

Minutes*

**Senate Committee on Faculty Affairs
Tuesday, September 9, 2003
2:30 – 4:30
510 Morrill Hall**

Present: John Fossum (chair), F. R. P. Akehurst, Carol Carrier, Terence Collins, Jesse Daniels, Janet Ericksen, Patricia Frazier, Darwin Hendel, Robert Jones, Theodor Litman, Claudia Parliament, Wade Savage, Kathleen Sellew, Charles Stech, Larry Wallace, Aks Zaheer

Absent: Carole Bland, A. Saari Csallany, Richard Goldstein, Dan Lim, Timothy Wiedmann

Guests: Dann Chapmann, Jackie Singer (Employee Benefits)

[In these minutes: (1) welcome/introductions, President's response to Grievance Advisory Committee report on the ombuds function, review of committee charge; (2) draft letter appointing an ad hoc committee on a summer semester; (3) reserved contract parking; (4) changes to My One Stop; (5) issues pending before the Committee]

1. Welcome, Introductions, Various Items of Business

Professor Fossum convened the meeting at 2:15 and welcomed everyone to the first meeting of the year; he called for a round of introductions. The Committee has a lot on its plate, he said, including a number of items that have been added recently.

-- The President's response to the recommendations of the Grievance Advisory Committee on an ombuds service: When the suggestions were presented by the Faculty Consultative Committee to the President over the summer, he was receptive to them but the budget situation prevents appointing anyone to an ombuds position. The President did, however, ask Carolyn Chalmers, the University Grievance Officer, to create a working group to (1) "evaluate and amend policies and practices to improve and better integrate and coordinate existing dispute resolution services"; (2) "coordinate outreach efforts about the availability of conflict resolution services to the University community"; and (3) evaluate the current Regents' policy and administrative procedures "to determine if they could be amended in a way that will produce a less adversarial conflict resolution process."

Professor Fossum said he expected Ms. Chalmers to start quickly. He said he assumed the Committee would see recommendations for improved procedures even without the ability to invest in an ombuds service.

-- Professor Judith Martin, chair of the Senate Consultative Committee, has asked all Senate and Assembly committees to review their charges in the context of a proposed reorganization of the University Senate. He asked for comments and recommendations on the Committee's charge. Following brief discussion, it was agreed that only one item in the bylaw list of duties and responsibilities required amendment.

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

2. Summer Semester

Professor Fossum next asked Committee members to review a draft charge letter to an ad hoc committee that would be asked to explore the wisdom of adopting a full third semester in the summer. He recalled that there was a suggestion at the spring meeting of Senate and Assembly committee chairs, from Professor Ken Heller, chair of the Classroom Advisory Subcommittee, that given the current budget situation, it is time to consider whether summer session should be done differently than it has been in the past. He asked if the Twin Cities campus should consider a full summer semester. To make this change would probably require starting spring semester earlier than at present.

Another question is whether such a change would affect B-appointment (nine-month) faculty, Professor Fossum said. There has been discussion of reducing or eliminating the number of A (11 month) appointments.

A third semester could substantially increase the efficiency of the use of resources (e.g., classrooms) and could also have an effect on faculty work assignments.

All of this is exploratory, Professor Fossum explained; no one is advocating the merits of a change and no one has any ax to grind one way or the other. The question is what the consequences would be if the campus were to make such a change.

Professor Hendel said that it would help the charge letter if there were a statement of desired outcomes, of overall purposes, to be achieved in moving to a new calendar. There needs to be a clear focus on the problems at the University to be addressed and data to suggest that a change in calendar would help to achieve the goals. Professor Fossum agreed and noted that the discussion began with respect to the efficient use of physical facilities.

Would such a change assume that faculty workload remains stable, Professor Savage asked? In some cases, if an institution moves to a three-semester system, more efficient use of the physical plant might also lead to more "efficient" use of faculty: The change could lead to an increase in workload without an increase in salary.

