



Academic Specialist Advisory Committee Meeting

November 7, 2023

Minutes

I. Call to Order: Ashley Malhoff, Chair, call to order 11:00am

II. Attendees:

Committee Members (P=present, A=absent)

Ann Austin	Ex Officio Member	P
Kathy Charles	Ex Officio Member	P
Jonglim Han	Member	P
Erin Hill	Secretary	P
Kelly Hodges	Faculty Senate	P
Bethany Judge	Vice Chair	P
Karen Kangas-Preston	Sergeant at Arms	P
Ashley Maloff	Chair	P
Molly Polverento	Member	P
Grace Pregent	Member	P
Aaron Reifler	Appointed	P
Bonnie Russell	Member	P
Debjani Sarkar	Member	P
Samantha Sliwa	Appointed	P
Megan Stevenson	University Council	A
Mary Anne Walker	Member	P
Sarah Whitaker	Member	A

Other attendees: 111 participants in total, too many to list individually, which is a good issue :)

III. Acceptance of Minutes for September 5th, 2023. Motion by Beth Judge, second by Jonglin Han. Accepted by all, passed.

IV. Associate Provost & Associate Vice President for Faculty and Academic Staff Affairs (FASA) Report (Ann Austin & Kathy Charles)

A. Sexual Misconduct and Sexual Harassment (Ann Austin)

1. Safe Environment Task Force. What happens when there is a unit impacted by an Office of Institutional Equality (OEI) investigation? They have worked over the past 1.5 years to provide guidance to unit leaders (e.g. department chairs) on how to approach reentry of individuals whom were a part of the investigation. This drafted guidance will be working through the University policy pipeline for

final approval and implementation. This is a positive step for the University.

- B. President has charged a new task force with preventing "Pass the Harasser". Mission to create guidelines for how those involved in OEI investigation and found at fault is passed on to other institutions and how we protect MSU from having a "harasser" come here. There's a lot of privacy issues surrounding this, but it is a work in progress.

- C. Special Report from Ann Austin and Kara Yermak

- 1. Review on minimum requirements for Associate Dean positions (Ann and Kara)- **Background** (Ann): There have been lots of questions and requests regarding this lately who can be an associate dean. Current minimum requirements University wide are listed as Tenure-stream or health programs system faculty + terminal degree. This original policies were formed >20 years ago and much about the work environment has changed since then. Granting exceptions opens the door to inequity. There are other positions where this is happening too but FASA is starting to look here. When Ann met with the Deans in Fall 2023 she stated there would be no exceptions allowed this semester while the issues is addressed (temporary pause). **Where we are currently** (Kara): Kara is the Director for FASA. Her office is involved in reviewing & updating employment processes, equitable, fair, inclusive. There are Federal and State requirements imposed on employment requirements. There is a difference between the [Associate Dean classification posted on the HR website](#), this is different than a position description. Position description is specific to particular job in a particular college, very different from classification. The criteria used must follow a rule of job relatedness. Qualifications are outdated and need to be reviewed, including 1) position responsibilities and 2) minimum requirements. Currently the minimum qualifications are problematic, keeping underrepresented groups from applying. Policy review thus far...conducted research, looked at Big 10 peers, look at position descriptions internally and externally, meeting with interested groups to listen to thoughts and concerns with goal of adjusting minimum requirements (e.g. here with ASAC). Plan to remove tenure-system from the list, keep more open to all faculty positions, including academic specialists and to get this finished this semester to implement by next semester (beginning or early).

- D. Public Comments Related to Special Report

1. Looking at specialists in general...Why are the minimum degree qualifications for outreach and research specialists inflated in ways that constrict pathways for growth?- RESPONSE: No answers for group today without looking into it (Kara)Some discussion of this during handbook revision and whole review would be required, perhaps after this work is complete. Central HR is recruiting for Director of Compensation who will look at classifications and qualifications as the currently stand (Kathy Charles)
2. Currently says "should have a faculty appointment" not MUST, so why are exceptions needed by FASA?- RESPONSE: Good point, for at least 10 years this has been practiced "must"...practice and policy are not aligning. This office agrees with this is an issue. They believe the outcome will be lowering the minimum. The language needs to be very careful moving forward (Kara).
3. Are specialists represented in the working group? RESPONSE: It's not a formal working group or task force, though it was initially conceptualized that way. It is being handled as an HR issue with Kara and Mary Finn (former Dean) being the primary people working on this and meeting with various groups (Ann). This was seconded by Kara. They do not want to cut off any viewpoints with interest in this review project and this is a matter of enacting law (Kara).
4. Why not remove restrictions at all levels of administration? Seconded by another attendee... says same issue for center director or any director positions. Or at least that is constraining advancement for some- RESPONSE: These comments were heard, but no response was provided
5. Is there a relationship between the Associate Dean and Assistant Provost title review? Seems like being an Assistant Provost is easier- RESPONSE: The current focus is on Associate Dean role, but University and FASA are interested in reviewing further positions (Ann). FOLLOW UP?: Do all positions with title changes have to be posted? RESPONSE- Ideally, yes, but there have been many exceptions made to this and this practice continues on a case-by-case basis. (Kathy Charles). FOLLOW UP?: What are the exceptions? (Ashley) Executive management positions, spousal accomodation/hires, internal fills (someone already in related position)(Kathy). COMMENT: Need to look at Associate and Assistant Dean because the descriptions are so similar. RESPONSE: They are looking at both.

