

MINUTES

SENATE FACULTY AFFAIRS COMMITTEE (SCFA)

Thursday, October 1, 1998

3:30-5:00

229 Nolte Center

Present: Kent Bales (Chair), Josef Altholz, Gary Balas, Gerry Baldrige, Carol Carrier, Carol Chomsky, Robert Fahnhorst, John Fossum, Roland Guyotte, Cleon Melsa, Marcia Pankake, James Perry, Anne Pick, Richard Purple, Geoffrey Sirc, Caroline Turner

Absent: Avner Ben-Ner, Carole Bland, Thomas Walsh

Regrets: Amy Alving, Eville Gorham,

Guests: None

Others: None

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 represent the views of, nor are they binding on, the Senate or Assembly, the Administration, or the Board of Regents.

[Meeting topics: status of Nepotism and Consensual Sexual and Romantic Relationships Policy, faculty development leaves, health coverage update, faculty start date for semesters.]

1. Chair's Report

Professor Bales announced that the Senate Consultative Committee (SCC) voted earlier in the afternoon to bring the proposed changes to the Nepotism and Consensual Sexual and Romantic Relationships Policy that were submitted by the administration and Regents Office to the full Senate at a special meeting on November 5. Two concerns of the SCC involve the change in tone of the document and the removal of the purpose section.

2. Faculty Development Leaves

With regard to the proposed interim policy on faculty development leaves, Professor Bales reported that the Faculty Consultative Committee unanimously approved the following action contingent on SCFA's approval:

The Faculty Consultative Committee and the Senate Committee on Faculty Affairs forward to the Faculty Senate an interim policy on Faculty Development Leaves, intended to replace the Regents policies on Sabbatical Leaves and Single-Quarter Leaves. We ask for immediate action on this policy. In the interim, the Committee on Faculty Affairs will continue to work with the office of the Vice President and Provost to create a better policy, a goal shared by all parties.

For action:

Be it resolved that the Faculty Senate adopts the policy on Faculty Development Leaves and forwards it to the President for presentation to the Board of Regents.

Be it further resolved that the policy will remain in effect until 30 June 2002, or until a replacement for it has been adopted, whichever event is the sooner.

In essence, the action, if approved by the Faculty Senate, would approve the adoption of an interim policy and instruct the Faculty Affairs Committee to develop the administrative procedures.

Turning to the policy itself, Professor Bales noted that under Section III., Subd. 9, the administrative procedures are to describe a process for faculty to grieve repeated denials of a sabbatical leave or the delay of a sabbatical leave for longer than one year. The committee, he said, may wish to simply use the language it developed last spring for the "frequent flyer" proposal.

In response to a request for clarification of Section II. Administrative Procedures, Professor Bales explained that the Faculty Senate will develop procedures to implement the policy, and departments and colleges will also be required to develop unit procedures.

Looking at Section III., Subd. 6. Salary and Benefits, one person asked whether retirement benefits will be calculated on one-half or full salary. Mr. Fahnhorst said they will be based on full salary.

A friendly amendment was proposed and accepted to correct "sabbatical leave" to "single semester leave" in Section IV., Subd. 2, and another friendly amendment was proposed and approved to remove the words "Unusually heavy" in the last sentence of Section III., Subd. 7 due to their ambiguity.

With no further discussion, the proposal to endorse the FCC action noted above and to approve the interim policy as amended was approved.

Professor Purple agreed to present the policy at the October 15 Faculty Senate meeting in Professor Bales absence.

3. Selection of a SCFA representative to the Academic Staff Advisory Committee

In accordance with prescribed rules, the Faculty Affairs Committee shall select a representative to serve on the Academic Staff Advisory Committee (ASAC). Likewise, a member of ASAC serves on SCFA. Mr. Baldrige currently serves in this capacity. Mr. Baldrige was asked to review the charge of the Academic Staff Advisory Committee and the general time commitment. Professor Bales emphasized the importance of this role, especially this year with the review of academic and P&A appointments. Professor Bales will contact members by email in the next two weeks to seek a volunteer or possibly consider adding an additional member to the committee.

4. Health Coverage Update

Mr. Fahnhorst provided an update on the 28 day waiting period for health coverage. The waiting period is a State of Minnesota policy that has been in place since 1966. It is not unusual for employers to have a

waiting period and it is often set up as a design tool to prevent adverse selection to the plan. In a recent study, Employee Benefits learned that most other universities do not have a waiting period. Mr. Fahnhorst is exploring the possibility of having the waiting period begin July 1, especially for faculty on the 9 over 12 pay plan, so that when they actually begin their employment around the 16th of September coverage could start immediately. The Department of Employee Relations has agreed to test out this idea. If the State agrees to this proposal, the change would take effect January 1, 2000.

A question arose concerning those on 11 month appointments and Mr. Fahnhorst said he would look into that as well.

5. Faculty Start Date for Semesters

Vice President Carol Carrier recalled that the starting date for 9-month appointments has varied from year-to-year. Under the semester system the University would like to regularize that date. It also would like to ensure that the first paycheck each year be a full check, not a partial check, and to provide a certain number of working days before classes began for faculty preparation. A packet of materials on this issue was distributed.

Vice President Carrier suggested two possible options for SCFA consideration. The first would be to start the work of B-base faculty either the first Monday before Labor Day each year or two Mondays before Labor Day. If the faculty begin the first Monday before Labor Day, the 1st semester would run from August 30-January 12, the 2nd semester January 13-May 26, the Intercession from May 22-June 9, and the Summer Session June 12-August 18. This scheme would give faculty a full paycheck for the first pay period at least for five years, which is as far out as Employee Benefits studied. Under the second option (starting the second Monday before Labor Day), the 1st semester would run from August 23-January 5, the 2nd semester January 5-May 19, the Intercession May 22-June 9, and Summer Session June 12-August 18.

While the Faculty Senate indicated it would prefer a set start date each year, such as August 26, problems arise in that you could end up with the first paycheck covering only 1-2 days. This creates a major problem from a benefits perspective. The benefits experts indicate that to be safe, a pay period should include at least five days to ensure that pay will exceed deductions. Setting a fixed start date would also create significant problems for departments and central payroll in 1999-00 because the new PeopleSoft modules will not be implemented until 2000-01. This means that if the University adopts a fixed start date, all departments would be forced to do manual calculations on partial pay periods next year.

Vice President Carrier said she would like to arrive at a solution at least for the 1999-00 year and then suggested that the issue could be reconsidered after that time when the new systems are in place.

One person asked how a floating date would affect faculty in their application for summer research funds. Vice President Carrier responded that the dates would be set well in advance, thus providing faculty with the information they need. If the University adopts the proposal recommended by Vice President Carrier, it will be important that information be provided to faculty well in advance of Summer 1999.

There appear to be some circumstances unique to Crookston and Professor Melsa wondered whether that campus will be on a different calendar.

Another question arose concerning the availability of loans for new employees. Vice President Carrier said she understands those are negotiated on a case-by-case basis. It would be helpful in recruiting, said one person, if loans could be guaranteed. It was also suggested that the University encourage new employees to go on the 9 over 12 pay plan.

This item will be brought back to SCFA for further consideration at the October 22 meeting.

6. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 5:10 p.m.

-- Martha Kvanbeck