

Minutes\*

**SENATE COMMITTEE ON FACULTY AFFAIRS**

**Thursday, December 15, 1994**

**3:30 - 4:30 p.m.**

**Dale Shephard Room, Campus Club**

Present: Daniel Feeney (chair), Carole Bland, Rose Brewer, Daniel Canafax, Carol Carrier, Carol Chomsky, Mary Dempsey, Ann Erickson, Judith Gaston, Kinley Larntz, Willard Manning, Richard McGehee, Dianne Mulvihill, Michael Sadowsky, Anne Sales, Bernard Selzler, W. Donald Spring, James Stone, Yang Wang

Regrets: Roger Paschke

Absent: Ken Roering

**1. Approval of the Agenda**

The agenda was approved as drafted.

**2. Chair's Report**

Professor Feeney said he welcomes feedback from the committee regarding his handling of the meetings (especially regarding creating an environment which is suitable to discuss issues of concern). He said that future meetings will be conducted in the following manner:

- Speaker(s) will present as requested
- After the speaker(s) have left, SCFA members will discuss the issue at hand

Professor Ward (Judicial Committee Chair) is going to be invited to appear before SCFA in the near future (probably on February 2) as recommended by Mario Bognanno and Nick Barbatsis at the last meeting.

Professor Feeney said that some aspects of the latest early retirement incentives were of concern to SCFA's Retirement Subcommittee. He had sent a letter to Mario Bognanno expressing the views of the subcommittee, with copies to Associate Vice President Carol Carrier and Ms. Dianne Mulvihill.

Other upcoming items for SCFA:

- The Conflict of Commitment Policy is going to be presented on January 5 by Mark Brenner
- The Compensation Task Force Report will be presented on January 19 by John Adams in draft form
- The tenure letter by Professors Dempsey and Feeney was to be sent several days following this meeting
- Chancellor candidates for the Duluth campus are being interviewed. Dossiers are available from Professor Feeney

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- A University Copyright Officer will be visiting with SCFA in the near future to discuss the ramifications of the TEXACO case
- In the coming months, SCFA may wish to discuss whether it approves of the University Grievance Officer reporting to the President, or alternatives if it is not comfortable with that structure

### **3. Approval of the Minutes**

The November 17, 1994 minutes were approved.

### **4. New and Old Business**

Professor Feeney opened the floor for discussion of past meetings or any ideas on the minds of the committee members.

#### **a. Meeting with the President**

One committee member said that he was impressed with John Adams' statement that the dilemma of the University reflects what is happening at many other universities and organizations. As a result, administrators are run ragged. A single meeting with the President will therefore, not likely solve the problem of faculty morale. This situation is one that must be solved by the faculty starting with the use of the governance system. He recommended that the faculty consider drafting a list of problems and possible solutions. Committee members proceeded to discuss issues related to the proposed meeting with the President:

- Such a meeting could be used to begin a process to deal with this problem in a cooperative manner
- If the administration is not equally concerned, there will be no solution
- The administration is greatly concerned about many issues, one of which is its relationship with the faculty
- This is a very personal matter to faculty, who are very concerned about the insecurity which exists in higher education and how this may affect their positions
- SCFA needs to go before the President with an agenda containing concrete objectives. Otherwise, the issue will die, although all will leave the meeting in agreement that a problem exists
- Both the faculty and the administration are in difficult situations
- The administration's decision to establish the Morris campus was an example of a decision it made which the faculty admire. The administration has continued to support the quality at Morris through its willingness to apply the advice of the faculty on this campus. The faculty were, and still are, trusted and valued for their expertise
- The administration has made efforts to do what is right and seek the faculty's advice. Nevertheless, the environment in which the administration functions sometimes does not allow delays for decisions that faculty prefer

Professor Feeney said that the committee had determined two possible directions: 1) Begin a process which would include continued discussions with the administration and faculty in order to improve relations and understanding of the challenges that both parties face, 2) Seek the advice of FCC,

SCFA, SCEP, and Finance and Planning chairs. He added that the committee had taken the proper step to discuss the matter with FCC and recommended that the committee should vote to choose one of these two options. A motion was presented to move forward on meeting with the administration. Discussion regarding this motion included the following items:

- An agenda for such a meeting does not need to include interaction on concrete problems. Nevertheless, committee members need to be prepared to speak of such items if necessary so that results are achieved
- SCFA should conduct a pre-meeting to "pilot the process"
- The choice of using a professional facilitator needs to be considered carefully. Often such individuals approach meetings with their own agendas
- The use of a facilitator seems too elaborate
- SCFA should seek the advise of the SCEP and Finance and Planning chairs before considering such a process
- P&A and civil service staff are also feeling the effects of the tension on campus. Therefore, SCFA may wish to consider meeting with individuals from these groups to determine larger systemic issues which get to the root of the problem

Professor Feeney told the committee that he would meet with the FCC, SCEP and Finance and Planning chairs to obtain their opinions on this matter and report back to SCFA.

- Kevin Gormley

University of Minnesota