



Academic Specialist Advisory Committee Meeting

December 5, 2023

Minutes

I. Call to Order: Ashley Maloff, Chair, call to order 11:02am

II. Attendees:

Committee Members (P=present, A=absent)

Ann Austin	Ex Officio Member	P
Kathy Charles	Ex Officio Member	A
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	A
Grace Pregent	Member	P
Aaron Reifler	Appointed	P
Bonnie Russell	Member	A
Debjani Sarkar	Member	A
Samantha Sliwa	Appointed	P
Megan Stevenson	University Council	P
Mary Anne Walker	Member	P
Sarah Whitaker	Member	P

Other attendees: There were 5 people present in person and 52 total people present on Zoom.

III. Acceptance of Minutes for November 7th, 2023. Motion by Karen Kangas-Preston, second by Jonglim Han. Accepted by all, passed.

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

- A. Creating 'Tip Sheets' for policies pertaining to faculty and academic staff. Work has begun on this and will continue
- B. Special Report from Kara Yermak (FASA Director)- Review on minimum requirements for Assistant and Associate Dean Roles & Qualifications (not reviewed in over 15 years)- Follow up to information/conversation from Nov. 7 ASAC meeting

1. Current qualifications available at: [University Approved Academic Titles](#) Though the qualification language says “should” it has been enforced overtime as “must”
2. Information gathering: Office of Institutional Diversity and Inclusion, review of MSU posted descriptions, review of American Association of Universities (AAU) positions, solicited & reviewed organizational charts, literature review, Big Ten Academic Alliance (BTAA) benchmarking
3. Current drafted recommendations:
 - a) Continue to differentiate responsibilities of Assistant and Associate Deans by considering the scope of responsibilities and functional areas assigned. Dean titles are reserved for those with administrative responsibilities directly related to the academic mission.
 - b) After the college/unit has defined roles & responsibilities, identify needed minimum qualifications needed to be successful in the position
 - c) Candidate appointments not required to have appointment in the tenure system, but it may be a preferred qualification, if justified based on the type of duties
4. Next steps: Meet with stakeholder groups (e.g., Council of Dean, ASAC, etc.), develop guidance documents/resources for deans (i.e., minimum vs preferred qualifications, decision matrices, templates)

C. Public Comments relating to Special Report

1. During the AAU review, did you look at postings in different academic disciplines? Answer (Kara): Yes, this snapshot included veterinary medicine, college of law, human medicine, but did not include a full breadth. The posting information varied widely so it was helpful
2. Can you expand on what the need to include the part of 3b (above) that states that tenure system appointment may be a “preferred qualification”? Answer (Ann): Historically the tenure-system faculty have been considered the ‘decision makers’ of the academy. We are in flux currently (nationally). There are many people doing the core work of the University that are not a part of this system, so things are changing. The proportion of the people in the tenure-system is getting smaller. Trying to move forward without expecting a complete paradigm shift. Kara gave the example that the Associate Dean of Faculty Affairs position would be one with a

preferred fill from the tenure system because they would be dealing with faculty appointments and tenure-system issues.

3. Has there been any analysis to determine if these changes to assistant and associate dean minimum qualifications are limiting our reach to those outside MSU who may not understand these titles (i.e., specialist) that are unique to our institution? Will there be adverse effects on recruiting external candidates? Answer: Ann- Acknowledges that outside people do not understand positions such as specialist. Kara- The proposed change in qualifications from title based to knowledge, skill, and experience based should help us move away from the use of unclear titles... so the hope is that this will help in recruiting because there won't be a need to understand a title/category
4. If you have additional questions, comments, or feedback, it can be sent to ASAC Chair, Ashley Malhoff (maloffas@msu.edu), who will pass it along to Kara and Ann

V. Report of Officers

- A. Chair Report (Ashley Malhoff)- We are getting a new Vice President of FASA, so the schedule for ASAC meetings will need to remain the same for the spring semester. Dates, times, and location will be sent out shortly. Following up on ASAC positions in academic governance
- B. Vice Chair Report (Bethany Judge)- No report at this time
- C. Faculty Senate Representatives & University Council combined report (Kelly Hodges)- Megan Stevenson and Kelly remain in conversation about how to ensure ASAC participation in both groups while we await further clarification about aligning ASAC practices and bylaws with university practices and bylaws regarding ASAC participation in U-wide governance meetings.
 1. Last meeting Faculty Senate meeting: November 21, 2023. Full minutes will be available at:
<https://acadgov.msu.edu/facultysenate>
 2. Last meeting University Council meeting: November 28, 2023. Full minutes will be available at:
<https://acadgov.msu.edu/universitycouncil>
 3. New University policy & guidance regarding an updated Modified Operations Policy was shared by Kara Yermak and Sharri

