

Second Fall Faculty Association

General Meeting

Thursday, November 29, 2012

Ostrander Auditorium

3:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

APPROVED NOTES

Attendance fluctuated throughout the meeting, with a maximum of 73 members.

Meeting called to order at: 3:03 PM

1. Approval of Notes from the First Fall General Meeting (August 21, 2012)

Correct typo interspaced to interest based

Hustoles/Hadley: Motion to Approve: Passed

2. Faculty Association President's Report (Grabowska): I would like to call your attention to proposed changes to policies. The review process closes on the 5th of December. There is one expedited review on grading – including “pass, extraordinary (PE)”. Please take a look at these and forward concerns to the FA. The Academic Honesty, Administrative Drop, and Campus Demonstrations policies are also under review.

Please also note the grading deadline for this semester; it is 24 hours sooner than prior deadlines. This is an endeavor to limit unreported grades, and due to the proximity of the holidays.

The Provost search, which includes 3 search committee members from the FA, is underway. The Review of applications will begin in January. The Searches for Deans of Graduate Studies and Research and Institutional Diversity are also underway.

We currently have 71% of book orders in for next semester. We are usually up above 90%. Please give this some consideration, it affects student pocketbooks.

3. Faculty Association Vice-President's Report (Visser): It is promotion and tenure review time again; if you are having issues, be assured that we are working on them. We have one grievance on file, and it is in abeyance. Regarding the Hoffner case, these discussions are based on the criminal charges and hinges on whether it goes to trial or not. If it doesn't, it should be a pretty quick resolution. Investigative suspension has time limits, but so far the institution has been asking for extensions and it may be extended again. We fought pretty hard for these extensions as it keeps the person insured and paid. Administration has been honoring that.

We planned to file another grievance regarding tuition benefits for those who have been hired late. The President decided to intervene and ask HR to support our request. The Contract has no dates for tuition benefits, so any dates used by HR are arbitrary. This fall we had 300 people trying to use their tuition benefits, and the President solidly supported us.

There has been discussion regarding the visibility of VP for Academic Affairs Baer and the fact that she hasn't been around. We've expressed our concern that the Provost is supposed to be a check and

The Faculty Association is the local unit of the Inter Faculty Organization, the exclusive representative for the faculties of the Minnesota State Universities. Our office is located at 240B Morris Hall, with office hours from 8 AM until 1:30 PM, Monday through Friday. To e-mail the Faculty Association Office send to: donna.blom@mnsu.edu Our phone number is (507) 389-2479 and our fax number is (507) 389-1292.

balance to the administration, and that this important piece has been missing. We were able to express our concern to Dr. Baer.

(Question): What about the dropping of dependents from insurance? I've heard that the Union was not as responsive as it could have been. (Grabowska): There were 3 faculty members who lost dependent coverage. The issue did not originate from the system office, it came from the legislature. A company offered to do an audit which was promised to realize dramatic savings. Even the MnSCU office was subject to the same vagaries that the legislature made. The IFO went to at least two Meet and Confers with the MnSCU, and their response was that they were in the same situation. We encouraged those affected to appeal. There were some who didn't pay attention to the email messages, or were out of the country and didn't receive the snail mail. Also, there were some issues regarding marriages from countries that don't provide marriage certificates. The criticism is legitimate in that we were unable to intervene any more than we did. We've attempted since then to request that, when changing dependents, you have the documentation submitted within the time frame. We honestly did all that we were able to do.

(Question): The state spent how much to gain how much? (Brauer): Several million was spent, and nobody knows how much was saved. (Grabowska): They are sticking with the several million in savings, even though there are no numbers to support their statements.

(Question): Into the future, we should have some policy set up that, in case these kinds of audits come again, we can more effectively protect these benefits.

