

Academic Freedom and Tenure Committee (AF&T)
November 30, 2018
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:** Welcome and Introductions; *Education Abroad and Student Travel Policy* Review; Academic Freedom and the Big 10 Academic Alliance Governance Conference; Somali Night Discussion]

PRESENT: Jessica Larson (chair), Anne Barnes, Brian Bix, Jerry Cohen, Nicholas Fischer, Kristin Hickman, Holley Locher, Gopalan Nadathur, Yuichiro Onishi, Karin Quick, Gary Peter, Catarina Saiote, Rachna Shah, George Trachte

REGRETS: Rebecca Roberts-Huilman, Nathan Shippee, Timothy Wiedmann

GUESTS: Kevin Dostal Dauer, director of international health, safety and compliance, Global Programs and Strategy Alliance, Michael Goh, vice president, Office for Equity and Diversity (OED), Alyssa Klein, coordinator of international health, safety and compliance, Global Programs and Strategy Alliance, Amy Pittenger, vice chair, Faculty Consultative Committee

OTHERS: Brianne Keeney, deputy chief of staff, Office of the President, Thomas Keller, student representative, Senate Committee on Student Affairs Committee (SCSA)

1. Welcome and Introductions

Chair Jessica Larson welcomed committee members and called for a round of introductions.

2. *Education Abroad and Student Travel Policy* Review

Larson invited Kevin Dostal Dauer, director of international health, safety and compliance, and Alyssa Klein, coordinator of international health, safety and compliance, Global Programs and Strategy Alliance (GPS Alliance), to begin their presentation. Dostal Dauer began by saying that a number of changes had been made to the [*Education Abroad and Student Travel Policy*](#), which was last formally reviewed and updated in 2014.

Dostal Dauer explained that there were three main reasons why the policy was currently being reviewed:

1. The requirement that units organizing undergraduate education abroad opportunities must work through an education abroad office was being reconsidered.
2. The policy was on schedule for the required four year comprehensive review.
3. Changes in the State Department's travel advisory system (formerly known as travel warning system) warranted updates to this policy.

The revision work had been going on for over two years, Dostal Dauer stated, in order to carefully classify the various levels of support that University units provide for education programs abroad.

Dostal Dauer said there were seven documents under review, and in all the documents, “travel warning” was being updated to “travel advisory” based on the State Department’s new language. The majority of the revisions were on the main policy document, Dostal Dauer explained, as he highlighted seven types of updates:

[Student Travel and Education Abroad Policy:](#)

1. Defining the four levels of support (notifying, supporting, promoting, organizing), each with varying levels of involvement and due diligence on the part of units and the University.
2. Amending the requirement that units organizing undergraduate education abroad are required to work through an education abroad office to apply to for-credit opportunities only.
3. Implementing a travel tracking requirement for independent travel for all undergraduate students participating in education abroad programs organized by the University.
4. Consolidating the requirements for serving as a program leader into one section and codifying the requirement that all program leaders receive health and safety training from the GPS Alliance within 12 months prior to their leading a program abroad.
5. Consolidating the student pre-travel requirements into a single section.
6. Making the language changes necessary to update “travel warning” to “travel advisory.”
7. Minor title, language, contact, and grammar updates.

Listed below are three additional documents that accompany the main policy. Details on the changes to these documents can be found by clicking on the links below:

[Student Travel and Education Abroad Procedure - ITRAAC Approval](#)

[Preparing for Student Travel and Education Abroad \(Units\)](#)

[Student Travel and Education Abroad FAQ](#)

The following three documents are owned by Purchasing Services, and have been added to this policy update as many of the changes in terminology are also pertinent to these documents. Details on the changes to the documents can be found by clicking on the links below:

[International Travel Registration FAQ](#)

[Traveling on University Business](#)

[Traveling on University Business - Travel Tips](#)

Dostal Dauer asked if anyone had questions at this point. Larson asked if the turnaround time for travel for research requests was moving smoothly in light of these changes. Dostal Dauer explained that the State Department, along with country-wide advisories, was now issuing travel

advisories for *regions* of countries. The GPS Alliance now has, Dostal Dauer explained, an Expedited Review List. Traveling students must now contact the GPS Alliance, confirm via email that they understand they are going to a level one or two region, and that, as per University policy, they cannot go to a level three or four region in the country in which they are traveling. A confirmation email is then sent to the traveler, from the GPS Alliance, Dostal Dauer noted, usually in one to three days.

