

**Senate Committee on Faculty Affairs (SCFA)
February 13, 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:** Overview of Graduate Education Data Resources; Update on SCFA Child Development Center Statement; Draft/revised policies – Parental Leave for Employees, Postdoctoral Appointments, Family and Medical Leave Act]

PRESENT: Robert Kudrle, (chair), Adolfo Carrillo Cabello, Katherine Dowd, Kathy Brown, David Anderson, Christine Blue, John Connett, Sophia Gladding, Marti Hope Gonzales, Jarvis Haupt, Peh Ng, Lori Rhudy, Aks Zaheer, Kalley Mankowski, Dane Munson

REGRETS: Phil Buhlmann, Rebecca Ropers-Huilman, Jay Bell, Tae Kim, Monica Luciana

ABSENT: Ken Horstman, Terry Roe, Alisha Aagesen, Geoff Rojas

GUESTS: Scott Lanyon, vice provost and dean, Graduate School; Daniel Jones-White, senior analyst, Office of Institutional Research

1. **Overview of graduate education data resources:** Professor Kudrle convened the meeting and welcomed Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate Education Scott Lanyon who was invited to provide an overview of graduate education data sources. To put this discussion into context, Vice Provost Lanyon mentioned the [Statement by AAU Chief Academic Officers on Doctoral Education Data Transparency](#) that was endorsed at the AAU annual meeting in September 2017. According to this statement, said Vice Provost Lanyon, prospective and current students should have access to data on student demographics, time to degree, financial support as well as career paths and outcomes within and outside of academia. He then turned members' attention to the University of Michigan's Tableau dashboard as an example of a best practice when it comes to collecting data from multiple sources and integrating it into various reports. Vice Provost Lanyon said this is the direction the University of Minnesota will be moving in its data collection efforts, but before doing so some decisions need to be made about what data should be included. An advantage of collecting this data centrally versus asking individual programs for their data is that the University will have more input as to the quality of the data. Vice Provost Lanyon reminded members that when he accepted the position of Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate Education that he really wanted the Graduate School to be data provider versus a data consumer. With that said, the University is committed to making a public dashboard for graduate education data, but the questions that remain are what should be included in the dashboard and who should have access. While the goal is to have rich data for every graduate program, an important philosophy behind this data collection is to ensure the anonymity of the people who are involved. For example, currently there needs to be at least nine responses in any given cell in order for the Graduate School to report on it. Daniel Jones-White, senior analyst, Office of Institutional

Research, added that this number was chosen to avoid the possibility of any student being identified in order to protect them from possible retribution and/or retaliation. The objective is twofold 1) to give information to administrative decision-makers to help them with strategic planning decisions and 2) to preserve the anonymity of students.

Moving on, Vice Provost Lanyon walked members through a PowerPoint presentation containing data in the form of charts and graphs collected from the [SERU Graduate Student Survey](#) (gradSERU) responses about graduate programs across the University. The purpose of collecting this data, said Vice Provost Lanyon, is to get programs to pay attention to the data and use it in making necessary programmatic changes. He added that there is a fine balance between limiting access to some data yet increasing access to other data so prospective students can make informed choices.

Next, Vice Provost Lanyon talked about what the Graduate School is doing in terms of surveying alumni periodically after they graduate to find out what they are doing as well as surveying current PhD students to find out about their career aspirations. Over time, the goal is to provide programs with information about what their alumni are doing post-graduation. In response to a question about whether this survey data has been shared with survey respondents, Vice Provost said this information has not yet been shared with the respondents because the survey was only recently closed; however, he would like to share this data with them to reassure them that the institution is paying attention to the data and will take action on it as needed.

Vice Provost Lanyon went on to talk about the doctoral exit survey that the University conducts. Similar to the other surveys that are conducted, this survey looks at overall satisfaction of advising, learning outcomes, mentoring, etc.

