

Academic Freedom and Tenure Committee (AF&T)

April 14, 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:** Women's Faculty Cabinet Parental Leave Recommendations; Personnel Plans]

PRESENT: Phil Buhlmann (co-chair), Teresa Kimberley (co-chair), Anne Barnes, Jerry Cohen, Marti Hope Gonzales, Ben Intoy, Deborah John, Jessica Larson, Holley Locher, Gopalan Nadathur, Yuichiro Onishi, Gary Peter, George Trachte

REGRETS: Karen Miksch, Rebecca Ropers-Huilman, Nathan Shippee

GUESTS: Jane Blocker, professor, Art History, College of Liberal Arts; Bob Kudrle, member, Senate Committee on Faculty Affairs (SCFA)

OTHERS: Ole Gram, assistant vice provost, Office of the Vice Provost for Faculty and Academic Affairs

1. Women's Faculty Cabinet Parental Leave Recommendations

Co-chair Phil Buhlmann called the meeting to order and introduced Jane Blocker, a professor in Art History in the College of Liberal Arts and a member of the Women's Faculty Cabinet, whom Buhlmann had invited to talk about the recommendations the cabinet had crafted around parental leave. Blocker thanked Buhlmann for the invitation and explained that the cabinet had been working with the provost to update the tenure procedures to include reduced teaching loads for new parents, but that the Maintenance of Status Quo order had halted progress on this initiative. Therefore, she said, the Women's Faculty Cabinet came up with some talking points for faculty anticipating a birth, adoption, or foster placement that could be used in the interim before the new procedures go into place. She distributed a handout, below, outlining these talking points:



How to talk to your Unit Head or Dean about Parental Leave:

Did you know that the U is already working on a new parental leave procedure?

The WFC has worked with the Provost's Office to develop a procedure to reduce teaching duties for recent parents. It has not yet been implemented because the University is currently under a "Status Quo" order.*

In the meantime, how can you advocate for parental leave?

PARENTAL LEAVE HAS A LIMITED IMPACT ON UNITS
Only 1-2% of faculty become new parents per year, so accommodating parental leave should not be seen as overly burdensome on units.

SEMESTER LEAVES MAKE MORE SENSE

The current HR policy already gives women up to 6 weeks paid leave, and men up to two weeks paid and an additional 4 weeks unpaid leave for the birth of a child. Both men and women can take 2 paid and 4 unpaid weeks for the adoption of a child. Given the nature of the academic calendar, it is easier to plan for a semester's absence than for a period of weeks.

RESEARCH MONEY IS FOR RESEARCH

It is unfair to expect new parents to spend their own research funds to support their parental leaves. Such a burden falls disproportionately on female faculty, and prevents their advancement.

IT'S CHEAPER IN THE LONG RUN

On average, it costs units \$8,500/semester to replace faculty teachers. Compare that with over \$300,000 in costs to replace a tenure track faculty member who leaves the university in frustration. This includes lost start-up funds, research funds, the cost of searches, and replacement teaching.

FAMILY-UNFRIENDLY PRACTICES RUIN RECRUITMENT

In a 2014 comparison of similar research universities, the WFC found that Minnesota provided less parental leave to faculty than many of our peers. This hurts our reputation and ability to hire excellent scholars.

TIMES HAVE CHANGED

Several decades ago it was expected that men worked while women stayed home. Disallowing sufficient parental leave is an antiquated sexist practice that creates barriers for parents, disproportionately women, to participate equally in the workplace.

CONSIDER YOUR UNIT'S REPUTATION

Some university units are already using the parental leave document as a model. This creates inequity and unfairness. Why wait?

Deborah John asked if individual departments can decide to go beyond what the University requires in terms of parental leave. Blocker said that according to Rebecca Ropers-Huilman, vice provost for faculty affairs and academic affairs, department chairs and heads can work with individual faculty members on their terms of employment. Teresa Kimberley added that the tenure procedures are not very prescriptive and leave a lot open to interpretation. Blocker agreed and said that there is inequity across colleges and departments as to how it is applied. She also clarified that this is part of the tenure procedures rather than the tenure code or a human resources policy. John commented that she has seen new parents be granted a semester off from teaching, but that they are then required to do all their teaching for the year in the other semester, and wondered if the new tenure procedure sought to change this practice, and Blocker said yes. Marti Hope Gonzales pointed out that older faculty members may have similar responsibilities when caring for an aging parent, and that work-family balance is an issue that affects everyone. Jerry Cohen said that it also affects recruitment, as well.

With this, Buhlmann thanked Blocker for the information and Blocker departed.

2. Personnel Plans

Buhlmann then turned the committee's attention to the collegiate personnel plan review process and report. He said that he had circulated a draft of the executive summary he and Kimberley had written, and invited feedback from members. Kimberley voiced her opinion that because no one had really looked at these plans in the past, colleges may not have taken them seriously, and that it was therefore preferable to move forward in a way that will be beneficial both to the colleges and the administration. Members again expressed concern that many of the plans seemed to be more descriptive of the current state of things, not a forward-thinking plan. Cohen said that lack of a visionary plan does not allow for things like minority recruitment, and therefore makes it difficult to deliver on some of the University's goals. Buhlmann said they would include a statement to that effect in the conclusion of the report. He added that some colleges may have given thought to these points, but just did not include them in the document. Yuichiro Onishi said that diversity goals were not specifically mentioned in the provost's letter to the colleges, and that perhaps the provost could stress this when giving feedback to the colleges. He said that it would be important to emphasize not only recruitment and hiring for diversity, but also mentoring and support for those individuals once they are here. Members agreed. John commented that she had assumed all colleges had strategic plans and that this exercise would therefore be fairly simple-- she was surprised that this did not seem to be the case. Bob Kudrle a member of the Senate Committee on Faculty Affairs (SCFA) who had assisted with the review, wondered how honest colleges had been about the impact of resource scarcity, which is a legitimate issue.

Kimberley thanked members for their feedback and said that the next step was to compile the individual summaries of each plan into one document. Buhlmann asked members to revise the summaries they had written with an eye to diplomacy, and the rest of the meeting time was devoted to work on this task.

Amber Bathke
University Senate Office