6. At the end of a committee/work group process and recommendation, how is a final decision made and who makes it? And how will it be communicated and to whom?- RESPONSE: Recommendations will be put together by Kara and Mary Finn after discussions with Ann and Kathy and legal considerations. The plan is then to bring it back to ASAC, Deans, for second round of questions and feedback. This feedback will result in a second set of recommendations around January. This would then be communicated to ASAC and the Deans. It would then sit with Ann and the Provost to implement. They want to provide a document to advise on minimum qualifications for a job descriptions to avoid minimum inflation. COMMENT: Challenge to act more quickly... there are people in circumstances now where Deans are holding positions awaiting this implementation. The feedback loop might inhibit current progress. RESPONSE: A lot of the work is done already. They will work on drafting this quicker, considering this comment and the holidays.
7. Ashley has paused questions and requested an update on this at the December meeting considering time constriction. Kara has agreed to come back and can answer any questions in the meantime via email (burtkara@msu.edu).

V. Report of Officers

- A. Chair Report (Ashley Malhoff)- No report at this time
- B. Vice Chair Report (Bethany Judge)- No report at this time
- C. Faculty Senate Representatives Report (Kelly Hodges)- September 19, October 17, and October 26 (special meeting)
 1. Full minutes available at: <https://acadgov.msu.edu/facultysenate>
 2. Encouraging everyone to participate and be informed about what occurs at these meetings (notes, links, live stream). Requested to know what ASAC wants summarized.
 3. Constituent looking for an update about course fee courtesy inequity (academic governance and ASAC) between full and part time people.
 4. Discrepancy between ASAC bylaws and the University bylaws on representation on University Council and Faculty Senate. ASAC is currently out of compliance, we don't have a formal place on Academic Governance (Faculty Senate or University Council). Our seats have been honored as of late but they are not in

compliance. Will be working on formalizing a resolution to formally have seats on these committees. Karen Kangas- Preston comment- In 2016 ASAC was granted those seats and voting rights. It might be worth looking at the notes at that time to see if that was formalized then as they were told. Ashley- will look into minutes from that year. Kelly- Typically not two separate positions, in other unites the Faculty Senate Rep also serves on the University Council.

5. Next meeting is scheduled for: November 21
6. University Council Representative Report (Megan Stevenson)-
September 26 and October 31 meetings
 - a) Full minutes available at:
<https://acadgov.msu.edu/universitycouncil>
 - b) Sept 26
 - (1) Updates on campus safety, enrollment statistics, presidential search, and cyber security. Specific points of interest:
 - (a) MSU Alerts; Door Lock Installation; Security Operations Center; Active Violence Training; Metal Detectors; and 3rd party After-Action Review
 - (2) Cybersecurity Updates from EVP Woo and VP Gage
 - (a) 650 million attacks blocked in last 6 months
 - (b) People are best defense against cyber-attacks (strong passwords, cybersecurity awareness, safeguard devices, multifactor authentication)
 - (c) Research security continues to be high priority for federal funding agencies and is a requirement to receive funding
 - c) Oct 31
 - (1) Updates on Board of Trustees, faculty promotion & recognition ceremony, impacts of current social/political climate on campus community, MSU Anti-Discrimination, Feb 13 After-Action Review. Particular points of interest:
 - (a) Conduct at BOT meeting- Faculty Senate resolution for Chair Vassar to step down or be removed
 - (b) Feb 13 After-Action Review- Some recommendations already in progress (door

- locks, cameras); some University policies and procedures need to be created or updated
- (c) University RVSM and Climate Presentation, Presidential Advisors on RVSM. Moving forward - engaging community, strengthening policies (Pass the Harasser), monitoring strategic plan
- (2) Comments from Floor- Student concerns on opening Berkeley for SS24 classes
- d) Next meeting is scheduled for: November 28

VI. Reports of Committees- Time did not allow for verbal communication of committee reports. Below are summaries provided directly to the secretary.

