

**Senate Committee on Faculty Affairs (SCFA)  
April 11, 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 reflect the views of, nor are they binding on, the senate, the administration, or the Board of Regents.*

[**In these minutes:** Academic Freedom & Tenure Committee Update; Improving the Advising and Mentoring of Graduate Students; IT Governance]

**PRESENT:** Monica Luciana (chair), Katherine Dowd, Phil Buhlmann, Ken Horstman, Teresa Kimberley, Christine Blue, Jarvis Haupt, Robert Kudrle, Peh Ng, Ned Patterson, Lori Rhudy, Alisha Aagesen

**REGRETS:** Joe Price, Rebecca Ropers-Huilman, Jay Bell, Aks Zaheer

**ABSENT:** Kathy Brown, Theodor Litman, Sophia Gladding, Tae Kim, Ruth Okediji, Geoff Rojas, Scott Ng, Sam Stern

**GUESTS:** Jan Morse, ombudsman and director, Student Conflict Resolution Center; Larry Storey, IT liaison; OIT; Chetan Ganatra, senior director of user support, OIT; CJ Loosbrock, IT liaison, OIT

**OTHERS ATTENDING:** Julie Christensen, Ole Gram

**1. Academic Freedom & Tenure (AF&T) Committee update:** Professor Luciana convened the meeting, welcomed those present, and called for a round of introductions. Following introductions, Professor Luciana called on Professors Buhlmann and Kimberley, co-chairs, AF&T, to provide an update on what their committee has been working on this year.

Professor Kimberley began by noting that the AF&T charge stipulates that the committee is to annually review the use of contract and non-faculty instructional appointments in all departments and colleges, and to make recommendations to the Faculty Senate and provost. After being able to get more complete data from the Office of Human Resources (OHR), and colleges having a better sense of their FTEs in terms of who is teaching what, this process is now beginning to be examined in a more comprehensive way. As outlined in the administrative policy – [Academic Appointments with Teaching Functions](#) – each “collegiate personnel plan must include the rationale for any significant variations from the established collegiate patterns in making academic appointments in specific academic units within the college/campus.” Additionally, each collegiate plan must include a “supplemental plan for any unit in which the number of FTE contract faculty positions plus the number of FTE academic professional positions with primary responsibility for teaching exceeds 25% of the FTE tenured and tenure-track faculty.”

Having said that, 25% is not a magic cut-off number, said Professor Kimberley, however, if a department or college is out of sync with that figure, it is asked to provide additional information to explain why. For example, a number of professional programs hire contract faculty with

expertise that their faculty do not hold so they could have a higher number of non-tenured, non-tenure-track faculty. The point is that each college should have a plan that justifies their percentage of contract faculty and this plan should be developed in broad consultation with the leadership, faculty, and academic staff in these units.

Last year, explained Professor Kimberley, Vice Provost Rebecca Ropers-Huilman sent a letter asking the various colleges to update and submit their personnel plans to her office. As the plans have trickled in, AF&T has reviewed them against the criteria that AF&T had proposed in the 2015 – 2016 academic year and that the vice provost, with some modifications, had provided to the colleges. The goal is to provide a summary report on the collegiate plans to the provost with the committee's findings.

What employee classifications are being put into the non-tenure faculty category, asked Dr. Dowd? Professor Kimberley said Assistant Provost Ole Gram has been instrumental in pulling these data, and it is her understanding that all people who are delivering instruction are included in this group. She noted that, in the past, how employees were coded was a huge barrier to getting at this information, but significant progress has been made in this area.

The goal is to complete this effort by May 2017, said Professor Kimberley, and so the committee is now in the process of drafting its summary report.

Professor Buhlmann commented that he gets the impression that little activity has gone into updating and re-evaluating these plans by many of the colleges in quite some time. He said he also gets the sense that most colleges are not sure what to include in their plan. AF&T hopes their feedback on the plans will be provided to the colleges in an effort to give colleges the opportunity to improve upon their plans so they will be more helpful to the provost and the colleges themselves in the future. Professor Kimberley noted that a number of colleges, for example, did not address the consultation process they used in developing their plan. Going forward, it might be helpful to develop specific questions that each college needs to answer in their respective plan; however, because the University is so diverse and the colleges are so different, this may prove difficult.