Vice Provost Lanyon said the reason he is telling the committee about the surveys that are being conducted and the data that is being collected is to help get the word out because for the most part programs are not using the data that is being collected. In part, he admitted, that this is likely because the data has not been particularly accessible, but that is changing.

Next, Vice Provost Lanyon demonstrated an application tracker tool, which he said is particularly useful for directors of graduate admissions, etc. This tool, said Vice Provost Lanyon, provides an up-to-date report of the number of applications received, offers made, and offers accepted (at the college and program level) and compares that with the data from the same date from the past couple years.

Does the University have comprehensive data for all degree programs, including professional degrees, asked Professor Kudrle? Not consistently, said Vice Provost Lanyon, but if there is interest in collecting this data it should be discussed further.

The last slide, said Vice Provost Lanyon, takes the same information from the application tracker tool and presents it graphically and not just as a table. The Graduate School is finding that the tabular data is great once it has been determined that that a particular data point is needed; however, it is difficult to get people to look at the tabular data until they see it graphically first.

The goal is to make the data as easily digestible as possible and to highlight the top concerns programs should be paying attention to.

Professor Kudrle asked Vice Provost Lanyon what has surprised him the most about the graduate education data that has been collected thus far. Vice Provost Lanyon said he is actually surprised that the Graduate School has as much data as it does. Additionally, he said while it does not come as a complete surprise, there is not a single program that does not have something to work on/improve upon. Finally, Vice Provost Lanyon admitted being a little surprised at how powerful the gradSERU results were given it was only year one of the formal implementation of this survey.

How will success in terms of utilization be measured, asked Professor Zaheer? Vice Provost Lanyon said while this is not completely clear yet, he does know that the deans and associate deans have been very pleased with the data generated by gradSERU. Mr. Jones-White added that with the launch of the collegiate-levels reports, people are increasingly accessing the data because it is more digestible. Vice Provost Lanyon commented that with the upcoming mid-term accreditation visit in June of 2020 and the increasing attention that is being paid to graduate education in terms of graduate education goals, he would like programs to report that they have made programmatic changes as the result of the gradSERU data. He said he is concerned that if programs do not acknowledge that they made changes as the result of gradSERU that students will stop filling out the survey.

Professor Kudrle asked Vice Provost Lanyon to generalize about the University's graduate program rankings. Vice Provost Lanyon said this is a difficult to do because defining graduate education is becoming more and more complex. In his opinion, where some of the University's graduate programs are behind is in acknowledging/accepting that some of their students are looking for careers outside of higher education.

Hearing no further questions, Vice Provost Lanyon said he would send members links to all the different data sources he talked about today.

2. Update on SCFA Child Development Center (CDC) statement: Professor Kudrle reported that the CDC statement that SCFA approved at its last meeting was sent to President Kaler and Provost Hanson for their information. He also reported that the CDC issue is being monitored very carefully by faculty governance.

3. Draft/revised policies – Parental Leave for Employees, Postdoctoral Appointments, Family and Medical Leave Act: Professor Kudrle welcomed Vice President for Human Resources Kathy Brown to the meeting and called for a round of introductions. Vice President Brown explained that due to the Maintenance of Status Quo (MSQ) order that was in place for 22 months, the Office of Human Resources (OHR) had to put a hold on all of its policy work. Now that MSQ was lifted in the fall of 2017, OHR has been able to move rather aggressively on a number of policies that it had been working on prior to the MSQ. With that said, three policies are being brought to SCFA today for member input and these include:

- Parental Leave for Employees
- Postdoctoral Appointments
- Family and Medical Leave Act

Starting with the proposed changes to the Parental Leave for Employees policy, said Vice President Brown, this policy applies to all eligible employees and relates to the birth, adoption, or surrogacy of a child. Eligible employees are defined as anyone who holds a 50% appointment or greater. There is no waiting period for this benefit to take effect. This policy stipulates that eligible employees who have a birth, adoption, or are a surrogate parent are able to take six weeks of paid parental leave. This leave may not begin more than two weeks prior to the event or up to six weeks after the event. The rationale for this specified time period is that the time is intended for bonding with the newborn. Prior to this proposed change, the policy allowed for two-weeks of paid parental leave for men and women, and surrogacy was not included. Vice President Brown added that under the new proposed policy, leave must be taken consecutively and without interruption.