4. Donna Brauer – Negotiations Update (Time Certain 3:10 p.m.): Things are looking better since the election. In response to that, the team has resurrected the domestic partner benefit language that was in the contract 10 years ago before it was stripped out. Our next meeting is in mid-December. This domestic partner benefit language will be placed in the package given at that time. We had been negotiating around this issue without calling it domestic partnerships, and the other side was amenable. Hopefully we won't have to tiptoe around it any more. I talked to the MUSAFF President, and he said that MnSCU wasn't interested in settling with them until they settled with us. Now that the landscape is clear, we hope they will be more interested in working towards that goal.

We are $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way through this contract biennium. They have spent probably $\frac{3}{4}$ of their budget; they say they can't reallocate to fund us. I think the actual dollar amounts for pay raises are going to be modest. President Black made it very clear that we were the first bargaining unit to offer a pay freeze 4 years ago. We continue to press forward, but the major sticking points are department chairs as supervisors and tenure for administrators; these are going to be very problematic. They have been very open to a minimum placement for assistant professors, they didn't flinch at all. I do believe that they don't want to set any negotiating dates for February, so they may want to be done by that time. December and January might be it.

(Question): Which contract is this? (Brauer): This is the contract that will expire in Spring of 2013, so it is the 2011-2013 contract. This is another reason why we talk about strategy: as soon as we settle this one, we start again. Should we push for something now or wait until summer to try it then. It is part of the strategy.

(Question): What is the status of AFSME contract? (Brauer): I assume AFSME is waiting until the new legislature is installed; MAPE as well. I can ask Stanton if he's heard anything about what they are thinking or what their strategy is.

(Question): What else is on the table besides wages? Parking, Per Diem, etc? (Brauer): Parking is not, it is considered local. The Chancellor said on more than one occasion that he is interested in increasing salaries. The previous chancellor said he wanted them up to the 75% percentile, and in the end of his term we were around the 60%. I don't think we are going to walk away from the table without any raise, but how much we get in the next contract is perhaps more important. Their negotiators know they don't have much money for this biennium.

(Question): What about teaching loads? (Brauer): They didn't know what the political landscape was going to be, so they haven't been interested in looking at it so far. Right now, we are still going back and forth. We will be putting together a new package (language for a variety of different parts of the contract) including money, workload, benefits, and a few other items. (Grabowska): One thing that has changed since last time is we are no longer in interest-based bargaining. The flow of the exchanges have changed; you don't just look at one part at a time. It plays differently.

(Question): The domestic partnership language has fiscal implications. Does the other side know the cost of those changes? (Brauer): No, because we've not been talking about it before the election change. One thing we've been looking at is paid leave for birth or adoption, and the other side was quite willing to entertain that concept. They estimated how much it would cost, and it was peanuts.

(Question): What would the negotiations team strategy be if the choice between salary increases and domestic partnership language? (Brauer): There are so many aspects that are being negotiated over, it isn't going to be a simple one to one relationship. Our guiding principle is 1: How many people are affected? 2. What is the overall benefit for everyone? 3. Is it something that moves us toward a long-term goal? 4. Does it start us down a slippery slope? We look at all of these when we look at their packages. (Grabowska): If I was sitting at the table again, and domestic benefits and pay were on the table, I would jump at domestic benefits. They don't have any money, but they could (and probably would) go for benefits. Most of the other contract negotiations depend on what we get, including administrators. Even though they aren't at the table, they are still interested in how our negotiation works out. (Brauer): There is a civil rights issue, but the real issue is the equity. We want all members to be treated equally. That is a principle that we are always focused on.

(Question): For equity, in the College of Education, faculty are getting differential pay for working with graduate students. (Grabowska): That is not true.

(Question): Chairs are getting more and more work to do; can we set a minimum floor for chair release? We need at least 50, or 75, or 100% release. (Brauer): That is being discussed

(Question): What about inequity on campus among departments? (Grabowska): The notion of equity is a pure façade. I hate the notion of market hires, but it exists. I don't believe there is ever going to be a playing-field leveling.

(Question): Most of this is the discretion of the deans. They play the market. (Brauer): In our proposal, not only did we insert a minimum salary for assistant, but also for associate and full professors. Our proposal would raise those salaries. Right now, they only have so much money.

