

Minutes*

**Senate Committee on Faculty Affairs
Tuesday, November 20, 2007
2:30 – 4:15
238A Morrill Hall**

Present: Geoffrey Sirc (chair), Stacey Aronson, Ben Bornshtein, Arlene Carney, Dann Chapman, Tom Clayton, George, Jayne Fulkerson, Andrew Gerst, Kathryn Hanna, Morris Kleiner, Holly Littlefield, Theodor Litman, Anna Masellis, Luis Ramos-Garcia, George Sheets, Roderick Squires, Elizabeth Stallman, Virginia Zuiker

Absent: Carol Carrier, Vladimir Cherkassky, Larry Wallace

Guests: none

[In these minutes: (1) report of the chair; (2) new faculty hires; (3) new-faculty orientation; (4) tenure-track faculty data for the Twin Cities campus; (5) department-chair leadership program; (6) the source of external-review letters]

1. Report of the Chair

Professor Sirc convened the meeting at 2:35 and noted several handouts.

-- At a future meeting, the Committee will discuss the number of part-time faculty at the University. He pointed out the article in The New York Times that had been distributed to Committee members by email reporting on the decline of tenured faculty in higher education and the direction of the professoriate.

-- CAPA enthusiastically supported (at both its Executive Committee meeting and monthly CAPA membership meeting) the response that was written. While endorsing the response, CAPA membership also supported CAPA's continued work with SCFA and other governance committees on retiree benefit issues as outlined in the response memo.

-- The ad hoc subcommittee on the expertise database, chaired by Nancy Herther in the libraries, provided a written update on its work. Professor Hanna, a member of the subcommittee, said the subcommittee had expanded its charge to include annual reporting. Professor Sirc commented that the University News Service is also developing databases and asked if the subcommittee is working with them. Professor Hanna said that the News Service is aware of their work. Dr. Carney said that the subcommittee will also report to her as a member of a group looking at long-term technology investments; much of those investments have to do with faculty, so she is gathering information and will serve as an advocate for the faculty.

* 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 represents the views of, nor are they binding on, the Senate, the Administration, or the Board of Regents.

2. New Faculty Hires

Professor Sirc next asked Vice Provost Carney to talk about the new faculty orientation program—which, he observed, has received national attention.

Dr. Carney distributed several handouts and drew the attention of Committee members to a one-page table of data on new faculty hires during the period January 1 to September 26, 2007. There are two dilemmas about reporting new faculty hires. One is that she only knows of them if the colleges tell her; there is no central repository of new faculty until they are on the payroll. (Which also creates a dilemma in identifying the individuals who should be invited to the new faculty orientation. The new faculty again reported that they liked the program, so she has received more information about new hires, but learned nonetheless that some had been missed—and those who had were disappointed.) The second dilemma is when to start counting. She chose January 1-September 26 because there was a mix of 9- and 12-month appointees and some come mid-year. Anyone who began during the previous year is invited to attend the new faculty orientation, and that includes clinical and visiting faculty and so on.

There were 104 new faculty hires during the period: 84 assistant professors, 19 associate professors, and 1 full professor. Of the 84 associate professors, 47 were male and 37 were female, so the University is getting closer and closer to 50% each men and women, although this varies significantly by college. Of the associate professors, 10 were male and 9 were female. The full professor was a male. The University hires at the associate level and the new faculty are a mix of tenured and non-tenured (e.g., the Law School does not hire at the assistant level but new associate professors are hired on a probationary track; the same is true in parts of the Academic Health Center).

In the future, Dr. Carney said, she will provide data for January to January.

Professor Kleiner said that the most striking number he has seen presented to this Committee was the average age of probationary faculty: 39. That means probationary faculty are probably tenured in their early to mid- 40s. That fact goes to Professor Sirc's question about the direction of the professoriate: in a law firm or a public accounting firm, one becomes a partner in his or her early 30s. When he came as a faculty member, the average age for tenure seemed to be in the early 30s. Is the University similar to other institutions in this regard? (It is, Dr. Carney said.) What does she attribute this apparent increase in the age of probationary faculty, he asked?

The average age of a Ph.D. recipient is 33, Dr. Carney said, which may be older than in the past. The average age of the University's faculty is 51. Information that Dr. Zetterberg provided to another committee demonstrated that the University resembles the other institutions in the CIC. When she examined the COACHE data (the Harvard study of probationary faculty, in which Minnesota is participating), Minnesota was typical of most institutions. Faculty are somewhat younger in the liberal arts, because they do not have postdocs, as do many in the sciences; those in the sciences start their faculty careers at age 35-36. The University is similar to other research institutions. One could look at the data from 20-30 years ago to see if the average age of Ph.D. recipients was lower.