Professor Zaheer argued that there needs to be a much stronger justification for even thinking about this. Such a change has serious implications for what faculty do; the change would "throw the place into turmoil." The University has the standard academic calendar and it is working quite well; it should not consider a change like this unless there is very strong justification.

What about the effect on faculty who rely on summer teaching to augment their income, Professor Akehurst inquired? That needs to be considered, Professor Fossum agreed, so that if a faculty member scheduled a regular teaching load during spring and summer, teaching during the fall would receive extra compensation. Unless more faculty are hired, it would be difficult to provide a full set of course offerings during a third semester. And would there be a problem with paying faculty over a semester that ran over two fiscal years, Professor Akehurst asked.

Professor Frazier asked if the Committee could suggest additional questions for the charge letter. Professor Fossum said that it could, or at least provide feedback to the Faculty Consultative Committee

before the letter is issued. Professor Frazier agreed that the proposal needed stronger justification. She also said that implications for graduate student funding and for summer teaching needed to be explored.

When the University moved to semesters it added the intersession, which has not worked very well, Professor Litman said. But the amount of time required to make the change was enormous and extremely disruptive to students and faculty. To make this change should require very compelling reasons.

Are there obstacles to shifting B-appointment faculty, without their consent, to dates different from the ones under which they were appointed, Professor Collins asked? Professor Akehurst said he would argue, as a lawyer, that the faculty had a contract for nine months that did not include the summer.

Professor Fossum related that he had experience with the summer semester at Michigan. It was in fact a two-semester system with a summer semester; they had full-length courses but with considerably lower enrollment. He said he did know about the entire University of Michigan, but in his unit the faculty had fall-spring appointments and summer teaching was considered extra. The question embedded in the charge is whether or not there is sufficient demand for a summer semester.

If an additional semester is not staffed by graduate students or as it is now, without an increase in the faculty load there will only be a gain if class sizes increase, Professor Savage said, because there will be the same number of people teaching at the same time. There is already a push to have larger classes; in his college there are minimum enrollment numbers that must be met if a course is to be offered. The orientation is to larger classes and less contact at the lower division. There are two ways to look at the issue, Professor Fossum responded; Professor Savage's is one. If summer enrollments increase, a large fraction of students took summer courses, and summer includes a moderately comprehensive set of course offerings, the University would have to hire more regular faculty or more adjuncts or have more teaching done on an overload basis. If students accelerate their pace in achieving a degree, the University would need a larger faculty capacity. If handled on an overload basis, and with larger classes, the result would be poorer working conditions for the faculty.

Professor Wallace asked if there had been any indication of student desire for a year-round curriculum. It was noted that the ad hoc committee would have three students on it. Professor Fossum said he did not know, but pointed out that this is not a top-down initiative; it was started at a meeting of Senate committee chairs last spring, not something proposed by the administration. The Faculty Consultative Committee expressed an interest in exploring the issues and looking at the proposal on its merits to decide if the University should move forward. The administration is interested in what the faculty view will be but no one's mind is made up. There are number of issues that need to be looked at and Professor Zaheer's argument may be justified. Professor Litman's point about the change in the calendar is also legitimate; there are all issues the ad hoc committee ought to look at, he said.

Professor Savage said that his sense of the discussion is that the Committee would vote against appointing the ad hoc committee unless there is an overwhelming reason to do so. It was noted that such a vote would likely mean only that this Committee would have no representation on the ad hoc committee inasmuch as other committees have already identified individuals to serve.

It would be helpful to have data on whether or not students would enroll, Professor Frazier said. If the curriculum is spread across three rather than two semesters, Professor Akehurst commented, the

result could be empty classrooms--at which point the administration would see that the University could accommodate more students in order to generate more tuition. If students go faster, Professor Fossum said, there would be more opportunities to generate revenue; the University's resources are perhaps not being used as intensively as they might be. He said he did not expect the idea included reducing fall or spring semesters but rather to increase summer opportunities.

There is an academic appointments policy that put limits on the number of non-regular faculty in units, Professor Collins recalled; if the summer semester proposal were to increase the number of classes, there would need to be a stipulation that the academic appointments policy is not abrogated. The charge letter should include this point, he said.

