

FACULTY COUNCIL
Tuesday, October 6, 2009
3:30 – 5:15 pm
Penn State Room, 337 IMU

MINUTES

Councilors Present: J. Cox, B. Justman, S. Kurtz, T. Mangum, F. Mitros, P. Mobily, D. Morris, N. Nisly, J. Reist, L. Robertson, R. Valentine, R. Williams.

Officers Present: E. Dove, D. Drake, M. O’Hara, K. Tachau.

Councilors Excused: M. Cohen, D. Hammond, L. Richman, G. Russell.

Councilors Absent:

Guests: L. Cox (Ombudsperson), B. Eckstein (Office of the Provost), R. Friedrich (Faculty Emeritus Council), S. Hansen (Office of Student Services), D. Heldt (*Gazette*), C. Joyce (Ombudsperson), D. Kieft (Office of the President), B. Morelli (*Iowa City Press-Citizen*), V. Sharp (Office of the Provost), L. Zaper (Faculty Senate).

I. Call to Order – President Drake called the meeting to order at 3:33 pm.

II. Approvals

- A. Meeting Agenda – Professor Kurtz moved and Professor Justman seconded that the agenda be approved. The motion was unanimously approved.
- B. Faculty Council Minutes (August 25, 2009) – Professor Kurtz noted that Professor Tomkovicz, who no longer serves on the Council, was inadvertently included on the attendance list. Professor Kurtz moved and Secretary Tachau seconded that the amended minutes be approved. The motion was unanimously approved.
- C. Draft Faculty Senate Agenda (October 20, 2009) – Past President O’Hara moved and Vice President Dove seconded that the agenda be approved. The motion was unanimously approved. Professor Cox, noting that Vice President Doug True was scheduled to give the Senate an update on the university budget, suggested that a faculty member also give an update on the budget. President Drake responded that he was planning to do so at today’s meeting.
- D. Committee Replacements (Edwin Dove, Chair, Committee on Committees)
 - Michele Fang (Internal Medicine) to fill the unexpired term of Sara Copeland (Pediatrics) on the Senate, 2009-12.
 - Yasser Karim (Anesthesia) to replace Lucie Laurian (Urban & Regional Planning) on the Faculty Staff Parking Appeals Committee, 2009-11.

Professor Kurtz moved and Professor Morris seconded that the replacements be approved. The motion was unanimously approved.

III. New Business

- *Partnership for Alcohol Safety (Victoria Sharp, Faculty Fellow, Office of the Provost; Sarah Hansen, Office of the Vice President for Student Services; David Kieft, Office of the President)*

Professor Sharp, Ms. Hansen, and Mr. Kieft accompanied their presentation with Power Point slides. Professor Sharp began by explaining that the university had not previously taken a position on alcohol safety but has now done so, choosing to focus on the aspects of 1) reducing risks of physical or emotional harm while respecting students' rights to drink legally, 2) providing an environment that supports learning, health, success and retention, and 3) creating and sustaining essential campus-community partnerships. The Partnership for Alcohol Safety is a steering committee made up of university and community members; co-chairs are Iowa City Mayor Regenia Bailey and Provost Wallace Loh. The Partnership is an oversight committee that endorses various university and community joint efforts to address alcohol issues. The Partnership's vision includes these key points: reduce harm; maintain a vibrant, secure community; obtain cooperation from all stakeholders; teach smart choices; and promote being good neighbors. Professor Sharp distributed a list of members of the Partnership and of its six subcommittees that are working on various aspects of alcohol issues, namely Access to Alcohol; Diversifying Downtown; Permanent Alternative Activities; Alcohol Abuse: Breaking the First Year Cycle; Data Collection, Statistics, and Monitoring; and Communication. Chairs of the subcommittees come from both the university and the community.

Ms. Hansen spoke briefly about data on alcohol use at the university. She stated that it was clear that we have an issue with alcohol abuse at the university. She noted that, while most university campuses must address this issue to some extent, there are some unique factors on our campus and in the community that play a role in the university's higher statistics on alcohol abuse. Iowa has acquired a national reputation as a "party school," and the data indicate that alcohol use at Iowa impacts students' health, as well as their academic performance. We don't have much data about alcohol use and attitudes in the community, but this is clearly not just a university problem – most of the public intoxication bookings, for example, are of non-students. This would seem to indicate that Iowa City has become a drinking destination. The Partnership for Alcohol Safety acknowledges that there are certain aspects of this problem that can be influenced by the university, but that the community can also influence certain aspects. The university's efforts are primarily focused on education – both the educational mission of the institution and the more specific efforts to educate students about alcohol. The university also sets expectations for students.

