

Minutes*

SENATE COMMITTEE ON FACULTY AFFAIRS

Special Meeting

Thursday, March 7, 1995

3:00 - 5:00 p.m.

238 Morrill Hall

- Present: Daniel Feeney, Carole Bland, Carol Carrier, Daniel Canafax, Carol Chomsky, Mary Dempsey, Ann Erickson, Kinley Larntz, Willard Manning, Richard McGehee, Michael Sadowsky, Anne Sales, W. Donald Spring
- Regrets: George Seltzer, Bernard Selzler, Roger Paschke
- Absent: Rose Brewer, Anne Erickson, Diane Mulvihill, Ken Roering, Yang Wang
- Guest: John Adams (FCC Chair), Mark Brenner (Acting V.P. for Research & Dean of the Graduate School), President Hasselmo, Martha Kvanbeck (Senate)

[These minutes include discussion on tenure code adjustments.]

1. DISCUSSION ON ADJUSTMENTS OF THE TENURE CODE AND TENURE PHILOSOPHY UNDER ADMINISTRATIVE RESTRUCTURING

NOTE: All responses to questions are by the President unless otherwise noted.

Professor Feeney said the issue concerning tenure under administrative restructuring came to SCFA's attention as a result of a discussion at an FCC meeting. Professor Dempsey (chair of the SCFA Tenure Subcommittee) addressed the matter at a SCFA meeting several months ago initiating an expression of faculty concern. Professor Dempsey told the committee that the subcommittee has been discussing the relationship between the tenure process and the new provost structure constructing a list of options on how this process may occur. The committee proceeded to pose several questions to the President:

Q The concern is not that provosts may decide on tenure matters, but that their decisions be equitable based on a University-wide standard. If these conclusions are made by six different individuals (three chancellors and three provosts), is there the chance for six different interpretations and applications of the tenure code? Could the entire philosophy on tenure change?

A There are no decisions more important than deciding to whom awards of lifetime contracts should be awarded. The standards for doing this must be clearly defined; not left to the subjective opinion of any individual. There must be a unified system for making these decisions for the entire University. How do we do this? An update of the reorganization to be presented to the Board of Regents states the following:

* These minutes reflect discussion and debate at a committee of the University of Minnesota Senate or Twin Cities Campus Assembly; none of the comments, conclusions, or actions reported in these minutes represent the views of, nor are they binding on, the Senate or Assembly, the Administration, or the Board of Regents.

Administered Policies and Procedures for the Promotion and Tenure of Faculty
Members: Dean of the Graduate School serves an advisory staff role to chancellors and provosts to insure uniformity of standards, and presents provosts' and chancellors' recommendations to the Board of Regents.

The Dean of the Graduate School would be the guarantor of the standards, serving as an advisor (not as an arbitrator). The role of others would be:

Provosts and Chancellors: Review and approve recommendations for promotion and tenure

Colleges: Evaluate and recommend faculty for promotion and tenure

Departments: Evaluate and recommend faculty for promotion and tenure.

This is the model being proposed by the Transition Task Force. There are different evaluation systems that currently exist in the professional schools and other units. With these considerations, the University must set a high standard which is clearly defined and maintained. Central coordination of the standards in this model is advisory allowing the responsibility to remain with the chancellors and provosts.

Q Coordinate campuses are concerned that tenure would be changed whereby a faculty member's tenure would be awarded by a specific campus and not but the University. Is this a possibility?

A No, faculty will continue to hold tenure with the University, not a specific campus.

Q Would the provost or chancellor submit to the recommendation of the Dean of the Graduate School if there was a disagreement?

A If there were numerous disagreements, the provost or chancellor would need to seriously consider the possibility that the tenure regulations were being violated. It is essential for these campus leaders to maintain the integrity of the University in the decisions they make regarding tenure.

Interim Dean of the Graduate School, Mark Brenner, said that the Graduate School has been involved in the process of awarding tenure for several years, reviewing files and sending recommendations to the Sr. Vice President for Academic Affairs. In practice, the Dean of the Graduate school meets with Associate Vice President Carol Carrier to prepare a summary recommendation that the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs may use to decide on tenure cases. The proposed system will take the University's Human Resources personnel out of the review process, but maintain the involvement of the Graduate School to work with the provost or chancellor. This provides a structure of accountability where any patterns of disagreements could be identified and addressed. Sr. Vice President Infante expressed to Dr. Brenner that he would want to be informed if such inconsistencies arose. The proposed model places the decision closer to the faculty affected. Dr. Brenner added that there are consistency issues within the current process that need to be addressed.

