

**Faculty Consultative Committee (FCC)  
February 25, 2021  
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:** Conversation with President Gabel; Administrative Policy: Academic Appointments with Teaching Functions; FCC Nominating Subcommittee]

**PRESENT:** Phil Buhlmann (chair), Ned Patterson (vice chair), Mark Bee, Robert Blair, Tom Chase, Carol Chomsky, Lester Drewes, Will Durfee, Carl Flink, Jayne Fulkerson, Frank Gigler, Jennifer Goodnough, Michael Kyba, Keith Mayes, Barb McMorris, Gopalan Nadathur, Marcia Nichols, Julie Olson, Amy Pittenger, Donna Spannaus-Martin, Cliff Steer, Tracy Twine

**REGRETS:** Colleen Flaherty Manchester

**GUESTS:** President Joan T.A. Gabel; Ole Gram, associate vice provost, Faculty and Academic Affairs

**OTHERS ATTENDING:** Bill Haldeman, Hana Ikramuddin

Professor Phil Buhlmann, chair, began the meeting by telling members about [YOU@UMN](#), a new systemwide tool being developed to support student health and wellness. Buhlmann asked members to explore the platform and bring feedback to the March 4 FCC meeting.

**1. Conversation with President Gabel**

Buhlmann then introduced President Joan Gabel, who provided the following updates:

Pandemic

- The University's positive test rates are some of lowest in the country and certainly lowest against peers.
- There have been no COVID-19 outbreaks in classrooms or labs.
- All faculty, students, and staff can be tested for COVID at the Recreation and Wellness building on the East Bank campus.
- The University is currently not a vaccine distributor, and therefore can only give vaccinations as they are received, and only to individuals qualified under Governor Walz's order. The administration continues to advocate to become a distributor, and is also committed to equitable distribution.

Campus Safety

- The University's commitment to campus safety is noted in the [MPact 2025 Systemwide Strategic Plan](#), which was fully approved by the Board of Regents (BOR) at their June 2020 meeting and the related metrics and measures at their February 2021 meeting.
- Dr. Cedric Alexander was hired to do an external review of the University of Minnesota Police Department (UMPD) with full recognition at the outset that there is tension about

what people consider safety on campus. Alexander's report is now public, and was presented to the BOR in February.

- Alexander's report recommended establishing an implementation team to review all of the recommendations in the report. That implementation team, newly named [M Safe](#), will report to the Office of the President. Gabel told members that she does not expect that all of the recommendations in the report will be adopted, but that the implementation team will consider the full report and engage in consultation through senate committees and other groups.
- M Safe will likely operate for roughly six months. All findings and recommendations will then be distributed between the BOR, the UMPD, and the Campus Safety Committee for operation and oversight.

### Spring 2021 Semester

- Infection rates continue to be low, which helps guide the administration's decision making for the remainder of the spring semester.
- In accordance with the Center for Disease Control (CDC) guidelines, classes will continue after spring break with the operations in place before spring break.

### Commencement

- The administration has received considerable feedback from units and chancellors highlighting the desire to get back to unit level, in person commencements.
- The challenge is that the desire for information is out of sequence with the state. As of today, the state has capped large events at 250 people. Therefore, the administration would like to wait a little longer before making decisions about commencement in hopes that the continued decline in COVID cases will open up more capacity for large events at the state level.
- The Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) intends to issue guidance about commencement, so more information is forthcoming.
- The expectation for commencement is that units would build a plan in line with MDH guidelines, and then have that plan reviewed and approved.

Gabel told members that there could be more face to face classes in the summer, given that there are less courses available, and therefore more classroom space available. That said, masking and social distancing will still be required, and S/N grading will apply for the summer semester as well. There is a lot of benchmarking and contingency planning in process as we consider the summer and fall semesters, she said.

In addition to planning for future instruction, there is consideration being given to how and where people work in the future; Gabel told members that these potential changes are not limited to higher education. A lot of people are thinking differently about how work can be accomplished, she explained. To address these questions, the Office of Human Resources (OHR) is working through the complex issues related to providing flexibility to faculty and staff, and will consult with employee groups on proposed plans and policies.

Carl Flink asked if there is a possibility that the six feet social distance structure currently in place on campus could be reduced to three, adding that there are a number of programs and activities that would benefit from three foot distancing. Gabel told Flink that the University continues to follow the MDH guidelines currently recommending six feet distancing, but said the administration has also reminded the agency that the restrictions have been reduced in some places in the world, and has shown the agency data to support this. However, despite advocacy, she has not seen any signs of receptivity yet. The University will continue to follow MDH guidelines, she said.