Ms. Hansen described two new educational efforts underway. Data indicate that students in fraternities and sororities are even more prone to high-risk drinking and its related negative consequences than the general student population and therefore an evidence-based Alcohol Skills Training Program has been implemented for all Greek chapters to reduce alcohol-related harm. Also, while first-year students experience a variety of protective factors – first-year seminars, living-learning communities, residence in dormitories, etc. – sophomores are not given any significant level of protective common experiences. Because data reveal that students

experience a “risk spike” at this point in their college careers, the Health Iowa Office is implementing for the first time this fall an on-line health risk assessment intervention that will target sophomores. It will provide both immediate feedback on risk and incentives for high-risk students to participate in effective interventions. The focus is again on harm reduction.

The second area of university influence on excessive alcohol use involves raising expectations for students. The National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism indicates that high-level university leadership must be “visible, vocal, and visionary” on alcohol issues. The Provost serving as co-chair of the Partnership for Alcohol Safety steering committee therefore sends a clear message about university leadership commitment. Moreover, a series of student expectations known as “The Iowa Challenge,” recently developed by the Student Success Team, asks students to make choices of which both they and the university can be proud.

Mr. Kieft stated that the City of Iowa City has taken three actions in recent months to address alcohol issues. First, the fine for Possession of Alcohol under the Legal Age (PAULA) has been increased from \$250 to \$500. Secondly, bars’ PAULA rates have been tied to annual liquor license renewals. Previously, a bar could have numerous PAULA violations without its liquor license being affected. Now, however, the City has established a guideline ratio of 1.0, meaning that on average each time the police visit a particular establishment, there is at least one PAULA citation issued there. There have so far been two instances of the City not renewing an establishment’s liquor license. Those denials will be appealed to the state’s liquor board. Third, new zoning ordinances have been adopted. The first is only for the downtown and requires that alcohol retail licenses be granted only to establishments that are greater than 1000 feet from each other; for bars citywide, the establishments need to be greater than 500 feet from each other. This means that there cannot be any new bars in downtown Iowa City, given the prevalence of bars already there. The Diversify Downtown Business subcommittee of the Partnership for Alcohol Safety recently inventoried downtown businesses with the goal of eventually working with property owners to identify innovative retail and other non-alcohol related businesses to bring into the downtown.

Professor Sharp briefly showed the Council the website of the Partnership for Alcohol Safety [<http://www.alcoholpartnership.org/index.html>]. She then spoke about the Partnership’s communication plan. Mary Stier, a communications consultant, has worked with the Office of University Relations to identify the various stakeholders – parents, students, faculty, community members – and determine how to communicate effectively with those groups. Thus, for example, a print version of *Parent Times* has been coming out quarterly, but now, in order to engage students’ families more closely, an electronic version will come out monthly, with the current issue to feature a story on alcohol use at the university [<http://www.uiowa.edu/~ptimes/issues09-10/fal09-10/alcohol.html>].

Professor Sharp stated that she had met recently with the Faculty Senate Officers to discuss how to engage faculty in seeking solutions to the problem of excessive drinking by students. She is working with Vice President Dove on a draft survey of faculty to obtain their perspectives. A group of interested faculty may be assembled in the future to work on this issue.

Professor Cox commented on previous efforts to combat this problem, such as the Stepping Up program and a joint student/faculty committee, and asked what lessons had been learned from those efforts and also what the Partnership for Alcohol Safety proposes to do differently. Professor Sharp pointed out that the Partnership is a joint effort of the campus and the community and stated that, at other universities, the joint involvement of university and community has proven successful. The Partnership will take a long-term, deliberative view of the problem and will gather best practices from other universities in order to determine the most effective solutions. Nevertheless, the University of Iowa has some unique features, such as a closely intertwined campus and downtown that the Partnership must take into consideration. Student health, safety, and success are a major concern of the Partnership, as is the economic vitality of the downtown. Professor Cox urged that faculty who teach freshmen and sophomores be included on the Partnership steering committee and the subcommittees, as these faculty witness firsthand how student alcohol abuse impacts academics. Professor Sharp emphasized that, indeed, the Partnership wants faculty with an interest in this problem to become involved.