A discussion followed regarding training and compliance for program leaders and faculty. Dostal Dauer described how the system was currently being set up to track leader training, and that in addition, a system of reminders to leaders regarding their training requirements should be implemented within the next 30 days.

Thomas Keller asked if students were required to take part in the travel tracking process while they were on University sponsored education abroad programs. Dostal Dauer said that while undergraduate students were traveling on a University sponsored program they were required to register with the travel tracking process even when they were on independent travel *during program dates*. He further explained the variety of situations in which graduate students might be engaged in education abroad and the various requirements in those situations. He added that the units and their leaders were required to demonstrate that they were implementing the policies, but neither the unit nor the program leader would be held responsible if a student did not follow the program requirements.

As there were no further questions, Dostal Dauer and Klein left the meeting.

2. Academic Freedom and the Big 10 Academic Conference

Larson then introduced Amy Pittenger, vice-chair, Faculty Consultative Committee (FCC), and asked her to share information she gathered from attending the Big 10 Academic Alliance (BTAA) Governance Conference, concerning academic freedom and freedom of speech. Pittenger started by saying that one of the major issues the FCC is focusing on this year is defining the term “faculty” more broadly, beyond the tenure track component. As a faculty governance group, Pittenger noted, the FCC felt it could be missing an opportunity to provide a voice for its colleagues in the non-tenure track category. She added that the BTAA Conference held a half day session on the same topic. Pittenger shared the story of an incident that took place at the University of Nebraska, in which a non-tenure track faculty member and a tenure track faculty member received different treatment when exercising their right to free speech at a University event. The non-tenure track faculty member was barred from instructional activities while the tenure track faculty member received no disciplinary action.

Pittenger said an often repeated question at the conference was how does the faculty body - as a whole - mobilize and advocate for *all* of its members around issues such as promotion, career development, and having a voice in university governance. She added that the University of Iowa, which hosted the event, had made an interesting change in its choice of terminology to categorize faculty. “Regular” faculty now included tenure track faculty, salaried clinical, research and instructional faculty, and non-tenure track faculty. The change was instituted because the University of Iowa administration was working to avoid defining faculty by what

they were *not*, which they saw as a diminishment of what the faculty members' capabilities might be. Pittenger then mentioned that, at the University of Nebraska, there was a job category called "continuous appointment" which is given to faculty whose one year terms are renewed repeatedly. It is similar to tenure track, but does not afford the faculty member the same protections that tenure does.

A discussion followed about the need for a cohesive system of evaluation and promotion for faculty not on the tenure track. Jerry Cohen pointed out that one reason for such a system was that, should faculty leave the University of Minnesota and accept positions elsewhere, they should be viewed as better qualified upon leaving the University than they were when they arrived. Gary Peters noted that his understanding of the purpose of the AF&T [white paper](#) from 2011 was to affirm that academic freedom applied equally to tenured, tenure track, and P&A faculty. Discussion continued with members noting that the hiring and promotion processes differed widely among colleges, and that could be a possible barrier to making University-wide changes to policy. Gopalan Nadathur added that the threat of being terminated was present, in covert as well as overt ways. Citing the University of Nebraska incident as an example, he requested the committee focus its attention on ensuring that faculty members are not terminated because of their political views.

The discussion concluded with a number of committee members expressing concern over the erosion of the position of tenured faculty, as more and more teaching positions become non-tenure track. The number of non-tenure track faculty members was expanding at other Big 10 Conference schools as well, Pittenger noted. Cohen suggested that if there were individuals in a job category who felt they were not being well respected, bringing the individuals together as a group could allow them to understand their potential strength, when working together, vis-a-vis improving their working conditions.

3. Somali Night Discussion

Next, Larson introduced Michael Goh, vice president, Office for Equity and Diversity (OED), to the committee. Goh had been invited to discuss events which occurred at the April 2018 Somali Night event. At this point, members voted to close the meeting.

Geanette Poole
University Senate Office