Professor Hanna said she was interested in what was NOT on the table: the number of teaching professors. In her college, they have recently hired two tenure-track faculty and 3-4 teaching professors. That is a complex issue, Dr. Carney said, that should be the subject of discussion at a future meeting. CBS hires teaching faculty but CLA does not; CLA hires teaching specialists who do not carry the faculty

title. The data provided to the Committee demonstrate that the University has not hired as many non-tenure-track faculty as many institutions. There are also clinical scholars in the Academic Health Center, with whom she has spoken; that is a track they want and some on the tenure-track have asked to be changed to the clinical-scholar track. In comparing data with other institutions, the Academic Health Center, or at least the Medical School, should be separated out.

3. New-Faculty Orientation

Vice Provost Carney next reviewed the new faculty orientation. When her office identifies new faculty, they send an invitation, and continue to send invitations all summer as units hire. In the first year of the new program, they had 86 participants. They just finished the second year and there were 136 participants; there was an increase because a number of Nursing faculty changed from teaching specialist (P&A appointments) to the clinical track and the dean wanted them to attend as new faculty.

The schedule lasts for three days, one day on each campus (East Bank, West Bank, St. Paul), so for at least one time, all new faculty see where everyone else works. The new faculty orientation was developed in response to a recommendation from the faculty culture task force, which observed that faculty allegiance appears to be primarily to the department and not to the institution, about which new faculty knew very little.

Dr. Carney reviewed the agenda for the new faculty for the three days. She said she was pleased that the overwhelming sentiment of those who attended was very positive and that the attendees had some great suggestions. The University pays the new faculty \$200 per day for each day to attend because most have 9-month appointments and the orientation comes before they are on the payroll; it is a cheap way to introduce new faculty to University and how to navigate it. They also provide new faculty a special email to use if they have problems they cannot get resolved, which helps cut down on frustration.

Dr. Littlefield asked if the program includes new P&A staff hired for research or teaching. It does not, Dr. Carney said, in part because P&A staff are not under her auspices. She said she believed it would be appropriate, however, to have a one-day session, with perhaps a morning session devoted to all-University matters and afternoon sessions for those who are going into teaching, research, or administration. She said she has talked with Human Resources about such an event, but first they wanted to see how the new faculty orientation worked. Given their experience, she said she believed a parallel session would help new P&A staff. Ms. George suggested that Dr. Carney work with CAPA on developing such an orientation. Vice Provost Carney pointed out that the Office of Human Resources is currently revamping the new employee orientation program, which may address more of the needs of P&A employees in the future.

Professor Sirc asked if there are any measures Dr. Carney uses to evaluate the effectiveness of the orientation. His instincts tell him it is excellent, but are there more concrete appraisals? She said there are; they began an IRB-approved study last year by surveying faculty who had NOT gone through the new faculty orientation (who came before the program was offered in 2005) to inquire about connection to the University, satisfaction, and so on. They have also contacted faculty who went through the program in 2006. They intend to track and compare the two groups over time to see which is more satisfied with and connected to the institution. They will also compare the two different sessions that have been offered.

Will they get "quit rates," or other clearly observable measures to justify the time and costs, Professor Kleiner asked? They will, Dr. Carney said. That is an important question: do the new faculty feel more connected? The evidence from last year's program is that they do, both to their department and the University. She also hosts a series of new-faculty lunches during the year, with 15-20 new faculty, to ask them about problems they're having. Whatever information they learn from the lunches (e.g., what one must do to get research funding) is then distributed to all new faculty. At the end of the year they have a reunion to learn how the new faculty are doing and help them remain connected. Dr. Carney said that she now knows incoming faculty across the University (which she would not otherwise) and can help to convey the message that the institution cares about them.

4. Tenure-Track Faculty Data for the Twin Cities Campus

Dr. Carney turned next to a table of data on tenure-track faculty on the Twin Cities campus by college and by rank as of November 1, 2007.

There are 42 tenure-track associate professors, with the largest numbers in CFANS (8), Law (7), and CLA (6); the others are scattered across various colleges. There are 511 tenure-track assistant professors, with the largest numbers in the Medical School (135), CLA (116), IT (61), and 36 in CFANS and 32 in CEHD. In a number of units, the tenure-track assistant professors make up a sizeable proportion of the total faculty in the unit:

CBS	19%
Dent	23
Design	16
CEHD	20
CFANS	13
HHH	2
Law	21
CLA	24
Med	28
CSOM	29
Nursing	35
Pharm	26
IT	16
Vet	11

Professor Kleiner asked Dr. Carney if she had comparable information for the CIC schools. She said she is talking with her colleagues, but Minnesota is looking at these things more than other institutions. She is beginning to see emulation of the new faculty orientation, after some initial skepticism across the CIC.