Professor Fossum asked what the Committee wished to say to the Faculty Consultative Committee and whether or not there were any volunteers to serve on the ad hoc committee. Professor Hendel suggested the Committee tell FCC that members of this Committee expressed reservations about aspects of the proposal and want to be at the table to provide suggestions about ways to explore the positive and negative aspects of a change. Professor Savage agreed that the Committee should not cut itself out of the process.

Professor Fossum asked Professors Savage and Zaheer to serve on the ad hoc committee. They agreed.

4. Reserved Contract Parking

Professor Fossum reported that he had received an email from Parking and Transportation about a supposed new benefit: If one pays \$10 per month, one can have a reserved space in the ramp one parks in. In his ramp, the week before classes there were signs nailed up reserving spaces from 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Monday through Friday.

This decision poses a number of problems. As far as the Carlson School is concerned, it is potentially highly disruptive to the evening program: Classes start at 5:45; students drive in, thinking the regular day employees have left and that they (the students) will be able to get a parking space. The reserved spaces means that no one can park in those spaces until 15 minutes after class has started. Now the reserved signs are covered up. The email message indicated that Parking intends to implement the program on October 1 (the earlier letter to employees indicated it would begin September 1).

The Committee on Finance and Planning normally deals with parking issues, Professor Fossum noted, and Professor Campbell is disturbed about this change and will bring it to that committee. It is important that this Committee weigh in as well, he said, because the reserved contracts will have negative consequences for instruction as well as for faculty working conditions. He circulated a draft resolution.

Professor Hendel said he did not sense any problem that the reserved contracts addressed. Professor Fossum said he assumed the reserved spots would generate additional income. If the result is to deter students from parking, or attending classes, the result could be a reduction in income, Ms. Sellow observed. Professor Fossum said the Carlson School has worked hard the last several years to overcome the perception that one local institution provides good service for evening students so they don't have to attend the big callous University. They have finally turned around; evening students who come to the

University are very complimentary. Something like this will have a very negative effect on the ability of the Carlson School to have the reputation it needs in the community to retain evening students.

Professor Zaheer said he was also bothered by the perception the reserved spaces convey: that some are more equal than others. It is not a good idea to present to the community that faculty are privileged. There are companies where even the president does not have assigned parking. This goes against values of equity.

Professor Parliament cautioned that the argument against the reserved spaces should not be predicated on the time allotted to the contract holder; the time could be adjusted to 5:00 p.m. to respond to that concern. The more persuasive argument is that there was not consultation.

What number of spaces will be assigned, Professor Savage asked? Some people may need them (e.g., the physically handicapped). Professor Fossum said that in his ramp there appear to be about 120 reserved spaces, which is a significant portion of the ramp total. All faculty do not come to the University every day, Professor Zaheer pointed out; if people drive into ramps and see spots vacant but reserved, it will degrade the system and only make people furious.

Will the number of reserved spots be driven by the number of people willing to pay for them, Professor Parliament asked? Professor Zaheer said as he thought about whether to reserve a spot, he wondered if he would forever lose the opportunity to do so, so thought maybe he should sign up even though he was against the idea. He said he may be forced to do so simply in order not to lose the option. That problem could be resolved by allowing people to purchase a reserved spot at any time, Professor Parliament pointed out.

Professor Litman said that he understood one of the reasons that this has come up is that there apparently is excess space in the ramps so parking can make additional money on these contracts. He also has seen letters from P&A and Civil Service staff who feel that such a proposal discriminates on the basis of income. On a related matter, for the first time, parking sent letters to the Deans asking them to certify which retired faculty were entitled to continue to have parking privileges without, however, notifying retirees that their contracts were at risk. As a result, it is possible that some retirees will find that they have lost their parking space without knowing why and too late to do anything about it. That is a poor way to run a railroad, he said. There are three things he tells people here at the University not to give up when they retire: their parking spot, their health insurance coverage, and their athletic tickets--and not necessarily in that order.