Jenn Goodnough cautioned that as more people return to campus, there will likely be varying interpretations from University members about why certain individuals are on campus, and whether they should be on campus, which will lead to inequities. Gabel acknowledged this, and agreed that it will be a challenge. She shared that Professor Mike Osterholm, director for the Center for Infectious Disease Research and Policy, warned her early in the pandemic that she will find that it is much easier to close down operations than to open back up.

Gabel also reported that the Derek Chauvin trial is scheduled to begin on March 8, which will likely be an intense moment for the University community, and will affect members of the community in different ways. She told members that UMPD is part of cross-agency planning to address potential unrest in the city during the trial. (Note: the University's Office of Public Engagement has since created a [trial community support and resource webpage](#) in coordination with several other units.)

Lastly, Gabel reminded members that the leadership for the President's Initiative on Student Mental Health (PRISMH) has been identified, and the committee will (1) explore the root cause of student mental health issues, (2) will review current resources and ensure that the University community's mental health resources are robust and culturally relevant, and (3) enhance the ally-ship work already underway in the community. The initiative builds on the good work that has already occurred across the UMN System. The plan is for this work to be completed over a three year period, at which point the work will roll into the Office for Student Affairs.

## **2. Policy Review: Academic Appointments with Teaching Functions**

Buhlmann then introduced Associate Vice Provost Ole Gram and asked him to provide an overview of draft changes to the [Administrative Policy: Academic Appointments with Teaching Functions](#), which is up for comprehensive review.

Gram told members that the policy is a key document governing the standards and procedures for the appointments of instructors and faculty, or any individual that has a teaching function. One of the main policy functions is to ensure that individuals have appropriate qualifications for teaching, and is therefore often considered a "credentialing policy." In addition to the qualifications portion, Gram said, the policy is uniquely tied to the principle of tenure because the language indicates that colleges must rationalize any significant imbalance in the ratio of tenure and non-tenure instructional staff. He explained that departments are asked to revise their personnel plans every five years and must also indicate what types of appointments they will be using, and whether they plan to use fixed-term staff. (Per the policy, "collegiate plans must include a specific supplemental plan for any unit in which the number of FTE contract faculty

positions plus the number of FTE academic professional positions with primary responsibility for teaching exceeds 25% of the FTE tenured and tenure-track faculty.”)

The committee discussed the issues related to ratio of tenure and non-tenure instructional staff and provided comments and questions to Gram.

Marcia Nichols commented that the personnel plan on the Rochester campus states that there should be roughly 40% tenure or tenure-track faculty in teaching functions, and currently there is roughly 30%, which has been the ratio for years. She explained that when the campus attempts to hire more tenure or tenure-track faculty, the hires are denied by the administration, which has led to a lack of tenure and tenure track faculty required to do the tasks and duties necessary to make a department or college function. Given these issues, Nichols asked the following questions on behalf of the Rochester campus:

1. What should the “appropriate complement of regular faculty” be in developing intellectual programs?
2. What role should termed faculty play in developing intellectual programs?
3. What should the relationship between term and tenured faculty be in relation to developing intellectual programs?

Gram explained that the issues facing the Rochester campus are similar to those at universities across the country wherein institutions are hearing faculty concerns about the potential erosion of tenure. He told Nichols that the discussions at Rochester are important, and the notion behind the policy is to prompt those discussions on a regular basis. He explained that it is understood that certain colleges and disciplines will not be able to keep the non-tenure teaching appointments at or below 25%. He added that the ratio was developed in the 1970s by the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) and despite the fact that adhering strictly to these ratios may not be realistic in certain disciplines, it remains in policy. Gram said that the aspirational ratio helps guide these discussions and that faculty governance needs to be involved in these conversations..

Ned Patterson added that the College of Veterinary Medicine could not operate using the ratio defined in the policy, and reminded members that the FCC’s Fixed Term Faculty Task Force is working on issues like those outlined in the policy. He also noted that the Academic Freedom and Tenure committee (AF&T) is supposed to be notified when a term faculty appointment exceeds the seven year mark, but those reviews are not happening. Gram acknowledged that the reporting mechanism is not working well.

Gopalan Nadathur, AF&T chair, expressed concern with the way the policy reads, particularly that it focuses on the bureaucratic aspects of collegiate plans and does not include aspirational goals. He suggested that the policy should be more than a template tool linked to an administrative policy, but rather should be an exercise in setting plans based on aspirational goals for the college. Nadathur also expressed concern that as the policy currently reads, the AF&T committee will be prompted to deal only with bureaucratic issues when the collegiate plans are reviewed by the committee. [Note: at its meeting on March 26, 2021, AF&T voted to approve

additional minor wording changes previously proposed by committee and endorsed by the administration.]

### **3. FCC Nominating Subcommittee**

Following the administrative policy review, the FCC Nominating Subcommittee met in a closed session to discuss the 2021-22 FCC ballot.

Bobbie Erichsen  
University Senate Office