Margraves at the 11/28 University Council meeting. Additional details to follow by other means

4. A revised combined Student Rights and Responsibilities and General Student Regulations policy was presented at the 11/28 University Council meeting. The vote to endorse was tabled until the next meeting while some procedural questions are worked out
5. A new University-wide policies repository has been launched at <https://policies.msu.edu/>
6. The Higher Learning Commission (HLC) has responded to the letter sent by Faculty Senate to request investigation of the Board of Trustees for potential violation of HLC standards, indicating it will open an investigation.
7. Extensive comments have been raised regarding reactions and responses to a range of issues that encompass free speech, hate speech, and how we treat and protect each other.
8. Ongoing concern about the president search remains, with particular note of the lack of information regarding progress following the Board of Trustees' self-imposed deadline of Thanksgiving for completing the search.

VI. Reports of Committees

A. Elections- No update at this time, will begin in the spring (Ashley)

B. Outreach- No update at this time

C. Promotion & Compensation (Karen Kangas-Preston)

1. Jenn and Karen worked with Kathy Charles to create a 'tip sheet'/check list that was sent out with the promotion memo on 11/20. This was primarily to help with concerns of keeping to the 85-page limit at University/Provost level and how to be sure important information is still included. Thanks to Ashley for sending it to the Specialist listserv. Questions remaining:
 - a) How can ASAC be sure specialists are aware of this document? Especially those in non-degree granting units
Who gets this memo in non-degree granting units?
 - b) Has ASAC ever seen/asked to see the memo that FASA sends out with the promotion document? UCFA and UCSG both review the tenure system memo

- c) What is the most effective way for specialists to find out who their academic HR rep is? Who should they be directed to speak to (that is not the chair/director)? OR how do you look up who your academic HR rep is based on your unit appointment?
 - d) For reference, [this information](#) is shared from the Provost regarding RPT recommendations;
- 2. New handbook- There are some inconsistencies in language/vocabulary use that need to be cleared up. Some items that were not discussed when the last review committee met that are causing concern:
 - a) Research specialists required to have PHD, TERMINAL DEGREE (this is a language difference in different sections)
 - b) What is the purpose of hiring a research specialist as opposed to a TS research associate?
 - c) Why is the terminal degree required when specialist system was set up for those with expertise but not a degree?
 - d) Not all PI on grants must have a terminal degree so why this language?
 - e) If this is practice but not policy it needs to be clarified so there are not limits to what a specialist can achieve
- 3. Plans to expand on Thriving as an Academic Specialist session with mini-sessions that go into more detailed and break down explanations of the promotion process. If you are from one of the following units and have access to promotion and reappointment guidelines, please send them to Karen (kangaspr@msu.edu)
 - a) Comm arts and Sciences
 - b) Graduate school
 - c) International Studies and Programs
 - d) James Madison
 - e) College of Law
 - f) Lyman Briggs
 - g) College of Music
 - h) College of Natural Sciences
 - i) College of Nursing
 - j) Residential Collage in the Arts and Humanities (RCAH)
 - k) College of Veterinary Medicine

D. Bylaws- No update at this time

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

- F. DEI- No update at this time
- VII. Unfinished Business-None
 - A. Website updates- Working on a place to make minutes publicly accessible
 - B. Table Talks- Bei
 - C. ASAC positions on Academic Governance- No updates at this time, awaiting feedback from Kathy
- VIII. New Business
 - A. ASAC approved for a budget for swag by FASA. This could be used for some of the mini-sessions discussed by the Promotion & Compensation Subcommittee or other ASAC events
 - B. Language for ASAC Bylaws Change Motion (Sergeant at Arms to Parliamentarian)- Karen Kangas-Preston put forth the motion. Sarah Whitaker seconded. The motion was passed by unanimous consent
- IX. Announcements- None
- X. Comments from the Public-None
- XI. Adjournment: Motion to adjourn from Kelly Hodges, seconded by Megan Stevenson. Meeting adjourned at 12:01pm