Does any place have a more extensive new faculty orientation, Professor Sirc asked? The University of Washington has a five-day orientation, Dr. Carney said, that is more focused on teaching. The Minnesota program focuses on teaching but it is also intended to provide a broad overview of the institution. Her office is also preparing an electronic newsletter to remind new faculty of the information that was provided at the orientation (e.g., how to submit grades).

Professor Fulkerson, who had gone through the orientation, said it helped to have links to websites she would not otherwise know about.

5. Department-Chair Leadership Program

Dr. Carney next pointed to a schedule of events for department chairs, which comprise a leadership program sponsored by her office and the Vice President for Human Resources. Participation is voluntary. Human Resources has had a program for a long time for department chairs, but the focus has broadened to include not only human resource issues but also academic leadership.

There are once-per-month meetings during the academic year. The sessions include such topics as "Leading the Academic Department," "Teaching and Learning and Mentoring," "Planning and Managing Finances," "Fostering a Productive, Supportive Department," and so on. They deal with promotion and tenure, legal issues, and difficult issues (e.g., mental health). The chairs are also provided a book on department leadership. There were 22 participants last year and 21 this year; they come from colleges and campuses across the University.

Dr. Carney reported that she also brings 5 chairs to a CIC weekend, meetings for department chairs in their second or third year of service. This gives them an opportunity to meet with chairs from other institutions.

Her office is also sponsoring lunches for continuing chairs that usually focus on a specific topic (e.g., dealing with problem faculty in trouble, budgeting, how to write annual reviews). Any chair can pick a topic that resonates and no one is obligated to sign up for the entire year. These lunches are less about presentation than about problem-solving. Dr. Carney said she welcomes thoughts on how to have ongoing sessions for chairs.

6. The Source of External Review Letters

Professor Sirc explained that the next issue did not have to do with anonymity of external reviewers but rather the source of the letters: Do they come from peer institutions? What if the greatest letter, from the best scholar in the field, comes from someone at an institution not in the same rank as Minnesota? He invited the Committee to discuss the issue to determine if there was anything to do with it.

Dr. Carney explained that the last two years she has kept track of where letters have come from because she was interested to learn if, across colleges and departments, there are particular areas that people pick. There are clear patterns in some colleges, she said (e.g., more emphasis on international letters from people at arm's length from the candidate and who have no interest in the candidate's career advancement). Across the University, there are a lot of letters from Berkeley, Michigan, UCLA, and Cal Tech, MIT, and Harvard, depending on the area, but there is great variation, depending on the area. A lot of letters come from CIC schools, but there is a mix of public and private. In CFANS, for example, there tend to be a lot of letters from other land-grant institutions, but she would be surprised to see more letters from land-grant institutions in such areas as classics, for example.

Some departments do a better job than others of explaining the credentials of a reviewer. Some provide a summary of the reviewer's qualification; others, however, simply include the CV of the

reviewer, which is not helpful for her, Dr. Carney said. She needs a summary identifying the individual as a scholar in the field. The individual may come from a small school because a spouse/partner is there or they like the area they live in. It is important to interpret the letters. If all the letters for a candidate were to come from institutions that are not of the same rank as Minnesota, that would be unusual.

Who does the interpreting, Professor Zuiker asked? That varies by college, Dr. Carney said. CLA frequently has a "case worker," a senior faculty member who writes a description for the college and provost. CEHD also has that system with a synopsis committee, but not all colleges do. Just inserting the CV does not help, especially if it is a difficult case; that does not provide the Provost the information he needs.

Is it up to the department to decide on the number of letters and their origin, Professor Sirc asked? There is no institutional policy? With the new Procedures, Dr. Carney explained, there are more regulations than there were before. A file must have at least four letters, half of which must be from external reviewers who have no relationship to the candidate. Many colleges have always done that, but now it is not permissible to obtain letters from someone the candidate knows. But there is no policy on where they may come from, Professor Sirc repeated? There is not, Dr. Carney said; the only requirement is that they come from distinguished scholars. It would probably be helpful to have best practices that describe the scholar, why he or she was selected, and also information about the journals in the field (if journal articles are used) and why they are important. She said they will ask the libraries about measures of impact. The process could use more regularity, she commented.

Given the changes in technology, and compilations of research such as Google Scholar, Professor Kleiner said, one can get rough estimates of faculty citations in several fields. How does the new technology on research impact affect promotion and tenure? There is an effect, Dr. Carney said, although she would be nervous if she saw Google Scholar in a file. Ms. Herther's subcommittee has concerns about citation indices—they were never intended to be a measure of impact. For one thing, they do not cover every journal. In medical fields, what is the impact? There is no way to record the number of practicing physicians who may download an article; it may be an article has a significant effect on practice. There are experts in the libraries who can help, Dr. Carney said.