Professor Akehurst said that the Economics Department used to be up in arms about parking so it might be useful to consult with them about whether the reserved spaces will be an advantage or a disadvantage for faculty. There is no doubt that it will hurt programs, especially large evening programs, Professor Litman said.

There is also the matter of appearances, Professor Fossum said. For transient parkers who come to public events--of which there are a lot--the ramps will look like a toothless person, with empty spaces alternating with cars parked. People will have difficulty parking, the reserved spaces will make it less convenient than first-come, first-served parking, and the plan could reduce the capacity of the system. There goes the bequest! Professor Zaheer joked.

The resolution the Committee adopted unanimously read as follows:

Whereas Parking and Transportation Services is initiating a new extra-cost Reserved Contract Parking program in selected garage and ramp facilities, effective October 1, 2004; and

Whereas this change reduces the value of a non-reserved contract without any corresponding reduction in its price; and

Whereas this change imposes severe negative effects on the educational mission of the university by substantially reducing the ability of evening students to park on campus in time to join their classes, and otherwise generally reduces the efficiency in the use of parking facilities, especially for events involving the general public; and

Whereas it is not egalitarian and sends the wrong message to students and the public; and

Whereas this change was introduced following the beginning of the academic year and without consultation with the faculty and staff; therefore

Be it resolved that the Senate Committee of Faculty Affairs requests that this proposed contract modification be prohibited unless and until appropriate consultation has been completed and the likely negative effects of its implementation studied and weighed.

[NOTE: At the meeting of the Senate Committee on Finance and Planning on September 16, Vice President Kathleen O'Brien announced that the reserved contract parking program would be capped for this year and would be treated as a pilot program, to be evaluated after a year.]

5. Changes to My One Stop

Professor Fossum next distributed copies of an email from Professor Feeney, last year's chair of the Faculty Consultative Committee, responding to a query from an individual in Human Resources about discontinuing support for the link from the My One Stop to the Employee Self-Service applications. It seems that few people use My One Stop as a way to get to the self-service applications.

Professor Feeney wrote that he has not customized anything related to the web and instead uses URLs or bookmarks. Committee members appeared to concur and concluded that they had no objection if Human Resources did not maintain the link between My One Stop and the self-service applications. Professor Collins observed that he had no reason either to support or oppose the change. Professor Fossum concluded the Committee did not oppose it. No one objected.

6. Issues Pending

Professor Fossum directed Committee members' attention to the list of issues pending. He said he would like the group to think about which items have a higher priority and which ones the Committee should deal with sooner rather than later.

The items fall into several categories:

- resolution of grievances/complaints
- salary and benefits
- reviews of academic administrators
- course evaluations (with the Senate Committee on Educational Policy)

-- privacy/surveillance/email security

Several other items were mentioned in the discussion.

-- It was agreed the Committee would hear about work/life issues as they relate to family concerns; Professor Frazier said she would like to be involved in any Committee efforts related to this subject.

-- The Committee should be provided an update on whether implementation of the academic appointments policy is consistent with what the policy was intended to accomplish; Professor Collins said that it was developed in response to the concern about the erosion of the number of tenured/tenure-track faculty and the increased number of non-regular faculty who were teaching. He said he was concerned that with budget pressures, the policy could be quietly tossed out; if it is to be tossed, it should not be quietly, he averred. Every college is in charge of implementing the policy, Vice President Carrier said.

-- The Committee should receive a report on faculty diversity.

-- Professor Frazier asked about a study of faculty salaries based on gender and ethnicity. Professor Fossum noted that the Committee had sponsored a study of faculty salaries last year but that the database did not permit identification of sex or ethnicity. In response to the request for the additional salary study, made by the Senate Committee on Equity, Access, and Diversity, it was suggested that it be forwarded to Vice President Carrier because Human Resources would have the necessary information in its databases. If the data were produced, he said, the Committee would be very interested in it.

Professor Fossum thanked everyone for coming and adjourned the meeting at 3:50.

-- Gary Engstrand

University of Minnesota