(Question): Has there been any discussion regarding the shift for more online teaching? (Brauer): The contract doesn't distinguish among courses. Compensation is based on duty days and course credits. Our stance is that it doesn't matter what pedagogy you use. At Metro State, they have introduced the idea of Master Courses. The contract doesn't mention the notion of a Master Course at all. We don't intend to go there. We emphasize academic freedom and academic conduct/ethics. We are not about to allow them to put anything in the contract that would permit administration to take faculty intellectual property and give it to someone else to teach. There are those in the international scene that feel this is a cost effective way of teaching, but the research and our belief is that a syllabus is only a rough diagram. The real teaching is based on the interaction. We aren't going down that road; I don't think it is a concern for this contract. We have to throw the research at them. Having taught some online courses, there is no way that students can have the same quality of education. We all know this. We are adamant about Article 20 and the departments controlling pedagogy and policy.

(Question): I am getting concerned that some faculty get saddled with large courses while others get to teach smaller amounts. I'm concerned, but perhaps this isn't a discussion for this setting. (Brauer): The contract is between us and the administration, so we can't use the contract between each other. But faculty have to have dialog among themselves. Most faculty like academic freedom for themselves, but they may be willing to sacrifice the academic freedom of others. Having 300 students severely limits the faculty members academic freedom to teach correctly. If that is what a department is doing, then they need to spread the load around. (Grabowska): This is a worthy discussion, and it isn't really clear cut. We need to continue this discussion.

(Question): I'd like to ask about adjunct health care. If they work more for the system, we may be on the hook for the health care? (Brauer): One of the issues there is that the community colleges have a different contract than us. Is administration willing to give an adjunct more credits which puts them in the fixed term appointment category and get benefits? The point is, this is like putting a Band-Aid on a leaking dike. The underlying problem is that we hire more adjuncts and fixed term than any other state university, and we have to say "NO". If the courses don't get taught, they don't get taught. We keep doing more and more without being compensated. We continue to be complicit with hiring fixed terms year after year. This is a violation of the contract when the Administration uses them more than short term. We need to make it so that the Administration can't do that. They need to offer multiple year fixed-term appointments, or they have to have more probationary appointments. This is the union's position. (Grabowska): There is a real tension on this subject.

(Question): I've observed that there should be 5 more probationary hires and we only get 2 probationary plus 3 fixed term. How do we affect this decision? It is always made by the administration. (Grabowska): It isn't. We come in with staffing requests, all of the chairs and the Dean give the pitches, and then the dean asks us to rank the requests. We then submit those ranks, the Dean make his choices, and then brings them to the Council of Deans, they make their pitches, and it starts all over again. (Brauer): When we are at the table, we use a lot of research to support our

arguments. This institution is interested in retention and completion, and “quality”. The research has shown that student retention and placement are directly related to the full time faculty. We need to show the Administration that hiring adjuncts is going to cost them more money in the long term. The other big problem is that Administration is so behind the times in their modeling. They use an isolated systems approach that doesn’t look at the big picture. (Grabowska): I’d be happy to bring that to the table. If you let me know, then I can have that discussion with the Administration.

5. Questions / Discussion

(Question): Regarding teaching evaluations and the change of practice where the university keeps the originals. Why are they keeping the originals? (Grabowska): They retain them to run their data sets, but Akey is amenable to a sun setting of 1 year.

(Question): But why are they keeping the originals? They make it very difficult to get them back. (Grabowska): Faculty can get them back.

(Question): But you need to specifically ask them, this should happen automatically. (Grabowska): I understand.

(Question): With the forms that they are using now, are they just dumping the data or keeping it? (Grabowska): They’ve always kept the data. I started using my own forms which were no interest to them. You can skip the ABCD forms.

6. Information

7. Scheduled Faculty Association General Meeting for Spring 2013

- a. **Thursday, January 17 @ 3:00 p.m. in Ostrander Auditorium**
- b. **Wednesday, April 24 @ 3:00 p.m. in Ostrander Auditorium (NOTE DAY IS WEDNESDAY)**

Meeting adjourned at 4:27 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Daniel J. Swart
FA Secretary