Professor Patterson mentioned the *Report of the Clinical Faculty Task Force*, which, to the best of his knowledge, had been given to Senior Vice President Cerra in about 2010 or so just before he retired. A lot of work went into this report, but he is not sure what happened to it or if any action was ever taken on any of the recommendations contained in the report.

According to Professor Buhlmann, AF&T members saw the updating of the collegiate plans as an opportunity for colleges to show where they are at now. The intent was not to criticize the colleges, but to help them understand where they are at and to reflect on if they are in a good place or not.

Where did the original 25% number come from, asked Professor Patterson? Assistant Vice Provost Gram said the number seems to be fairly arbitrary, but as he recalls the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) established the figure around 1976, and it has been

reaffirmed in reports thereafter. As Professor Kimberley mentioned earlier, there is no magic to the 25% number, and different institutions think of this number differently.

Dr. Dowd rhetorically asked whether budget-related decisions factor in to what colleges can afford to do. This raises the point, said Professor Buhlmann, that a number of collegiate personnel plans make the assumption that the readers of the personnel plans know their local situation with a significant level of detail, which in fact is not the case. Because the people reading the plans often lack such detail, colleges would be better off to explain their local situation in order to make their case.

It seems like it would be easy for units to slip into patterns as needs arise, e.g., covering a course here and there, and then suddenly come to the realization that they have a configuration of instructional appointments that has not been planned out, said Professor Luciana. Does this sound familiar based on the plans that have come in so far? The plans vary greatly when it comes to the degree of planning and effort that has gone into them, concurred Professors Kimberley and Buhlmann.

Professor Ng thanked Professors Kimberley and Buhlmann for having undertaken this effort. She suggested rather than having a rigid 25%, there should be an interval range instead. For example, in small units when a regular faculty member goes on sabbatical, non-regular faculty frequently replaces them, and so the percentage for small units could change drastically from year to year. Professor Buhlmann reminded the committee there are no hard consequences for being over the 25% provided the local situation can be justified. Also, the supplemental plan is meant to explain why the college is over the 25% guideline.

In response to a question from Professor Luciana about next steps, Professors Kimberley and Buhlmann said that AF&T is in the process of drafting an overall synopsis for Provost Hanson as well as giving her specific feedback on each of the plans. Professor Luciana suggested inviting Professors Kimberley and Buhlmann back once this initiative is complete to get more information.

Professor Luciana thanked Professors Kimberley and Buhlmann for their report.

**2. Improving the advising and mentoring of graduate students:** Professor Luciana welcomed Jan Morse, ombudsman and director, Student Conflict Resolution Center, 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, and 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](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 increases 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 increases 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.

Members' comments and questions included:

- Professor Blue said she finds the data interesting and does not debate that this is likely the perception of many graduate students. Having said that, she wonders how "guidance" is being defined, and speculated as to whether it is really guidance that graduate students are lacking or that their advisor is not doing the work for them. While she recognizes this may be the perception of students, and their perception is their reality, the advisors in her program are spending more and more time helping students with their writing, etc. Students may not feel they are not getting much guidance, but in reality they are. Dr. Dowd suggested providing graduate students with a set of expectations so everyone is clear about their responsibilities. In response to Professor Blue's comments, Ms. Morse said the purpose for sharing this survey information with the committee is to raise awareness of what students are thinking. She added that this data is being broken down by college, and she and Vice Provost for Graduate Education and Dean of the Graduate

School Scott Lanyon will be meeting with each of the graduate associate deans to talk with them about this information. This is a process of discernment both for the student and the faculty advisor as well.