- *Office of the Ombudsperson Annual Report (Cynthia Joyce, Staff Ombudsperson and Lois Cox, Faculty Ombudsperson)*

Ms. Joyce reminded the Council that the services of the Office of the Ombudsperson are confidential, informal, neutral, and independent. She referred the Council to the last (summary) page of the 2008-09 annual report which shows that during that year, there was a 15% increase in cases over the previous year (487 cases compared to 424 cases). Both the percentages of faculty, staff, and students who visited the offices as well as the primary reasons for the visits have remained constant; however, the primary faculty concern, job conflicts (whether with colleagues, DEO's or other administrators), dropped from 55% to 44% of total faculty concerns. Ms. Joyce noted several trends during the report year: 36% of graduate student concerns involved a problem with a supervisor (usually a faculty member) and 17% of the total cases reviewed by the Office involved disrespectful behavior, an increase over the last year and continuing the three-year upper trend of great concern to the Ombudspersons. The increase seems to be a result of the great stress on campus last year. She concluded by reporting that 81% of those who responded to an evaluation survey of the Office did so positively, with 62% indicating that they had learned skills to help them deal with future conflicts. President Drake asked whether the three-year increase in cases involving disrespectful behavior was stepwise one or if there was a big jump in cases; Ms. Joyce responded that it was stepwise, moving from 8% (2006-07) to 12% (2007-08) to 17% (2008-09).

Professor L. Cox then discussed several concerns highlighted by the annual report. She commented that in the past year the Office saw familiar problems worsening, perhaps under the strain of a difficult year on campus. Problem avoidance was particularly prevalent, as supervisors were expressing reluctance to deal with problem situations that have existed for many years and had therefore become part of a unit's culture. Other concerns brought to the Ombudspersons involved privilege of various sorts, such as a perceived lack of empathy for the points of view of members of racial minorities. There were also cases involving status hierarchy; for example, some high-profile individuals had special efforts made for them, whereas others farther down in the university hierarchy did not. And, there were several cases in which staff with advanced degrees felt a lack of respect from faculty. A final area of concern was the

intersection of health and work performance. Health difficulties were exacerbated or surfaced for the first time under the pressures of the previous year. Professor Cox stressed that supervisors need to create environments in which health matters can be discussed freely. Early intervention in health situations can make an enormously positive difference.

President Drake expressed concern about the impact of the university's financial situation upon employees' stress levels. Professor L. Cox acknowledged that we have little control over the economy overall, but that Human Resources has made efforts to minimize the impact on employees; nevertheless, employees still experience a great deal of stress. Ms. Joyce commented that the budget crisis has occurred when the campus community was already confronting other damaging events on campus, such as the flood and the sexual assault; the combination of all of these events led to an extraordinarily high level of stress on campus. Secretary Tachau reminded the Council that faculty directly affected by the flood continue to suffer in its aftermath and will do so for some time to come. She suggested that the Ombudspersons make a special outreach effort to faculty in the School of Music and other units affected by the flood.

Vice President Dove commended the Ombudspersons on their report and asked if they had any recommendations that the Faculty Council could act on. Professor Cox responded that the annual report does not usually include suggestions for action; however, during discussions of the report with various campus constituencies, sometimes the Ombudspersons do make very specific suggestions for improvement. In light of the concerns highlighted in the report, Professor Nisly advocated for greater cultural competency training on campus as well as a greater acceptance and understanding of mental health issues.

Professor Morris, referring to the avoidance of longstanding problems mentioned earlier by the Ombudspersons, asked if this avoidance pertained to any particular types of problems. Ms. Joyce responded that, in regard to staff, the problems often centered on high-performing staff with poor interpersonal skills. Because of the employees' abilities, the behavior of these staff members had been tolerated for many years. Professor L. Cox referred to "toxic interactions" that had been allowed go on for a long time in units, even when these interactions were masked by superficially collegial behavior. Professor Mangum asked how best to deal with these difficult individuals, in response to which Professor L. Cox stressed that administrators must be willing to address the problem if the "toxic interactions" are to be resolved. Professor Mangum commented that the temporary nature of many administrative positions held by faculty could work against the resolution of these types of problems. President Drake suggested that, during this difficult budget year to come, we should all look out for and support our colleagues. Professor Morris added that deans could remind DEO's to be proactive regarding conflict in their departments as the university enters another round of budget cuts and, hence, high stress.