In response to a question from Professor Anderson about why a surrogate parent would need six-weeks leave if the intent of the leave is for bonding, Vice President Brown explained that in the case of a surrogate, the six-week leave would be time to recover from the act of giving birth.

With this policy change, how does the University compare to its peers, asked Professor Kudrle? Vice President Brown said on a scale of 1 – 10, with this policy change, the University would be in the 7 – 8 range. Some institutions have a waiting period, but the University does not, said Vice President Brown, and a number of other institutions' policies are not quite as broad, e.g., do not include surrogate parents. The University's policy is definitely competitive with its peers.

Is surrogacy a small part of this policy, asked Professor Kudrle? Yes, said Vice President Brown, but the University over the past year has had several instances of individuals asking about benefits for surrogate parents.

Professor Zaheer asked what if an employee gets their child from a surrogate, would this employee be eligible for parental leave too? Vice President Brown explained that this employee would also be eligible for parental leave. The University's position is that it wants to provide parental leave to employees who are bringing a new child into their home.

Professor Connett commented that there seems to be some ambiguity around the duration of the leave. The proposed policy implies the leave has to start before six-weeks after the birth of the child. With that said, how long after the leave starts can it go on? Vice President Brown turned members' attention to the section of the policy that says "eligible employees may take six-weeks paid leave." To be clear, there is really an eight-week window in which an individual can start the six-weeks of paid leave. In the instance where both parents are University employees, one could take six-weeks leave at the front end and then the other parent could start their leave when his/her spouse/partner was ending their leave thus giving a continuity of up to 12-weeks leave.

How long can an employee take off for a parental leave, asked Professor Blue? For example, is there a maximum amount of time an employee can take off? To answer this question, Vice President Brown turned to the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) policy. She said that other than stylistic/editorial changes, no changes have been made to the FMLA policy. The editorial changes were made to clean-up the policy for greater clarity. Having said that, FMLA runs concurrently with the six-weeks of paid parental leave; FMLA provides for up to 12-weeks of unpaid leave unless the person is eligible for other paid leave through his/her employer.

Professor Gonzales mentioned that while FMLA is available to faculty for an unpaid leave, faculty also have a benefit that allows them to take up to 10-days paid leave to take care of parents and children, for example, but, unfortunately, this paid leave does not cover siblings. With that said, as faculty are getting older, and their parents are dying and people are choosing not to have children, this puts faculty in a precarious position because while they can take an unpaid leave (FMLA) to care for a sibling, the 10-day paid leave does not cover siblings as a covered family member. Vice President Brown noted that the 10-day paid leave is applicable to faculty and P&A employees who do not accrue sick leave based on the number of hours they work. The definitions for leave benefits are inconsistent between faculty, P&A, Civil Service and labor-represented employee agreements. Vice President Brown said she cannot justify or explain these differences other than to say that the definitions developed ad hoc over time, and she realizes this is an issue. She added that supervisors are able to exercise discretion and approve a paid leave like in the scenario outlined by Professor Gonzales. Vice President Brown said in looking at the institution as a whole, the University tends to be more generous in giving leave than denying leave.

Adolfo Carrillo Cabello then shared his personal experience with the 10-day paid leave. In response, Vice President Brown acknowledged that FMLA was written under the assumption that everything would go as planned, e.g., an ideal world scenario, but this simply is not reality. In situations where problems arise, typically these can be dealt with at the local level on a case-by-case basis, but, if not, employees are always welcome to contact central Human Resources to resolve the matter between the employee and the supervisor.