Professor Ramos-Garcia said there are also rumors that the University tracks the number of libraries who buy a faculty member's book. Dr. Carney said she has not seen that statistic in any promotion-and-tenure file. People do come up with a lot of measures but there is a need for best practices. Citations can be used in a limited way, perhaps to discuss impact, but it may not be the right way. And the impact could be negative because someone got something wrong, Professor Bornsstein pointed out.

Professor Fulkerson recalled that some of her colleagues who went up for promotion and tenure were asked for 10-15 reviewer names at the end of the academic year. Many were not available because it was summer, so more names were sought. The candidate does not know who was selected. Dr. Carney agreed it is better to be asked to provide names in April, not later. In some cases, reviewers are asked over the summer to provide a letter by October. Much depends on college deadlines; it appears that most P&T committees meet over (fall semester) final exams, so the department must be finished earlier (such as late October or early November). That means the department must have all the materials by mid-October—all of this is so because the tenure code requires that the Provost send letters no later than May 15. A candidate needs a number of names because some people will turn down a request to serve as a

reviewer—some because of Minnesota's open files law, although there is not overwhelming evidence that that happens. People turn down the requests more often because they are busy; if someone is the top scholar in a small field, he or she will be asked for a lot of letters.

Do they have a hard-and-fast rule if letters are late? That is up to the department, Dr. Carney said. Departments differ? They do, she said. The Procedures require that one cannot pick and choose. She said she is also troubled by interpretive comments such as "X would not write a letter, so we assume it would be negative." People should not draw inferences. Her recommendation is to send an email message first, asking if the individual can write a letter, before sending the file. One risks someone being on sabbatical or traveling by just sending an entire file without notice. The Procedures also require that the department and the candidate provide names of reviewers and there should be letters from both groups. There have been cases where there are more letters from the reviewers selected by the department or by the probationary faculty member simply because some who are asked turn down the request.

What should this Committee do, if anything, Professor Sirc asked? Dr. Carney asked if it had recommendations. Should there be best practices (e.g., about use of citation indices)? If so, it would help to have the Committee's backing. She does want to give units a template letter to external reviewers so that anything that is University policy is included; the department can then add information.

Professor Kleiner noted that the Carlson School of Management has an eight-year probationary period; is that a trend? It is a trend in business schools, Dr. Carney said, but she has not heard about changes in other colleges. That would make assistant professors even older when they received tenure, and further reduce the appeal of an academic career to many, Professor Kleiner observed.

Professor Sheets offered two recommendations. One, since top scholars are asked again and again for letters, the best practices should suggest writing to them earlier. Two, any letter should emphasize that it is not seeking a recommendation on granting tenure, only on the quality of the scholarship. It would be permissible, however, to ask if the candidate would receive tenure at the reviewer's institution. The letters should only ask about scholarship, not teaching and service. Dr. Carney said that varies; some fields do ask about teaching (e.g., in extension work service is a natural part of the job). It could be appropriate to ask. In the case of teaching, are the reviewers sent the syllabi, Professor Sheets asked? They are, Dr. Carney said, as well as websites. To ask for a review of teaching is atypical for candidates on the Twin Cities campus and more likely on coordinate campuses, and it would be useful to have the expectations set out in campus requirements. There is much that needs to be cleaned up, she said, and it is in difficult cases that the questions come up.

Professor Kleiner asked whether, if other major institutions are bidding for an individual, that fact can enter into the decision. Dr. Carney said the tenure code requires that the criteria in the code and the department's 7.12 statement must be used. There is nothing about candidates being lured away, and if they are, they are probably high on the measures. It is the unit's decision; there is no provision for making a decision on that ground. If a probationary faculty member in the third or fourth year receives an offer from somewhere else, there is no provision for the Provost to make a quick decision. Professor Kleiner said he thought it interesting, in that case, that an external person could receive tenure but an internal candidate could not. Dr. Carney agreed but said that would be an unusual circumstance. When a candidate is being lured from outside, the department often needs a quick decision. CLA uses an ad hoc P&T committee that can be put together quickly (composed of senior faculty who have agreed to be on

call) to review the file for the dean. Most colleges have no such provision. In most cases, the department is recruiting faculty from elsewhere. In those cases, external letters are still required; the Provost will not make a tenure decision on the basis of a CV and a department vote.

What about early promotion, Professor Litman asked? The Procedures allow it, Dr. Carney said, and there are three possible outcomes: the candidate is promoted, the candidate is turned down and terminated, or the candidate is turned down but continues in the probationary appointment. The second option was put into the Procedures to warn people that termination can be one outcome.

Professor Sirc concluded that the Committee supported development of best practices and asked that it be permitted to review them when drafted. He thanked Dr. Carney for her reports, wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving, and adjourned the meeting at 4:20.

-- Gary Engstrand

University of Minnesota