- *Funded Retirement and Insurance Committee Update (Sheldon Kurtz, Faculty Co-Chair)* Professor Kurtz explained that he gives a yearly update to the Council and the Senate regarding impending changes in the university benefits system. Regarding the health insurance plans, he reminded the group that employees currently have a choice between two plans, UI Choice, by far

the most popular, with 8700 contracts, and CHIP II, with only 880 contracts. Professor Kurtz commented that he would not be surprised if the university eventually dropped the CHIP II plan, given the low number of contracts. He noted that UI Choice has been improved in recent years with three levels of non-emergency service providers: UIHC providers, Iowa providers, and out-of-state providers; this improvement may have caused people to migrate from CHIP II to UI Choice.

Professor Kurtz then updated the Council on premium increases to go into effect for the 2010 calendar year. For the single UI Choice plan, there will be a 5.6% increase in the monthly premium. For the employee/spouse plan, there will be 10.4% increase; for the employee/child plan, an 11% increase; and for the family plan, a 5.3% increase. The monthly premiums for the four plans would be, respectively, \$431, \$929, \$788, and \$1023. Professor Kurtz reminded the group that the university provides employees with a considerable amount of money to help cover these monthly premiums, so that the sums listed above are not employees' out-of-pocket expenses. For the CHIP II plan, the single plan will increase 30%, for a monthly premium of \$593. There will be no increase for the employee/spouse plan or for the family plan, but the employee/child plan will have a 10% increase. The university is committed to providing an employee enough flex credits to purchase the single UI Choice policy. Any additional amount of flex credits can vary widely depending on individual circumstances.

Professor Kurtz indicated that FRIC has recommended a new co-pay structure for UI Choice. Currently, visits to a UIHC physician entail a \$10 co-pay. Under the new arrangement with UIHC, this co-pay would be reduced to \$5. Currently, visits to a local, non-UIHC physician require a \$15 co-pay, but under the new plan the co-pay would be increased to \$20. Two commitments were made to FRIC by UI Health Care in exchange for these favorable co-pays: preferred appointment times would be set aside for UI employees and a questionnaire, containing questions developed by FRIC, would be distributed to the UI community.

Past President O'Hara commented that he is rarely asked for a co-payment when he visits the hospital. Professor Kurtz responded that, nevertheless, patients are responsible for the co-pay and are billed for it at some point. Professor Nisly noted that some routine examinations do not carry a co-pay. She then commented on her concern at the rise in premiums, especially for the family plans, since good benefits are one of the university's recruiting tools. She stated that she was also worried that some employees might choose not to cover their dependents because of the cost of the family health plans. Professor Nisly urged, too, that in the future, disparities in coverage between physical and mental health be addressed. She observed that those seeking mental health services might visit providers in the community, rather than at UIHC, because of confidentiality concerns. The \$20 co-pay for community providers might become prohibitive, as mental health patients may need to see their health care providers frequently. Professor Kurtz acknowledged this aspect of the issue, while noting that the university health plans generally provide for very good mental health care coverage. Professor Nisly also commented that there are a limited number of mental health care professionals available in this area.

Professor Mangum asked whether the difference in co-pay costs might antagonize community health-care providers. Professor Kurtz responded that it has that potential. He added that employees who have already established relationships with community providers will probably not shift to UIHC providers because of this change in co-pay; new employees, however, may indeed be encouraged to initiate relationships with UIHC providers because of it. Vice President Dove asked how our premium rates compare nationally. Professor Kurtz responded that to his knowledge our rates compare favorably, and that, even when rates may be comparable, the UI plans offer far more features – such as mental health equity, absence of pre-existing conditions, etc. – than do most universities' plans.

Professor Kurtz turned to a discussion of the flex benefit system. He reminded the group that the flex benefit credit is determined by four insurance products: health, dental, life and disability. FRIC has submitted recommendations to President Mason for reforming the flex benefit system. She has requested that FRIC review the controversial aspects of their recommendations one more time, taking into account concerns raised by the campus community. Meanwhile, two of the less controverted recommendations are already being implemented: as of January 1, 2009, a new maximum amount of *university* money that can be put into flex spending accounts was established. Previously, \$9000 could be put into these accounts, but the limit has now dropped to \$7500, and as of January 1, 2010, will be reduced further, to \$6000. Also, as of January 1, 2010, the amount of money the university would provide to buy life insurance will drop from 2 ½ times an employee's salary to 2 times an employee's salary. As of January 1, 2011, the more controversial aspects of the initial FRIC proposal will go into effect, assuming that FRIC does not make additional recommendations. While FRIC is continuing to review its original proposal, the current, difficult budgetary times make it unlikely, in Prof. Kurtz's view, that any new recommendations that would incur additional expense for the university would be well-received by the administration.

