

University Faculty Affairs Committee Meeting Minutes
Thursday, August 25
3:00 pm via Zoom

Attending: Jenny Barry (at large), Caitlin Finlayson (chair, at large), Lance Gentry (secretary, COB), Miriam Liss (CAS), Kyle Schultz (COE), and Jessica Zeitz (at large).

Caitlin called the meeting to order at 3:00 PM.

Old Business

- **Status of Equity Study:** Caitie informed committee that the contractor (Gallagher) had the data and was in the process of conducting their analysis. Gallagher was selected from a competitive bidding process and were in the middle range of the bidders. More importantly, they showed an understanding of the complexity of faculty salaries as opposed to many of the prospective contractors whose experience seemed limited to traditional businesses.
- **Status of Sabbaticals:** Caitie contacted Tim after the call for proposals went out; did not add details about hire behinds to proposal. Tim said they will just try and award as many as possible. Kyle had similar news. Martha is gathering details on the number of faculty who are eligible but have not taken one yet. Kyle pointed out that we don't have data on who is interested, for example, he has not given any thought if he would want to take time away from his teaching. Miriam pointed out that we need to be aware of faculty equity, as some departments have more than enough faculty to cover for someone on sabbatical while other departments would be much more affected by a missing member. Lance suggested that the university ensure that once a sabbatical has been approved, the university ensures that others may not change it (for example, if a new dean takes her position after the sabbatical is approved and does not agree with it).
- **Faculty visas.** Jenny Barry gave an update. This is a constant issue and much of problem is outside the power of the university. However, university support is vital to help our faculty facing this issue. The committee was unaware of any UMW support on the website. Jessica pointed out that the faculty are not directly put into contact with the state lawyers for visa issues. The committee wondered if the university initiative to update the website would include this. Since no apparent change has occurred since last year other than Martha Link being the designated person, the committee discussed options for how to ensure this is addressed. The committee concluded that the next step should be to invite the provost to attend our next meeting to discuss it.

New Business

- **Concern about Biased Student Evaluations:** Kyle gave an update on what he learned from a COPLAC event. One idea that received attention was including a bias statement in course evaluations. Here is an example: *Student evaluations of teaching play an important role in the review of faculty. Your opinions influence the review of instructors*

*that takes place every year. Iowa State University recognizes that student evaluations of teaching are often influenced by students' **unconscious** and **unintentional** biases about the race and gender of the instructor. Women and instructors of color are systematically rated lower in their teaching evaluations than white men, even when there are no actual differences in the instruction or in what students have learned. As you fill out the course evaluation please keep this in mind and make an effort to resist stereotypes about professors. Focus on your opinions about the content of the course (the assignments, the textbook, the in-class material) and not unrelated matters (the instructor's appearance).* The committee discussed this. Jenny said she agreed there was plenty of evidence that this bias exists. Miriam and Lance had questions as to the results of the Iowa State University change. Kyle said two biology and two political classes were used in an experimental study and he provided a link to the results (<https://www.news.iastate.edu/news/2019/05/15/genderevals>). The results had a positive effect on female faculty and no effect on male faculty. The committee supported the findings and the idea of trying this at UMW. Suggestions were made to bring this to Debra and to several other faculty venues.

- **Next Meeting:** The committee agreed our next meeting would be September 29 at 3:00 PM via Zoom.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:40 PM.

These minutes were electronically approved by the committee on August 26, 2022.