Q Do you have any concern that varying philosophies regarding tenure may evolve? (i.e., Could an individual decide to increase the probation period within the operation she/he leads?)

A Dr. Brenner: The University policy is explicit, and must be followed as it stands. Any changes would need to occur through the formal channels of the governance system and the Board of Regents.

President Hasselmo: Tenure and promotion policies apply system-wide. Any changes, including the period of probation, would require system approval. There are different models that the provosts may need to consider, e.g., clinical appointments within the Medical School are evaluated using different models. Nonetheless, any changes would need to be approved. The basic values of the University need to be guarded in a conservative manner.

Q Will the Dean of the Graduate School also serve advisory to the Board of Regents?

A The Board of Regents approves tenure on a collective basis, and does not review individual cases. Therefore, if any distinct difference existed between the Dean of the Graduate School and a provost, the President would need to establish some mechanism to resolve the matter. The President would only become involved directly in extreme cases, i.e., a disagreement in the legitimacy of a scholarly field.

Associate Vice President Carrier: A policy matter would be addressed in a meeting of the Regents, but not the specific case that initiated the policy disagreement. The current system operates such that the Dean of the Graduate School advises the Sr. Vice President for Academic Affairs. The Dean's recommendation is not independent of the Sr. Vice President's final decision, and therefore cannot be applied as an opposing view. The role of the Dean in the proposed review process will continue in this same fashion. She added that given this arrangement, a disagreement may never become visible.

Several SCFA members said that this is the core of their concern. The President clarified that under the restructuring plan, the Dean of the Graduate School presents the tenure recommendations to the Board of Regents. In practice, the President is the person who actually presents the final recommendations to the Regents. Therefore, any differences would be brought to the attention of the President and would be noticed. The President said that maybe the restructuring document should explicitly state that certain cases should be brought to the President's attention before forwarding recommendations to the Regents if significant differences arose regarding the application of standards: "As President, I would like to hear about such disagreements if they occurred."

Other points relating to this question included:

- A review of the application of standards will be handled by the Sr. Vice President for Academic Affairs.
- The Dean of the Graduate School may confer with the President if any disagreements occur.
- Polarized disagreements occur very rarely.
- The tenure code and interpretive language needs to explicitly state all parties involved in making recommendations on tenure cases.
- Final authority needs to be given to a specific officer so that the quality of the University is maintained through accountable procedures.
- The University of California system has a faculty committee which advises the provosts on faculty tenure cases. The committee members are not in the same department as the faculty member whose case is being reviewed. This could insure the application of common standards.
- A provost can become acquainted with the culture and accompanying norms of credentials in a way that a multi-disciplinary committee cannot.

Q How would the grievance system operate?

A Associate Vice President Carrier: A faculty member could grieve the Sr. Vice President if he has confirmed the recommendation with the respondent being either the collegiate dean or the provost depending on how far the case progressed.

Dr. Brenner: Normally this process stops at the provost level to prevent an excess of cases proceeding to the President or the Dean of the Graduate School.

Q Is the University planning to make promotion to tenure more difficult?

A What may occur is a restriction in the positions that lead to tenure. The University should "fight to the death to maintain the institution of tenure as protection for academic freedom."

Q What level does the University need to set for the number of tenured faculty?

A This will probably be narrowing over time.

Other general points regarding tenure by SCFA members:

-- A wonderful tenure policy that only applies to 10% of the faculty would not be practical.

-- There should be a discussion about determining the number of tenured faculty that the University must maintain. Otherwise, the University's mission may change from teaching and research to services and profit.

-- The Tenure Committee should be re-established as a full Senate committee, especially in light of the fact that SCFA only became aware of the shift in tenure decisions to the provosts accidentally.

Q Should an office be developed for faculty affairs and development above the provost level?

A The Sr. Vice President for Academic Affairs is the senior administrative representative for the University faculty. The reorganization is meant to strengthen the role of faculty by bringing the administrators closer to them.

