The University Senate
FACULTY · STUDENT · P&A · CIVIL SERVICE
UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

Term Faculty and Academic Professionals Subcommittee (TFAPS)
September 9, 2025
Minutes of the Meeting

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[**In these minutes:** Welcome and Introductions; Information about Recent Establishment of Salary Floors; Committee Orientation]

PRESENT: Ole Gram, Athena Kildegaard, Laura Larson, Brian Mondy, Pawel Mroz, Angela Perkins, Mary Pogatshnik, Deena Wassenberg, Kevin Wendt

REGRETS: Adolfo Carrillo Cabello, Elisia Cohen, Katherine Dowd (chair)

ABSENT: Jovin Lasway, Emil Lou, Courtney Matson

OTHERS ATTENDING: Mary Rohman Kuhl, senior director of total rewards, OHR, Paula Merrill, director of compensation, OHR, Laurie Cooper Stoll, director, University Senate Office, Shawn Curley, chair, SCFA

1. **Welcome**

Laurie Cooper Stoll, director, University Senate Office, welcomed everyone and explained that she would be facilitating the meeting because Chair Katherine Dowd had jury duty. Cooper Stoll invited committee members and guests to introduce themselves by stating their name, day job, and motivation for serving on the committee.

2. Information about Recent Establishment of Salary Floors

Cooper Stoll then turned the meeting over to Mary Rohman Kuhl, senior director of total rewards, OHR, and Paula Merrill, director of compensation, OHR, to discuss information about the recent establishment of salary floors. Rohman Kuhl explained that she chaired the Workforce Reinvestment Governance Committee's Compensation Work Group over the last year. The group was tasked with prioritizing a list of items submitted through the Workforce Reinvestment Resolution. Merrill emphasized that the unanimous top priority for the committee was setting new salary ranges for teaching specialists and lecturers. The group felt strongly that there was a need for more consistency across the university system for these positions.

Merrill then explained that her team used data from a CUPA faculty survey, considered the "gold standard," to derive new salary floors. She noted that while she had initially expected to see significant salary variations based on specialty, such as business versus biology, the data showed very little difference, only about a $4,000 spread between the highest and lowest-paid disciplines. This unexpected finding meant that a single salary system could be used for all teaching roles, regardless of specialty. She also stated that they would monitor the market annually to see if this trend changed.

Merrill then detailed the new salary floors. For contract and term faculty in specific job codes, the 12-month floor would increase from the mid-$40,000s to $70,500. For instructional P&A job codes, which include teaching specialists and lecturers, the new floors ranged from $53,000 to $64,000. Additionally, the per-credit rate for faculty who are paid on that basis was set at $1,200. Merrill confirmed that these new floors comfortably surpassed the minimums for postdocs, which was a specific concern for some departments.

Brian Mondy inquired if there was a previous per-credit compensation rate, to which Merrill said there was not. He then expressed concern that the new, higher pay floors for full-time positions might inadvertently incentivize colleges to hire more part-time, per-credit faculty due to the significant salary difference. Rohman Kuhl and Merrill acknowledged this was a valid concern and a potential issue to monitor. Mondy also questioned if the lack of salary variance across disciplines suggested that faculty in high-demand fields like STEM and business were underpaid. Merrill responded that while it was a tempting conclusion, she did not think so, as it seemed people were choosing the work for reasons beyond pay. She admitted her "comp gut" did not fully understand why the market behaved this way and that they would continue to watch it.

Athena Kildegaard asked about the number of P&A teaching faculty on nine-month versus twelve-month contracts, noting that those on nine-month contracts would be at a floor of roughly 75% of the twelve-month rate. Merrill estimated that most were on nine-month contracts but did not have a specific number. Deena Wassenberg then raised a concern about teaching faculty salaries falling below postdoc minimums, especially since many teaching faculty are required to have a postdoc. Merrill assured her that this was a key consideration in the project and that the new faculty floor of $70,500 was comfortably above the current and next fiscal year's postdoc minimums which are $60,008 and roughly $62,000 respectively.

Pawel Mroz asked if the new compensation floors would apply to faculty in health sciences with dual appointments, such as those with a clinical role. Merrill explained that the medical school was intentionally kept out of the scope of this project because a review showed that the combined pay from both the university and the clinical practice already put their total compensation well above the new floors. Mroz clarified that not all medical school faculty had dual appointments and that the university portion of their pay could still be low, an issue Rohman Kuhl and Mroz said they would follow up on.

Kevin Wendt questioned the study's scope, asking if the market analysis included institutions beyond Minnesota. Merrill stated the focus was primarily on Minnesota because the market for these roles seemed to be local, though she noted that

Minnesota's market tended to be higher than the national average, which she felt worked in the employees' favor. Wendt countered that for teaching faculty, the university was often competing nationally with Big Ten and R1 schools, suggesting that departments with hiring difficulties might need to pay above the floor. Merrill reiterated that the new numbers were just a floor and not a cap.

Wassenberg expressed her appreciation for the new data but voiced a concern that the pay disparities between different roles, such as teaching specialists and tenure-track faculty, were unfair when the work itself was often indistinguishable. Ole Gram affirmed that both this issue and the potential to overuse per-credit hiring to avoid full-time pay were priorities for the year. He also confirmed that the new floors would be included in the Provost's compensation memo and that the issue of job classification inequities was an important area for future work.

Mary Pogatshnik requested that the compensation specialists provide TFAPS with a general cost of living calculation to compare with the wage data they have provided so far. According to Pogatshnik, it would be very helpful for TFAP's charge to have comparative wage data from other Big 10s as well as with "the market," but as TFAPS has said before, they need to know in detail who term faculty are, how long they have worked at the University of Minnesota, and how their wages compare to COLA numbers from 2015 to the present.

3. Committee Orientation

Cooper Stoll then reviewed the committee's charge and duties, using slides provided by Dowd. After this review, Laurie excused members who had already attended a committee or chair's orientation recently. For the remaining members, she provided a brief committee orientation, emphasizing the importance of shared governance. She highlighted the process of legislative action and provided four key strategies for effective governance: (1) cultivate good working relationships; (2) consult widely; (3) pay close attention to the insights from ex officio members, other governance leaders, and the University Senate Office; and (4) focus on achievable goals and realistic solutions.

4. Adjournment

Hearing no further business, Cooper Stoll adjourned the meeting.

Laurie Cooper Stoll

University Senate Office