

University of Virginia

General Faculty Council

Minutes: September 14, 1999 meeting

MEMBERS PRESENT: Susan Andrews – Administration, Donal Day – Arts & Sciences, Tom Dowd – Other Schools, Trish Foley – Medical School, Elizabeth Fortune – Other Schools, Nancy Garlick – Arts and Sciences, Joe Gieck – Athletics, Abby Gillette – Other Schools, Brad Holland – Administration, Aaron Laushway – Student Affairs, Joyce Pastors – Medical School, Jane Penner – Libraries, Jan Redick – Medical School, and Betsy Tucker – Arts & Sciences

MEMBERS ABSENT: Dennis DeSilvey – Medical School and Mary Smith – Engineering

ALSO PRESENT: Marva Barnett (Faculty Senate), Peter Berg, Gene Block (Vice President for Research), Art Bulger, Jack Cosby, Paul Desanko, Tatiana Globus, Kathy Reed (Associate Provost for Management), Martin Straume, Tim Tolson, and Lynda White

Jane Penner chaired the meeting

1. In June, a letter addressing problems with, and recommending solutions for, university policies and procedures impacting research general faculty was sent by the GFC to Gene Block, Vice President for Research and Public Service. Mr. Block's office responded with a request for a meeting to discuss that letter with GFC representatives. In August, Jane Penner and Elizabeth Fortune met with Mr. Block. At that meeting Mr. Block was invited to attend the September GFC meeting to discuss the problems caused by the vagaries in funding cycles for most research general faculty that may cause temporary breaks in full-time support for salary, benefits, and associated overhead. Mr. Block accepted the invitation and, accompanied by Kathy Reed, U.Va. Associate Provost for Management, attended the September GFC meeting. In his report on issues, and possible solutions, of importance to research faculty the following points were made:
 - a. U.Va. has not developed a clearly articulated view on the importance of general faculty in the research area. This is surprising because we are a relatively small school and do not have enough state funded, tenured/tenure track positions to staff our programs. A school with a limited number of tenured spots can meet its needs, and advance in various rankings, by adding faculty. The most likely method for doing this is to add faculty that can generate their own funds. This money, known as 'soft money' might come from grants and/or contracts. This can cause problems. If a member of the research faculty loses support, or is between funding, that person may lose salary and benefits, including health insurance.
 - b. The issue is security, the sense of security that would allow research general faculty to focus on their research without worrying about the impact of temporary breaks in funding.
 - c. Mr. Block gave a quick description of how overhead funds flow at U.Va.. Approximately 40% of overhead goes directly to deans and department chairs.
 - d. Focusing on salary issues, Mr. Block went on to say that, in his view, the responsibility for supporting research general faculty who are confronting interruptions in their funding should fall on the areas that benefit from the overhead generated as part of the funding. Deans and department chairs should be the first recourse. Centrally, funds available for salary support are limited. Mr. Block's office receives income generated by U.Va. patents and uses these limited funds to support research. A member of the research general faculty can apply to the office of the Vice President for Research and Public Service for interim salary funding but the award criteria are restrictive. The best strategy, already adopted by some, would be for deans and department chairs to put overhead funds aside as insurance to develop a pool to be used for faculty facing funding interruption.
 - e. Ms. Reed addressed the issue of benefits, saying that things have gotten better lately. The new U.Va. Human Resources web site, <http://www.hrs.virginia.edu/>, provides easy access to valuable

information. There is a summary section addressing benefits for faculty and outlining benefits by type of faculty. An important category of leave for the purpose of this discussion is Agency Convenience Leave, which allows U.Va. to continue making its contribution to employee health care coverage, life insurance coverage, and disability insurance coverage for up to four months, even if the employee is not earning a salary. Details are spelled out at <http://www.hrs.virginia.edu/facbenlv.html>. Determining eligibility for an Agency Convenience Leave when a research faculty member's funding is interrupted is up to the appropriate dean or department chair. A critical component in the decision making is the likelihood of the research faculty member's obtaining further funding.

