Marquette University Faculty Council
Draft Minutes
October 26, 2015


Excused:

Guests: K. Blank (MU Libraries)

Acting chair L. Whittenberger called the meeting to order at 2:02 p.m. in Olin 204.

Whittenberger introduced a visitor to the council, Ms. Katie Blank, attending as a representative of the compensation and benefits committee.

Discussion of Old Business

Draft Motion on Health Insurance – The council addressed the draft motion introduced at the 9/28 meeting that made recommendations regarding the university’s decision not to provide health insurance to Marquette employees working 30-37 hours per week.

The draft motion recommended 1) that a forum be created where affected parties could provide anonymous comments about the impact of this decision, 2) that representatives of the Academic Senate, Faculty Council and Staff Senate be added to the Health Care Taskforce, 3) that information be collected regarding the insurance benefits provided to part time employees by local and peer universities, and 4) that all decisions on this issue be consistent with the mission and values of the University.

Council members discussed the necessity of, and best methods for, gathering new information from the groups affected by this decision. The council noted that the university already conducted a survey, which might contain relevant information. Because the council has not been given access to that data, however, it is unclear whether it contains pertinent information and whether the data can be precisely linked to the target respondents – i.e., employees working 30-37 hours/week.

The committee ultimately agreed that it should present its motion to the Academic Senate and let that body decide the next steps for information gathering. It is possible that no new information is necessary, but unless the council can review the existing survey, it cannot know whether additional information-gathering is necessary. Nevertheless, the council did confirm the need for the creation of a forum where affected parties could anonymously share their concerns and experiences and
specifically address how this decision would affect them, so this provision will remain in the final motion.

The council also revisited the issue of how the university’s decision on health insurance for part-time employees aligns with Marquette University’s mission and values. The council members noted that the Catholic Church advocates for employers to provide health insurance to employees, and the university in this case is electing to incur a penalty rather than provide this benefit. Many council members suggested that this is inconsistent with the values of the university and does not position the university as a leader on these issues.

The council acknowledged, however, that there are some tradeoffs that must be made on these matters but that the university should at least be transparent about this and should specifically address how its decision is consistent with the university mission and values.

The council agreed to reword this in the revised motion and to move this from the fourth item on the list to the first item, putting the values question front and center in these discussions.

With regard to the draft motion’s recommendation regarding representatives on the Healthcare Taskforce, the council discussed whether there might be some overlap and whether the number of representatives could be reduced. Some members also wondered what, specifically, these representatives would add and what their role would be.

Others noted that without those representatives present on the Taskforce, there will be nobody to gather information and report back to their constituents, so those bodies will not have the information they need to act. The consensus was to leave this provision in the motion.

L. Whittenberger concluded the discussion by indicating that she would re-draft and distribute a new version of the motion that incorporates the new feedback from the council members.

Announcements

**Election of Chair and Vice Chair** – J. Richie made a call for candidates for the open chair position after the last meeting and indicated that all votes received were for L. Whittenberger, who ran unopposed. J. Richie asked as a matter of clarification whether an “election” required that more than one candidate’s name be placed in nomination. The council concluded that this was unnecessary and that the process was sufficient. L. Whittenberger was announced as the new council chair. L. Whittenberger sought nominations for a vice chair who would serve on the executive committee and be in line
to step into the chair position next year. No names were placed in nomination so the council will address this again in a future meeting.

Other Council Vacancies – L. Whittenberger noted that the council still needs members from Dentistry and Business and would reach out to the deans in those colleges to seek their help in identifying representatives.

Meeting Minutes – The council agreed that minutes would be taken by council members on a rotating basis, using a reverse-alphabetical order. E. Ugland took minutes for this meeting; D. Smith will cover the Nov. 23 meeting.

New Business

The council addressed the remaining charges given to it by the University Academic Senate.

One UAS charge was for the council to “review the findings of the survey [on part-time faculty]” but as the council members noted earlier, access to the data has not been provided. K. Gehring said he would ask the UAS executive committee about getting access. L. Whittenberger also asked J. Richie to seek clarification from the UAS about this, particularly the timeline they have in mind for the council to respond to the charge.

L. Whittenberger proposed the creation of a work group of council members to work on these issues of an audit of issues/concerns of full-time non tenure-track faculty. J. Richie, M. Class and S. Audi volunteered to serve, and D. Smith offered to serve as an alternate. L. Whittenberger also asked J. Richie to seek clarification from the UAS about this, particularly the timeline they have in mind for the council to respond to the charge.

L. Whittenberger and D. Smith formed a workgroup to begin organizing and scheduling the spring Faculty Forum with President Lovell.

Meeting Schedule

The council noted that some of the preliminary meeting dates for spring conflict with holidays and so adjustments to the spring schedule will be forthcoming. The remaining dates for fall, however, will occur as planned.

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 3:00 p.m. Next meeting is Nov. 23 at 2:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Erik Ugland