Morse, Professor Ernie and Vice Provost Lanyon for the information they shared and a good discussion.

2. Senate Research Committee (SRC) update: Professor Campbell called on Professor Kyba to share with members what the SRC has been/is working on this year. To begin, Professor Kyba mentioned the increase in postdoc salaries that took effect December 1, 2016 as a result of proposed changes to the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). Despite the fact that just days before the new FLSA regulations were to take effect, a federal judge put a halt to the legislation; however, the University decided to move forward with the wage increases for employees (primarily postdocs) who had been previously notified that their salaries were going to increase. Having said that, Professor Kyba said there are two kinds of postdocs, associates and fellows, and they are treated differently in terms of their benefits. As a result, the SRC has discussed merging these two job classifications or otherwise enabling them to have the same level of benefits. With regard to the recently elevated postdoc salaries, OHR made the decision to keep the new salary floor for incoming postdocs at the new minimum, which is \$47,476/year. Professor Kyba said he was not aware of a formal faculty consultative process ahead of this decision. He then highlighted some of the problems associated with this decision such as wage compression, and the fact that if promoted out of postdoc status, the next job classification has a significantly lower minimum than does the postdoc classification.

Professor Okediji wondered about how often consultation does not happen on issues that have an impact on faculty. There should be a way to more systematically ensure when central administration is making decisions that impact faculty research that consultation occurs. Professor Campbell commended Professor Kyba on being forceful, diligent, and respectful in pursuing this particular issue with Vice President Brown. Professor Konstan commented that there has been a lot of personnel turnover in senior administration of late, and the FCC has a responsibility to invite newly hired senior administrators to FCC meetings in an effort to ‘socialize’ them about governance and the importance of consultation. It needs to be made clear to new people that the University has a culture where faculty value having input, and hearing this input will in turn benefit administrators. In this situation, said Professor Konstan, he does not believe the decision would have been any different, but it is likely the downstream effects would have been better thought out. Professor Kyba added that he believes there needs to be a consistent salary floor for postdocs. Additionally, Professor Kyba offered that the faculty unionization effort has probably brought the administration to recognize the value of active and fruitful channels of faculty consultation.

Another issue that SRC has been working on this year, said Professor Kyba, is fringe pooling of unplanned leaves. The question is how should all unplanned leaves be paid for. A no-cost solution to the unplanned leave issue for researchers is to fund unplanned leaves in advance through a pool of funds that are taken as part of fringe. This would increase the fringe costs so that all employees become marginally more expensive, but when an employee takes an unplanned leave, they then cost nothing. The Equity, Access and Diversity and the Social

Concerns Committee are also interested in this issue, but for different reasons. Professor Kyba said there are institutions that already do this, e.g., Stanford University.

In terms of obstacles to doing this, Professor Kyba said SRC has been trying for a long time to find out how much doing this would cost and how much fringe rates would need to increase, and that in previous years the committee had not been successful in obtaining this information. This year, however, Vice Provost for Faculty and Academic Affairs Rebecca Ropers-Huilman arranged a meeting with OHR Vice President Brown and Julie Tonneson, associate vice president, University Finance, with Professors Kyba and Campbell to discuss this matter. Vice President Brown recently communicated that the total cost of unplanned leaves was approximately \$10 million last year. Professor Kyba expressed gratitude that Vice President Brown was able to commit resources to this job at a time when her office was quite busy due to the unusually large number of requests related to the ongoing unionization discussions. The committee is now waiting to hear from University Finance about what that will mean in terms of an increase in fringe. If it seems reasonable, the SRC will recommend that the University make this change to how salary costs to employees on unplanned leaves are budgeted and paid for.

Although in principle, fringe pooling of leave costs is cost-neutral, said Professor Kyba, it is his understanding that some units will be net losers and others will gain. Additionally, there is an upfront hiccup in costs because at the start, funds will need to be available to pay leaves before the pool has been filled.

Professor Konstan commented that this is a remarkably important effort, and he is happy that progress is being made. There are other closely related issues and so if progress is made with funding unplanned leaves that these other issues be looked at too, e.g., vacation payouts, severance payouts. Professor Kyba asked Professor Konstan to send him specific details and he would bring them to the administration.

Professor Campbell again commended Professor Kyba for all his hard work on this issue as well. He added that it would be great if this could be completed before the end of the academic year.

3. Discussion regarding the University's participation in the Coalition on Intercollegiate Athletics (COIA): Professor Campbell welcomed Professor Perry Leo who is one of two Faculty Athletic Representatives (FARs). Before beginning, Professor Campbell called for a round of introductions.

Following introductions, Professor Leo provided background information about COIA, and said that it was founded in 2002 as a way for faculty senates to be more engaged in Athletics. While COIA was active early on, over time, in Professor Leo's opinion, it seemed to be more about meeting and continuing the camaraderie than about doing anything actively about Athletics, which has resulted in the group becoming less and less effective. Beginning in roughly 2007/2008, COIA started having conversations about disbanding and these discussions have continued just about every year since that time.