A. Elections- No report at this time

B. Outreach- No report at this time

C. Promotion & Compensation- Karen Kangas-Preston reporting

1. Last met on 10/16/23
2. Tipsheet to Specialist Promotions & Reappointments- Jenn Petzko and Karen met with Kathy Charles on 10/10 and 10/25
 - a) No answer on why 85-page dossier limit was chosen
 - b) Requested this be shared Fixed Term/Teaching Focused faculty director in FASA and adapted for that cohort
 - c) Brought up (again) the inequity of limits for NTT faculty and TS faculty
3. Examples of paperwork for successful promotion on HR website; Jenn followed up with Marilyn Amey- Still a work in progress, the lead person working on this, Amy Martin, is currently on sabbatical leave
4. Training for Administrators and College HR Representatives on Specialist Promotion and Reappointment Process- The need was recognized by Kathy Charles. Subcommittee suggestions:
 - a) Units start creating Job Postings for Specialists that include details on evaluation, reappointment, and promotion processes so it is clear from the onset
 - b) Share who is eligible for promotion each year with the specialists themselves and not just administrators
5. Thriving as an Academic Specialist & Table Talk Sessions
 - a) ASAC has little input on Thriving sessions, consider asking for more

- b) Clear outline of support system for specialists needed, particularly if promotion rules are not followed
6. More suggested changes to the Specialist Handbook. Which office makes final approval once ASAC approves? Proposed language...
- a) Annual Review Guidelines
- Annual reviews between specialist and their supervisor/administrator must happen at least once each fiscal year
 - The review must be a joint process between the specialist and the supervisor/administrator
 - If there are questions about who should perform the review, the specialist or unit administrator should consult the Specialist Position Description and/or contact FASA
 - The exact process may be determined by the unit, as long as the following conditions are met:
 - The annual review must include a conversation between specialist and supervisor/administrator that is based on documentation of accomplishments from the past year and goals/plans for the future
 - The specialist must be provided with a written summation of the review from the supervisor within 30 days and have the option to provide a written response for rebuttal and/or clarification if desired
 - It is suggested that a conversation about the timeline for promotion eligibility be included as part of the annual review.
 - The Performance Excellence information may be useful:
<https://hr.msu.edu/performanceexcellence/tools-staff.html>
<https://hr.msu.edu/performanceexcellence/tools-staff-prepareannual.html>
- b) Policy for Extended Leave DRAFT/REVISION- Extended release time and temporary reassignment to scholarly duties may be granted to assist academic specialists with at least 60 Full-Time-Equivalent (FTE) service months to enhance professional competency and for scholarly pursuit. Such activities are intended for the mutual benefit of the University and the academic specialist. The purpose is to encourage academic and institutional revitalization by providing sustained time for research/creative activities; development of new courses or programs; acquisition of expanded and/or new qualifications and skills; contribution to academic unit plans to improve and/or refocus instructional, research, or public service activities in accordance with the missions of the University.

Extended changes of duty assignment are not granted automatically and must be approved by the appropriate

academic administrator. Such activities must be requested in writing by the academic specialist and directed to the appropriate unit administrator. Requests must include a detailed description outlining the purposes, objectives and scholarly and/or research activities of the proposed duty assignment. The plan should indicate how the objectives and accomplishments of the new assignment will advance the interests and capabilities of the academic specialist for fulfilling the aims, objectives and goals of the department/school, college or University. Changes of duty assigned for more than six months require approval of the dean and the Office of the Provost. Funding for extended release time and assignment to scholarly duties is provided by the unit.

7. Next meeting: TBD, Marilyn Amey will be invited, plan to present three clear requests

D. Bylaws- No report at this time

E. Specialists Forum (every other year)- No report at this time

F. DEI- No report at this time

- VII. Unfinished Business- Time did not allow, these topics will be discussed at our next meeting

- A. Website update
- B. Table Talks

- VIII. New Business Time did not allow, these topics will be discussed at our next meeting

- A. Language for ASAC Bylaws Change Motion (Sergeant at Arms to Parliamentarian)
- B. ASAC positions on Academic Governance

- IX. Announcements-Time did not allow for additional announcements

- X. Comments from the Public- Time did not allow for additional comments from the public

- XI. Adjournment: Motion to adjourn from Bethany Judge, seconded by Jonglin Han. Meeting adjourned at 12:01pm