- f. Ms. Reed stated that most departments pick up the funding for a research faculty member whose funding is interrupted. A problem only arises when a department chair or dean feels they can't provide interim funding.
- g. In response to a question about whether or not the university administration had any plans to design a policy to direct how deans and department chairs respond to interruptions in research general faculty funding, Mr. Block replied that it's hard to tell deans and departments how to "spend" the overhead monies they receive. Ideally, a discussion would be had at the departmental level with every newly hired research faculty member funded by soft money about clearly defined department policies for responding to short interruptions in funding. Ms. Reed agreed that any workable policy addressing this problem must come from the deans and department chairs up to the senior administration. What the senior administration can do is to establish the institutional expectation that care will be taken of people hired who are funded by soft money. Mr. Block suggested that the GFC ask the Science and Technology Commission headed by Anita Jones to take a look at this issue. He also suggested that once the leadership of the Faculty Forum for Scientific Research is in place that body be brought into this discussion. Ms. Reed agreed, saying that the weight of tenured and tenure track faculty will be necessary to establish any new policies in this area.

The GFC thanked Mr. Block and Ms. Reed for their report. The GFC will contact the Science and Technology Commission and the Faculty Forum for Scientific Research to alert them to the work going on regarding this issue.

- 2. The minutes from the July meeting were approved without modification.
- 3. Susan Andrews, who had volunteered to monitor the minutes of the Executive Committee of the Employees Communication Council, reported that minutes for this group's meeting are not kept.
- 4. Joyce Pastors reported on the August 19, 1999 New Faculty/Staff Welcome event at Newcomb Hall. Joyce Pastors, Nancy Garlick, and Aaron Laushway covered one-hour shifts at the General Faculty Council table. There was not much demand for information about the GFC.
- 5. Brad Holland, GFC representative to the Coordinating Committee for University-Wide Groups (CCUG), reported on the August 26 CCUG meeting. The predominant issue discussed was morale/work place climate at U.Va..
- 6. Update on the proposed revisions to the Policy on the General Faculty. On September 29 Jane Penner and Joyce Pastors will again meet with Alex Johnson, Vice Provost for Faculty Recruitment, and Kathy Reed, Associate Provost for Management, to continue working through the proposed revisions. Until the process is completed, the governing Policy on the General Faculty is the 1987 policy incorporating the July 1997 change on standards of notice requested by the Provost and approved by the GFC. This policy can be found at: <http://www.virginia.edu/~provost/genfac.htm>
- 7. A short discussion was had about whether or not a representative from the GFC should attend Board of Visitors (BOV) meetings. It was decided that it might be more effective to arrange a lunch with BOV members to discuss issues of importance to the GFC.

8. The GFC By-Laws Committee, Donal Day and Jan Redick, reported on its work on a proposed revision to the by-laws to establish a procedure for appointing GFC members to serve on other University committees/bodies as needed. The proposed amendment was discussed, voted on, and approved by the GFC. The text of the amendment reads as listed below. Donal Day will send proposed amendment out to all members of the general faculty for a vote of approval.

X. APPOINTMENTS TO EXTERNAL COMMITTEES

1. As deemed necessary, the Council may appoint members to serve as representatives to University-constituted committees. The term of appointment shall be determined on a case by case basis.

These representatives shall be responsible for:

a. regularly attending committee meetings and representing the interests of the Council

b. providing information to the Council regarding activities of the committees.

9. Chair's report:

- a. Jane reported that in the latest redesign of the U.Va. web site the GFC page had been placed alongside the employment and benefits sections. A call from Jane resulted in the GFC page being listed in a more prominent position on the site.
- b. Trish Foley, Elizabeth Fortune, and Jan Redick will peruse the U.Va. Human Resources web site for clarity and inclusiveness in areas relevant to the general faculty.
- c. Donal Day will monitor U.Va. legislative updates for items of interest to the GFC.

10. In late September, Elizabeth Fortune and Abby Gillette will get an updated list of general faculty members at U.Va. They will analyze the list and make suggestions at the October GFC meeting about possible reapportionment of GFC representation in order to fill the two defunct Hospital representative seats on the GFC.

11. At the October meeting the GFC will discuss effective strategies for raising the issue of salary increase parity for the general faculty in upcoming budgets.

12. NEXT MEETING: Tuesday, October 12, 1999 - 12:30-2:00 pm. Location: 389 Newcomb Hall

Submitted September 23, 1999

(updated October 12, 1999)

[Tom Dowd](#), Secretary

General Faculty Council