- Professor Kudrle said this is an important issue. As a Ph.D. student's thesis develops or fails to develop, and the necessity of finding a job becomes more of a reality, he wonders if anyone has done an evaluation of students' general psychological health. Professor Blue agreed that as students have setbacks in their thesis work, this all factors in to how they are feeling with the process and is not necessarily reflective of their advisors. Ms. Morse concurred and said the graduate student/faculty advisor relationship is a joint enterprise. To that end, there are several resources on the Student Conflict Resolution Center website as mentioned earlier on improving the advising and mentoring of graduate and professional students, including a new piece specifically directed at professional students given there is a difference between graduate and professional students.
- Is there a way in the survey data to link what was found in terms of perceptions to actual performance benchmarks in order to disentangle dissatisfaction from objective performance, asked Professor Luciana? That may be possible, said Ms. Morse. She added that it is her opinion, if a student needs something then it is advantageous to give it to them regardless if they are making good progress or not. This kind of deeper analysis is something the Graduate School may want to take up. When the survey is issued, people are assured confidentiality to try to get as high a response rate as possible so no granular examination of the data was undertaken. Ms. Morse said the advising report that was sent out with the agenda has some qualitative comments that convey the flavor of the responses.
- Professor Patterson shared examples of things the College of Veterinary Medicine is doing to improve their professional students' advising and mentoring experiences such as having individualized development plans, particularly because about half of their students go into industry versus academia. Ms. Morse said the 'Best Advising Practices for Graduate Student Success' document that was originally drafted by the College of Food, Agricultural and Natural Resource Sciences (CFANS), but which she and Karen Starry from the Graduate School recently converted to a generic document now includes verbiage to remind faculty that students may choose careers outside of academia.
- Professor Luciana said SCFA also represents the interests of postdoctoral students, and it seems that a lot of the resources that have been identified for graduate students would also apply to the postdocs on campus. Are there plans to build this information into the messaging that will be sent out about these resources? Postdocs, said Ms. Morse, are certainly a group of people that have needs and concerns about their positions. They need a healthy climate just like graduate students and they also need good advice from the person they are working for. She said she gets requests from postdocs to meet with her, as does Julie Showers from the Office of Conflict Resolution (OCR). Unfortunately, however, a number of the policies that apply to graduate students and employees do not apply to postdocs in the same way. To the extent these resources meet their needs, they are welcome to use them.
- Professor Luciana suggested that the resources/information that Ms. Morse distributed at today's meeting be shared with collegiate units so they can distribute at graduate student orientation and also distribute it to their faculty. These resources are a good way to get

conversations started. Ms. Morse said these resources are not yet on the SCRC website, but will be once they are finalized.

Professor Luciana thanked Ms. Morse for sharing this information with the committee. Ms. Morse in turn thanked the committee for the opportunity to do so, and told members to feel free to share the information with their colleagues. She added it is uplifting to think what a difference it could make if every graduate student could be ensured a positive and supportive environment.

**3. IT governance:** Professor Luciana welcomed today's guests from the Office of Information Technology who asked to come before the committee to hear from members what the Office of Information Technology (OIT) can do to support faculty in delivering the mission of the University. Before beginning, however, she called for another round of introductions. Following introductions, she turned the meeting over to Chetan Ganatra, senior director of user support, OIT, and Larry Storey, IT liaison, to facilitate the discussion.

Mr. Ganatra noted that representatives from OIT are meeting with various groups across the University to get input on what OIT can do to better support the mission of the institution. Prior to the meeting, members were asked to think about four questions in order to facilitate this discussion, and they included:

1. Looking forward to the next year or two, what do you foresee affecting your research, teaching, outreach and/or administrative work most significantly?
2. What IT-related resources do you see that your peers from other institutions (and/or the private sector) have access to that you think would make a positive impact here?
3. What do you see peer institutions, or comparable non-higher education organizations investing in (or not investing in) that you think would be important for IT to invest in here?
4. What activity outside of your core mission seems to take up an outsized amount of departmental resources when compared to its impact?

Mr. Ganatra told members that the input they share today, along with the input from other groups OIT is meeting with, will be shared with IT leaders, and will serve to determine the direction OIT takes in the coming year. Mr. Storey, IT liaison, added that the IT governance process has been going on for five years now. He encouraged members to take the OIT survey that is currently underway and to encourage their colleagues to do so as well. Members shared the following comments:

- Professor Blue said she likes 1:Button Studio, but, unfortunately, it does not work all the time. The School of Dentistry has for the most part stopped using it because when it is not working there is no one there to provide support, and calling 1-HELP is not an option either because it takes too long.
- Professor Luciana said it would be nice to get a sense of the University's plan for long-term storage of research data. This plan, assuming there is one, needs to be communicated to the University community. Mr. Storey said there is a group working on this since late summer 2016, which is comprised of representatives from the University Libraries, OIT, Academic Health Center-Information Systems, and the Supercomputing Institute.