Moving on, Vice President Brown noted that the parental leave benefit covers all eligible employees, including postdocs as well as postdoc fellows and graduate fellows. The Office of Human Resources has worked with the Graduate School and the Office of the Vice President for Research to ensure that fellows can be given a leave and continue to be paid with supported grant money. This means that both graduate and postdoc fellows will be eligible for leaves based on University policy. In the unlikely event that a non-federal granting agency is unable to pay, the University would still pay for the leave, but would have to work out the source of funding on a case-by-case basis.

In response to a question from Professor Kudrle about how close this policy was to being in final form before the MSQ was put in place, Vice President Brown said the revised policy was quite close to its final form. After the MSQ was lifted, the Office of Human Resources consulted with various groups on the proposed policy. Next week, the policy will go to the Policy Advisory Committee and after that it will go to the President's Policy Committee. Assuming the

President's Policy Committee approves the policy, it will have a 30-day public comment period. If no comments are received that would require further review or a rewrite, the policy will go into effect after that. Vice President Brown said she suspects the policy will go into effect sometime in early April.

Professor Ng asked whether a supervisor can initiate a FMLA on behalf an employee. Yes, said Vice President Brown, after an employee has been absent three days, the supervisor should be asking the employee for documentation to justify their absence. Once this happens, the employee will be given noticed that their absences will count as FMLA. Often this comes into play in situations where an employee has frequent absences. Also, in situations where an employee will need a long-term absence, the FMLA actually protects employees so they have job security.

At the request of Professor Kudrle, Vice President Brown went on to talk about employees who hold positions such as teaching specialists, senior teaching specialists, lecturers and senior lecturers, who teach periodically. The reality of employment is either a person is employed or they are not employed, said Vice President Brown. Depending on a person's legal employment status determines what benefits and services a person is eligible to receive such as library privileges, email, etc. Therefore, when a person is not employed, they do not get paid, or receive benefits and services, and there is a good reason for this, which is to protect the University's systems. The Provost's Office, however, after hearing a number of concerns, would like to keep the services such as library privileges and email in place. As a result, the Office of Human Resources is in the process of working to set this up. Hopefully, this will be accomplished by the end of spring semester so that individuals who are likely to periodically teach will have access to these services. The other side of this issue is that the University does not want to give individuals false expectations that they will be returning to employment when in fact they may not. In Vice President Brown's opinion, there are two sides to every coin, she believes by providing individuals with these services it will provide them with continuity of services, while protecting the University's employment and student systems. Katherine Dowd suggested entering these individuals into the system as if they are on a short work break. Professor Anderson added another group of individuals that would benefit from having access to services are community adjunct faculty in the Medical School who are volunteers. Vice President Brown noted that there is a category in the system called "persons of interest," which is designed for people who are volunteering at the University, but who are not eligible for pay or benefits. Sometimes these "persons of interest" have access to some of the University's services. Ms. Dowd mentioned her department occasionally uses the "persons of interest" category, which provides individuals with access to certain services, but she does not believe that includes library services because the Library has licensing agreement restrictions. Vice President Brown noted that she believes Ms. Dowd is right in that the Library has special agreements that stipulate who can use their services, but she does not know what all those agreements stipulate. She added that she would talk with the Medical School HR lead about the community adjunct matter. Professor Kudrle concluded this discussion by saying that this concern was raised because the University wants to make sure that the people it values feel like a member of the community. By giving these individuals access to University services, the institution is improving the quality and quantity of the work they do for the University. Vice President Brown agreed but said conversely there are legal compliance issues the University needs to adhere to; the goal is to strike a happy balance.

Lastly, Professor Ng mentioned other challenges faced by faculty of instruction such as not having access to class rosters, etc. Vice President Brown understands this frustration but reiterated that the University needs to maintain the security of its systems in terms of protecting private student data. Essentially, the University does not want people who are not employed to have access to its systems; this is a security issue.

In light of time, Professor Kudrle thanked Vice President Brown for attending today's meeting.

4. Hearing no further business, Professor Kudrle adjourned the meeting.

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