Q Will the total number of tenured faculty shrink over the next ten years?

A This has already been occurring. Over the past 4-5 years, the University has eliminated approximately 1,000 faculty and staff positions. The University has not drawn lines between faculty positions which are tenure tracked and those that are not. "I love the old fashioned faculty member" concept. Nevertheless, higher education is facing financial and technological environments that are dramatically changing the way we operate. We need the advice of the faculty on how to determine what positions need the protection of tenure. We need to face the problem and deal with it as gingerly as possible.

Professor John Adams reviewed the main items that the Faculty Senate is addressing this year:

1. Review of the Academic Freedom and Responsibility Statement
2. Development of the Professional Commitment Policy
3. Review of the Conflict of Interest Policy
4. Discussion of the Compensation Task Force Report
5. Review of Administrative Restructuring

Professor Adams proceeded to draw a diagram indicating faculty positions with "percent of time" on the "x" axis and the "length of appointment" on the "y" axis. With this, he demonstrated that

discussions tend to focus on full-time faculty who remain at the University in permanent positions. The current faculty employment policies resist part-time permanent positions or full-time temporary positions with renewable contracts. Provost Brody may be trying to expand in these directions. The tenure question should be separated from the financial considerations for the moment to explore other employment options. SCFA members added these comments:

- The reality of the need to explore these options has already become obvious, especially in CEE.
- We need to determine what to do for the short term and the long term.
- Long term: Discuss position flexibility and the role of tenure in the institution
- Short term: Decide what to do with the Tenure Code in the three provost model

Q We need a more flexible environment while we also seek to protect the academic culture. Is there a way to apply the ideas discussed so that the provosts will obtain faculty opinions on maintaining this balance?

A The University needs to know which direction to pursue before opening these types of discussions. Nonetheless, these issues need to be addressed. I have been meeting with Associate Vice President Carrier and Patricia Mullen (Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action) to examine the human resources of the University and to define the goals the University should seek to attract, retain, and support these individuals. A task force is being established to examine these issues. The faculty need to address them as well.

The President found the following SCFA suggestion acceptable for amending the tenure-related documents:

The Dean of the Graduate School should provide a report to the President regarding his interaction as advisor to the provosts on tenure matters, especially related to issues of the application of standards. The final decision on tenure should be accountable to the provost unless the Dean of the Graduate School expresses differently.

Q How do we make sure that we have a high quality faculty if few are reviewed under the tenure policy?

A The critical measures are being adopted for the University and will be created for the provost areas. Also, in the annual budgeting cycle, there will be an evaluation of unit productivity. This shifts the requirements from each individual to that of each unit.

Dr. Brenner said that he would like to begin a discussion with the Tenure Subcommittee on the process of tenure review (i.e., limiting the number of articles listed in a vita). The following points offer substantial support for the changes in the Tenure Code given the new provostal structure:

1. The recommendations provided at this meeting will help to assure the faculty that there is a fail-safe mechanism in the tenure review process.
2. The university-wide faculty committee is still available for grieving a tenure review case.
3. The policies, procedures, and review are still system-wide.

Associate Vice President Carrier added that the tenure changes need to be complete by July 1, 1995 in order to apply for the 1995-96 academic year. President Hasselmo excused himself and thanked the committee for inviting him to the discussion.

COMMITTEE DISCUSSION:

The committee continued discussing items related to the discussion with the President:

- The fact that the number of tenured faculty is to be reduced is new information. If that is the plan, it should be expressed to the entire faculty for the purpose of facilitating discussion on where the institution should retain its tenured positions. This would be important in terms of morale. One member responded that the Sr. Vice President clearly indicated during the retreat for SCC and Finance and Planning last fall that the University would be downsizing in all categories of employees.
- The President seemed to imply that there is a need for academic freedom and therefore tenure for those involved in teaching and research, but possibly not for those who only teach.
- The human resources task force may be addressing some of these issues based on a background document that identified some of the substantive concerns facing the University workforce. Associate Vice President Carrier said she would be willing to share the document with SCFA given the President's approval.
- The entire institutional environment needs to be examined along with matters of efficiency and effectiveness.

The committee will strive to have proposed amendments to the Tenure Code completed in time for the May 18, 1995, Faculty Senate meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

-- Kevin Gormley

University of Minnesota