- Professor Luciana requested more programming resources for research support. It seems like other institutions have more ready access to these kinds of resources than are available at the University.
- Professor Kudrle commended OIT on the 1-HELP helpline that he has found to be very helpful.
- Professor Blue said that both Moodle and WebEx are working well in her college. She said she and her colleagues do not want to move to Canvas.
- Professor Ng requested when OIT purchases software from outside vendors to remember that the University of Minnesota is systemwide and to write contracts so that all new software is available to all the campuses.
- Professor Ng also requested to know whether the consultation that is being done around the possible move to Canvas includes the system campuses. Mr. Storey explained that OIT has close connections with all the IT providers and leaders who are involved in [ULTA](#) (University Learning Technology Advisors), which is the group that is focusing on evaluating and making recommendation regarding the University's learning management system. Today's IT governance discussion is broader than ULTA and covers anything IT-related. The goal today is to get any and all IT-related feedback from the committee. OIT, through its governance process, is trying to get as close as possible to the people that are using its products and services.
- Assistant Vice Provost Ole Gram asked about members' experiences with the Student Rating of Teaching (SRT) reports. Professors Blue, Ng, and Luciana all had positive things to say about the online reporting.
- Professor Blue asked about the timeline for the decision about whether the University would move to Moodlerooms or Canvas. Mr. Ganatra said it is his understanding that the ULTA report has been delivered to Provost Hanson, and there may be a decision by the end of May, but that is just an estimate.
- Professor Rhudy noted that there are a few programs that have faculty on one campus, but are associated with another campus, e.g., Rochester and Twin Cities. With that said, recently she and some other Rochester faculty got new computers, but there is not the level of support on the Rochester campus to properly set-up the computers. The ability to find someone in Rochester who has the right privileges/access is challenging. She said she would like there to be more transparency and support available to all the campuses.

Hearing no further questions or comments, Mr. Storey thanked members for their time and said he would follow-up with a written summary of the feedback that members provided. He also said he would send the link to the OIT survey that is underway and encouraged members to take it if they had not already done so.

After the guests left, Professor Luciana asked for a show of hands of those who had taken the OIT survey. Professor Rhudy said she felt it was a hard survey to respond to because the questions were difficult to interpret. She also said she was not sure what the goal of the survey was, which also made answering the questions difficult. A few other members commented that they did not recall seeing the email with the survey link.

**4. Other business:** Professor Luciana reported that at a recent FCC meeting she reported on what SCFA has been working on this year. One of the topics that came up was the administrative

policy on Faculty Development Leaves, and she said to be honest she does not recall where this topic was left. With that said, she suggested members re-familiarize themselves with the proposed changes to the policy. Dr. Gram said the proposed changes are on hold in light of the Maintenance of Status Quo Order because it is directly pertinent to terms and conditions of employment. He said a great deal of work went into the proposed policy changes, which essentially moves the University towards a system that would guarantee a full semester sabbatical like what many peer institutions have. He then took a few minutes to describe the current policy and said the ad hoc subcommittee that worked on this made great strides towards moving to a more standard sabbatical policy.

Professor Ng reported that the SCFA has already endorsed the proposed changes to the Faculty Development Leaves policy. She urged the committee not to create another subcommittee to look at something that SCFA has already endorsed. The version that SCFA endorsed has also been discussed at the April 2015 Faculty Senate meeting.

Professor Luciana said this item would be added to next month's agenda for the purpose of refreshing members' memories about the changes to the policy that have been proposed and that the Faculty Senate endorsed. Professor Ng volunteered to send Renee Dempsey, Senate staff, the information, and asked her to distribute it to the committee.

5. **Adjournment:** Hearing no other business, Professor Luciana adjourned the meeting.

Renee Dempsey  
University Senate Office