

Minutes*

SENATE COMMITTEE ON FACULTY AFFAIRS
Thursday, November 30, 1995
3:15 - 5:00
Regents Room

Present: Dan Feeney (chair), Carol Chomsky, Cheryl Coryea, Mary Dempsey, Robert Fahnhorst, Richard Goldstein, Roland Guyotte, Sam Myers, Kevin O'Laughlin, George Seltzer, Yang Wang

Regrets: Carole Bland, Carol Carrier, Judith Gaston, Kinley Larntz, Richard McGehee

Absent: Ken Roering, James Stone

Guests: Mark Brenner, Richard FitzPutzenreuter, Helen Pladsen, Barbara Pucel, Alaine Siniff

Other: Judy Leahy

[These minutes contain discussion on the new mid-career support program for faculty, and includes a presentation of the proposed payroll merger.]

1. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA AND MINUTES

The agenda and the November 9, 1995 minutes were approved as amended.

2. REPORT OF THE CHAIR

Conflict Resolution Group: Professor Feeney said that this group recently met which consists of the chairs of the Sexual Harassment Board and SCFA, a representative from the Academic Affairs Office, Chief of Staff, Dr. Mario Bognanno, etc. Among other things, the group discussed SCFA's concern that the University Grievance Officer reports to the Office of the President, and the potential conflict of interest this may present in cases between a faculty member and the Administration. Clarifications were offered stating that while the President appoints the Grievance Officer, this person is actually supervised by the Grievance Advisory Board. SCFA has the opportunity to appoint an individual to this Board, who for this year is Professor Judith Garrard. Professor Feeney said that if the committee still has concerns about this matter, members can bring it to his attention and move to discuss the issue at a future meeting.

3. DISCUSSION OF MID-CAREER SUPPORT PROGRAM FOR FACULTY

Professor Mark Brenner, Dean of the Graduate School

Professor Brenner said that the idea for a mid-career award has been discussed for several years. He explained that the McKnight Land Grant Professorships in place now are supports up to 10 outstanding newly hired faculty members for a two year period with an \$18 million trust fund controlled

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by the Graduate School. The shrinking pool of junior faculty has decreased the demand for this program and opens opportunities for a mid-career support programs. A faculty committee chaired by Professor John Adams drafted the document before SCFA detailing the provisions for the awards available to faculty members who reached full professor positions within the last ten years. The awardees would be offered a lifetime title of "Distinguished McKnight University Professor" and receive \$100,000 of discretionary funding to be used over a five year period. If a faculty member decides to leave the University, she/he would only need to return support used over the past two years. Professor Brenner said that he is bringing this before the committee to guarantee that the language of the award statement is clear and thorough.

Points offered by the entire group:

- * The use of the title "Distinguished" may present some legal difficulties.
- * The University has awards for junior faculty members (McKnight Land Grant Professorships), and for senior faculty (Regents Professorships). This award provided recognition and compensation for outstanding mid-career faculty which at this time does not exist.
- * Approximately five of these new awards will be distributed annually.
- * There is a gap between the first and second (new) programs. Outstanding junior faculty can be promoted as a means of compensation. This award helps to retain recent full professors who may otherwise seek occupational improvements elsewhere.
- * The Horace T. Morse Alumni Professor title is also offered for the life of the awardee.
- * The average time to reach the position of full professor from assistant professor is 15-20 years.
- * The document is future oriented and should be fully supported. This is an efficient way of retaining the highest quality faculty.

Professor Brenner said that the award program is, in fact, on a fast track to be implemented. The University would like to announce this program in early January 1996. Additional comments are welcome, and can be sent to Professor Brenner.

4. DISCUSSION OF PAYROLL MERGER

Associate Vice President Richard "Fitz" Pfitzenreuter, Helen Pladsen, Barbara Pucel, and Alaine Siniff from the Office of the Vice President of Finance and Operations (Finance & Operations) joined SCFA to discuss the proposed payroll merger. A document was distributed around the table detailing the merger. Fitz introduced his colleagues and explained that the entire University community is to be consulted on this proposal starting with the Senate structure. This effort is part of re-engineering the University toward more efficient operations. Ms. Siniff said that a payroll task force has worked for about 3.5 years to develop streamlined operations for departmental staff who coordinate payroll documentation. A more efficient payroll documenting process is needed especially since staff have been downsized over the past few years and has been given increased responsibility for accountability. The new process will save money for the University, and save time for departmental staff.