Professor Kurtz then turned to TIAA-CREF, stating that he did not anticipate that FRIC would be making any recommendations regarding TIAA-CREF, although proposals for changes may come from other quarters. Professor Morris asked who would make such proposals, if not FRIC. President Drake responded that the Board of Regents, State of Iowa currently has a task force looking at the Regents institutions' benefit systems; proposals may come from this task force. Past President O'Hara asked if there had ever been a situation when changes were made to the benefits system that FRIC opposed. Professor Kurtz stated that he could only recall one such instance during his many years on the committee. Professor Cox asked how the TIAA-CREF rate of contributions of the other Regents institutions compared to the University of Iowa's. Professor Kurtz answered that they are all the same: 10% from the institution and 5% from the employee. He added that the University of Iowa had made the decision decades ago to give all of its employees the option to enter the TIAA-CREF system, with the result that the State of Iowa is now TIAA-CREF's largest single customer.

Professor Nisly commented that, given the rising costs of health care, preventive care should be emphasized. She asked if FRIC had entertained any thoughts of proposals to reward employees for using preventive care. Professor Kurtz responded that FRIC has been considering

this. She also commented on the emergence of the concept of the “medical home,” emphasizing primary care and reducing the fragmentation that occurs when a patient visits many specialists.

Professor Robertson next asked for clarification of the university’s “self-insurance” system. Professor Kurtz explained that the university sets aside a certain amount of money each month to pay for employees’ health care costs; that Wellmark has been hired by the university to process all of the claims; and that Wellmark pays the claims and then requests reimbursement from the university. The *university* therefore, rather than Wellmark, bears the risk from large losses and re-insures for that. This system is possible because it is not necessary for the university to make a profit. He added that the university spends about \$80 million on health care each year.

IV. From the Floor – There were no issues from the floor.

V. Announcements

Prior to making announcements, President Drake stated his intention to comment on the university budget situation. The state budget has been adversely affected by the decline in tax revenue this year. Last month, tax revenue declined by 19.2%, one of the largest such declines on record. The Revenue Estimating Conference (REC) meets tomorrow (October 7) and it is anticipated that they will revise their tax revenue estimate downward. If this occurs, it is expected that the governor will order across-the-board cuts. There is speculation that the university may experience a funding cut of 6-8% (up to \$17 million). The Faculty Senate Officers remain in close contact with the central administration regarding this situation. President Mason has consistently been soliciting the Officer’s input.

Professor Morris asked if the administration has contingency plans to deal with the budget cuts, which will need to be made very quickly. President Drake reminded the group that the deans were required to make contingency plans last year, so those plans may now come into play. Past President O’Hara added that every 1% reversion is equal to \$2.35 million, and that every government agency will experience the same percentage cut. Secretary Tachau stressed that the Faculty Senate is an appropriate channel for faculty to express their views on budget cuts. Professor Morris asked if the savings generated from the early- and phased-retirement plans would go towards off-setting these cuts. Professor O’Hara responded that those savings go towards the fiscal year 2011 budget. Professor Cox noted that the governor also has the option of calling a special session of the legislature to propose more focused cuts. He advocated for those with a strong interest in education to speak out for a tax increase earmarked for education at all levels.

- Faculty are needed for the Engagement Corps 2010 trip, May 19-21. Please consider volunteering.
- University Stories for the Faculty Senate Governmental Relations Committee: Keith Saunders, Director of State Relations, would like to collect stories about the professional activities of faculty and share them with state legislators during the spring legislative session.

- The next Faculty Senate meeting will be Tuesday, October 20, 3:30-5:15 pm in the Senate Chamber of the Old Capitol.
- The next Faculty Council meeting will be Tuesday, November 17, 3:30-5:15 pm in the Penn State Room (337) of the IMU.

VI. Adjournment – Professor Robertson moved and Professor Nisly seconded that the meeting be adjourned. The motion was unanimously approved. President Drake adjourned the meeting at 5:13 pm.