Professor Campbell said this topic came up at this year's Big Ten Academic Alliance Governance Leadership Conference at Michigan State. Based on the discussion, it appears that there are efforts underway to create an executive committee of COIA that would make decisions on behalf of the larger COIA organization. Given the University does not have a lot of enthusiasm for what COIA is doing, it is important to point out that if this happens COIA will be speaking on behalf of the University, which is a member. With that said, it does not make sense for the University of Minnesota to be a member of an organization over which it essentially has no control. He added that while it is difficult to say that the University wants to disaffiliate with an organization that was founded on giving faculty governance a greater say in Athletics, the concern is that the University does not have that voice as a member of COIA.

Professor Konstan said after extensive research it was discovered that the Twin Cities Delegation of the Faculty Senate voted to have the University of Minnesota become a member of COIA. Therefore, if the University wants to resign its membership, it will need to go before the Twin Cities Delegation of the Faculty Senate with a resolution to disaffiliate with COIA.

After some discussion, members agreed the University should disaffiliate from COIA, but it would be important to make sure the resolution is worded in such a way that it not be construed that faculty do not care about Athletics. Professor Campbell said resigning on the principle that the organization has become dysfunctional and irrelevant does not preclude the idea of a functional and relevant organization replacing COIA in the future. This is not to say that COIA was not a noble idea, but it is to say that it is not working in its current state.

Professor Okediji asked if COIA has a procedure in its bylaws for dissolving the institution. Professor Konstan said he would check to see if the bylaws have a motion for dissolution. Every organization, said Professor Okediji, if it was properly formed should have a procedure for dissolution. If an organization does not, and, depending on what state it was formed in, there ought to be a default procedure in the state legislation so that any motion for dissolution that it receives would pass if no negative/opposing votes were received.

Professor Feeney asked if anyone has asked Gary Engstrand, former secretary to the faculty, and University of Minnesota COIA representative, about this issue. Professor Campbell said he would reach out to Dr. Engstrand.

Professor Leo said there is a meeting coming up with the Big Ten FARs and athletics directors, and asked if the committee would be ok with him sharing this conversation with that group. He said by doing this he will get a sense if there are any concerns on the part of the Big Ten about the University wanting to disaffiliate from COIA. Hearing no objection from the committee, Professor Campbell said he would greatly appreciate Professor Leo bringing it to this upcoming meeting to get their input.

4. Legislative session update: Professor Campbell said that neither of the legislative liaisons are able to attend this meeting, but that Professor Donna Spannaus-Martin, legislative liaison, submitted a written report, which would be distributed to members electronically after the meeting.

What exactly is the faculty's role in terms of working with the legislature, asked Professor French? In terms of the legislative liaison positions, said Professor Campbell, the part that has worked the least well in his opinion is the FCC communication to them. The FCC rarely provides the legislative liaisons with feedback on what they should/could be doing. FCC members should be thinking about faculty colleagues that they could funnel to the legislative liaisons so they could share their research with legislators. Up until now, the FCC has relied on Government and Community Relations to identify faculty to do this. Professor French suggested the FCC talk with Government and Community Relations and develop a joint strategy for doing this in an organized versus hodgepodge way.

Will central administration be comfortable with other faculty going to the capitol and talking with legislators in addition to the legislative liaisons, asked Professor Okediji? She added that she thinks it is a great idea for faculty to have an independent relationship with legislators because administrators tend to come and go, but faculty stay at the University much longer. With that said, it will be important for the FCC to think carefully about how to do this and how to message it to legislators and central administration. Professor Okediji went on to say it might be worthwhile to think about the FCC, as a body, meeting with the legislature because it would be a more controlled group that could coordinate its messages. Doing this could serve to build trust that is not about year-to-year asks but more about the value faculty bring to the State of Minnesota.

Professor Curley agreed with Professor Okediji and noted that the FCC has met with legislators in the past. He added that another thing that has been particularly effective is when students talk with legislators.

Professor French said that at the last FCC meeting she got the sense that while the legislative liaisons are informed on particular issues, they are being asked a lot of questions by legislators that they are unable to answer. What can be done to give the legislative liaisons the support and knowledge they need to be their most effective? Professor Campbell said legislative liaisons are supposed to work with the people in Government and Community Relations as well as the FCC. Having said this, he asked members again if they know of faculty who would be particularly effective at the legislature, and, if so, to share these names with the legislative liaisons.

5. Draft of FCC statement on reaffirming the University's values: Professor Konstan said prior to today's meeting, members should have received the most recent version of the FCC statement and thanked those that provided input. The revised document: 1) depersonalized any reference to President Trump and simply talked about the immigration executive order; 2) depersonalized some of the statements of support and focused on supporting the diversity of people coming to the University from around the world in general; and 3) made some language changes.

Now, said Professor Konstan, the FCC needs to decide if it wants to vote to approve the document and send it out to the University community, or vote to not approve the document. Members spent a few minutes discussing the document as written and provided feedback on how it should be changed. In light of time, Professor Campbell said time has run out to discuss

this item any further. He proposed the document be modified to include the suggestions that were mentioned today and put online for a vote. If the FCC votes to approve the document, it will then work with the administration to get it distributed to faculty, staff and students.

6. **Constitution and bylaw changes:** Professor Konstan volunteered to send this agenda item out electronically given it is time to adjourn the meeting.

7. **Adjournment:** Hearing no further business, Professor Campbell adjourned the meeting.

Renee Dempsey
University Senate Office