Ms. Pucel told the committee that the current system operates both a semi-monthly system and a biweekly payroll. Problems with the current system include extra training to operate two systems, additional paper work, steep tax rates for overtime and bonus checks (bi-weekly) usually paid on a semi-monthly basis. Overall, the existing system is inefficient. Ms. Pladsen said that the proposed program is called "enhanced biweekly" that would allow a significantly less hand calculations. Benefits of the new

system includes eliminating occasional three weekend periods between paychecks, providing consistent tax rates, reducing overpayments, estimating savings of \$250,000 per year. The enhanced biweekly system would also alleviate retrieving approximately \$1 million in overpayment each year. There are some major challenges before the University to implement this program. There will be an unusually long delay between the last biweekly check before the transition and the first enhanced biweekly check (10 additional days). To facilitate this transition, non-interest loans will be offered by the University for which everyone would be eligible. The transition is tentatively scheduled to take effect in September 1996.

Faculty comments to the discussion:

- * A majority of the payroll dollars are allocated to the semi-monthly system.
- * Between the two existing programs, you have chosen the wrong one. Electronic transfers for billing and receiving funds are typically performed on the 15th or the last day of the month. This biweekly process complicates efforts to work with institutions outside of the University.
- * The faculty will be burdened by this transition. The financial benefits of this system does not calculate the costs that individual may incur. "To save the University a dime, don't cost the faculty a dollar."

The committee discussed the potential interest earnings losses to faculty as a result of this transition. Fitz assured the committee that, although there is a 10 day delay, faculty will receive the same amount of pay within the annual period. He did admit that faculty will lose the potential interest earnings on their wages for the 10 days. Professor Fred Morrison and the Senate Committee on Finance and Planning (SCFP) agreed with the figures calculated by the Office of the Sr. V. P. for Finance and Operations.

A committee member said that this transition will be difficult to sell to the faculty. The University must address the one time costs associated with this delay on income. Second, there is a tense relationship between the University payroll system and faculty. The group proceeded to discuss misinformation that impedes people from seeking alternative payroll options (i.e., spreading checks for a 9 month appointment over 12 months). Ms. Pucel explained to SCFA that a bimonthly delayed and non-delayed payment plan would still require a bifurcated system, and not incur any savings for the University.

Comments from the Finance & Operations staff in response to SCFA questions:

- * Under the current proposal, faculty will receive a full paycheck for the first pay period in September 1996.
- * The bimonthly payroll format can not be effectively applied to those paid on an hourly basis. Whereas, the biweekly program can be applied to those paid on a salary basis.
- * Discussion on this matter with SCFP was "animated."
- * Blaming the "system" for existing problems is not accurate. The system is run based on policies that were devised by real people. In addition, policies can be changed.
- * The best of the biweekly and semi-monthly payment programs are to be merged to construct the enhanced biweekly payroll system.
- * Computerization of the payroll system is being further developed to relieve the work level of University staff.

- * The "personnel action form" from Academic Affairs instructs the Payroll Office how it should pay each faculty member. The Payroll Office will pay the staff member over a 12 month period for a 9 month appointment if this form instructs them to do so.
- * The University is presently trying to get all of its policies updated and compiled in a central location.

SCFA decided that they would explore Academic Affairs' policy about stretching payments of a 9 month appointment over an entire year with Assoc. V. P. Carol Carrier. Professor Feeney invited the staff from Finance & Operations to revisit the committee once they have spoke with several other groups.

5. AGENDA ITEMS DELAYED

Professor Feeney said that the agenda items on Tenure and the Advocacy Office will be discussed at the next meeting.

-- Kevin Gormley

University of Minnesota