

Academic Freedom and Tenure Committee (AF&T)
May 5, 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:** Collegiate Personnel Plans; Update on the Minnesota Data Practices Act; Update on the Bias Response and Referral Network; Priorities for Next Year; Other Business]

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, Rebecca Ropers-Huilman, Nathan Shippee, George Trachte

GUESTS: Eva von Dassow, president, American Association of University Professors (AAUP), University of Minnesota-Twin Cities Chapter

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

1. Collegiate Personnel Plans

Co-chair Teresa Kimberley called the meeting to order and said that Vice Provost Rebecca Ropers-Huilman was present to discuss the plans. Kimberley and Co-chair Phil Buhlmann had prepared a synopsis outlining general impressions about the collegiate personnel plans and offering suggestions for improvement. She explained that the remainder of the document addresses each specific criterion plan by plan.

Buhlmann commented that similar strengths and weaknesses were observed across plans. Few were actual plans, as opposed to descriptions of the current state of affairs. He said that this feedback should be given to the colleges, emphasizing that colleges should view the personnel plans as an opportunity to document any challenges that prevent them from reaching their ideal personnel situation. This process could help address such issues, but not if colleges do not include all relevant information in the plans. Also, he added, very few of the plans addressed mentoring, which is another point that should be communicated to the deans. Nathan Shippee suggested emphasizing that the plans should be prescriptive, not descriptive. Ropers-Huilman agreed that the plan should have elements of both.

Gopalan Nadathur suggested it would also be important to communicate the importance of having a serious plan that addresses serious issues. It is the mission of the University that is in question, he said.

Kimberley said that guidelines or best practices on how to develop these plans would be useful, and Karen Miksch pointed out that there is a policy but there are no corresponding procedures. This is a good opportunity to develop such procedures.

von Dassow pointed out that there was no evidence of consultation on most plans, and asked if the plans could be shared outside of the committee. Ropers-Huilman said that one option would be that the provost can go back and ask colleges for more information about their plans and the extent of consultation. Buhlmann said that he and Kimberley were meeting with the provost on June 7, 2017, and would consult with her at that time about how to share the plans.

Buhlmann then asked Ropers-Huilman what to do about the colleges that didn't submit a plan. He suggested that the committee could continue reviewing plans over the summer, if people are willing. Ropers-Huilman said that her office would follow up with colleges that had not yet submitted plans. She suggested that it would be useful to have deans who took the process seriously talk with other deans about the importance of doing so.

Members offered additional minor feedback on the synopsis and summary documents, and Buhlmann invited members to send any further feedback by email.

2. Update on the Proposed Amendment to the Minnesota Data Practices Act

Buhlmann reported that the wording of the amendment was approved at the Faculty Senate on May 4, 2017. He said that it will be important that AF&T shepherd this along in 2017-18, including working with the Faculty Consultative Committee (FCC) and the legislative liaisons. von Dassow suggested involving the Board of Regents as well, and Buhlmann added that President Eric Kaler is supportive.

3. Update on the Bias Response and Referral Network

Buhlmann then asked Miksch, in her capacity as AF&T representative on the Bias Response and Referral Network (BRRN), to update the committee on the work of that group. Miksch reported that she and Tina Marisam, director of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action (EOAA), had delivered a training on the intersections of free speech, academic freedom, and bias incidents to the BRRN and its faculty and student advisory committee. The Office of General Counsel (OGC) requested that she and Marisam do this training for that office, as well as offer workshops for the National Association of College and University Attorneys (NACUA). Miksch commented that it was very useful to partner with Marisam on the training, as Marisam could speak to situations that actually violate the law and/or University Policy with regard to equal opportunity and affirmative action. They will do a follow-up training with the BRRN later in May 2017. Shippee suggested putting this training into a webinar that could be provided at new faculty orientations, and used to educate students as well.

Miksch reported that the BRRN received over 90 bias incidents this year. The group's annual report will be coming out soon.

Kimberley thanked Miksch for serving on the BRRN, and Buhlmann expressed his satisfaction that the working relationship between EOAA and AF&T had improved greatly over the past few years.

4. Priorities for Next Year

Buhlmann asked members what the committee should work on in 2017-18. Members came up with the following ideas:

- Shepherd MN Data Practices Act
- Personnel plans
- Free speech
- ITRAAC
- Presence of assistant professors during promotion and tenure review. Assistant professors would not be able to vote, but observing would help them understand the process, and it should be made clear to units that this is something they can do.
- Procedures for academic advancement of non-tenured faculty
- How would the U of M deal with an Ann Coulter/Berkeley situation

Buhlmann encouraged members to email him with further suggestions.

5. Other Business

Cohen recognized Miksch for receiving the President's Award for Outstanding Service.

Buhlmann thanked Marti Hope Gonzales for serving in her ex officio role as chair of the Judicial Committee. Hope Gonzales informed members that the new chair of the Judicial Committee will be Joe Gaugler from the School of Nursing.

Buhlmann and Kimberley thanked members for their service and adjourned the meeting.

Amber Bathke
University Senate Office