

**UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON WOMEN FACULTY AND STUDENTS  
UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME  
MEETING OF May 4, 2011  
12:30-2:00 p.m. Room 500, MAIN BUILDING**

**Members present:** Susan Ohmer, Tracy Bergstrom, Aimee Buccellato, Paulette Curtis, Sister Susan Dunn, Jennifer Mason McAward, Ken Milani, Kathie Newman, Maura Ryan, Alison Rice, Allison Regier, Amber Handy

**Members absent and excused:** Kevin Barry, Jessica Collett, Don Pope-Davis, Emily LeStrange, Catherine Soler, Diane Wagner

**Permanent Invited Guests present:** Catherine Pieronek, Kathy Brickley, Jannifer Crittenden

**Guests:** Erin Harding Hoffman-Associate Vice President for Strategic Planning; Tatiana Combs—Survey Program manager, the Office of Strategic Planning, Tracey Thomas (recorder)

1. **Welcome and Approval of minutes of November 17, 2010 meeting:** Prof. Susan Ohmer, chair, greeted and welcomed members, thanking them for making time for this meeting during this busy time of the semester. She introduced the two guests who have been invited to discuss an upcoming survey of faculty.
  
2. **Review of language change for Academic Articles:**  
Prof. Ohmer announced changes being proposed to the Academic Articles. First, language has been added which will extend permanent nonvoting membership to officeholders who are now “permanent invited guests.” These roles are those of the Director of the Office of Institutional Equity, the Director of the Gender Relations Center, and one of the University’s Sexual Assault Resource Persons. The wording has been unanimously approved by the Faculty Affairs committee working group of the Academic Council and will be presented to the full Council at the next meeting.

A second proposed change impacting the committee is that the Articles now read ‘his or her designee’ to indicate that if Associate Provost Don Pope-Davis is not available, his designee may open the committee year, thus eliminating the difficulty that the committee was dependent on that one individual’s sanction. This change was proposed by Prof. Pope-Davis himself. Because Pope-Davis is on the roster of the committee, this rule also opens up another member spot, which provides a welcome opportunity for increased input on the committee. Prof. Ohmer said these changes bring to a close a chapter in the committee’s history with a positive sense of progress made.

### 3. Faculty climate survey:

Prof. Ohmer commenced the discussion of the model climate surveys by reviewing the history. In Fall, 2010, a group of female faculty communicated to Provost Burish concerns and suggestions for addressing gender issues. Mr. Burish is particularly attentive to faculty concerns, and he has been addressing these concerns throughout the academic year. One suggestion was to conduct a climate survey of faculty. Mr. Burish asked Prof. Pope-Davis and Prof. Ohmer to work with Erin Harding Hoffman to design such a survey. Ms. Hoffman and Ms. Combs have been invited to meet with the committee today to garner input from this group about ideas and issues which should be included in the survey.

Ms. Hoffman said she is very happy to meet with the committee and to be part of this project, as it has long been a goal of her office to add this type of survey to the battery of instruments deployed by Strategic Planning. The survey program has historically targeted undergraduates. Now, under Ms. Combs, the surveys have expanded to include graduate students and some administrative units on campus. The recent ImproveND survey was administered by this office. In good part through the efforts of this committee, the faculty will now be included among the cohorts surveyed. The Provost has asked the Office of Strategic Planning not only to design a survey for ND faculty but also to take a leadership role among a select group of peer institutions—the Colonial Group—to craft a survey acceptable to the group. This will present a significant opportunity for both collective and collaborative information gathering, leading to useful benchmarking and a more meaningful insight into the significance of the information collected. The Colonial Group is a small group of private institutions which are, mostly, not members of AAU and do not have another natural peer group. Mr. Burish took the faculty climate survey concept to the group to solicit participation. Among those who have agreed to participate: Northeastern University, Southern Methodist University, George Washington University, Syracuse University, Wake Forest University, Leigh University, and the University of Miami. New York University, Boston College and Boston University have declined, as each has recently conducted a faculty climate survey. Of the group members, Brandeis and Tulane have not responded. Each of the participating institutions comes from a different and varied history of faculty surveys.

Since a significant goal is to collect information that can be informatively compared, Ms. Combs has researched the external instruments which are readily and widely available, particularly any in which the participating institutions have an investment. The two presented today are the AAUDE and HERI.

Today, Ms. Hoffman and Ms. Combs are seeking input on any issues or topics which are of interest to members to be included in such a survey. The Office has the freedom to draft its own instrument, which provides a lot of flexibility. The primary benefit of using one of the external instruments is that some of the other institutions have used them and are comfortable with them. It was suggested that the procedure for today's discussion be to assess any and all aspects of the two selected external instruments, noting strengths and weaknesses. Once this

information is collected, the Office can determine whether to administer one or draft an original instrument. A second area of interest to the Office is suggestions about incentivizing faculty to participate in the survey.

Ms. Combs briefly reviewed the two external instruments. She noted that the design of each responds to different needs. The HERI Faculty survey (Higher Education Research Institute) comes from the research institute at UCLA, which conducts comprehensive studies of higher education. The institute has designed a number of surveys, including a widely used freshman survey and a senior survey. The institute is compiling a longitudinal study of higher education, with a sociological perspective, which can be seen in the focus of the questions. Its first faculty survey was administered in 1999, and every three years after.

The AAUDE instrument has been developed with a focus on institutional equity and faculty climate. Areas of interest in this survey include what the faculty needs, are the needs being met, how does the institutional mission sync with faculty goals, etc. This is a different approach and the survey questions reflect that. Few of the institutions in the Colonial Group are familiar with the AAUDE instrument.

These two instruments have been selected and are presented to the committee today in part because of their differences; they present a useful starting point for identifying and articulate ND priorities, since they cover a substantial amount of the likely issues. Prof. Milani asked whether the survey conducted by the Chronicle of Higher Education would be useful to ND. Ms. Hoffman said ND has participated in that survey several times; that survey collects a more general level of information than she expects to collect, and the data is not retrievable without paying a large fee. However, if it contains questions that are of interest, they can be incorporated in the ND survey. It is a significant benefit that ND can control and customize the instrument it will eventually use. This is particularly true if the participating group decides to use the AAUDE instrument, while HERI, since it is copyrighted, can be more limitedly customized. Also, it must be administered through the Research Institute.

Members were invited to comment on specific aspects of the instruments. The group began with the AAUDE survey.

Prof. Milani suggested a follow up question to the question which asks about administrative service and the possibility of teaching relief: 'was the teaching relief offered a fair exchange?' He also noted that some faculty would prefer to continue teaching while acting in administrative capacities; they do not want to 'administer themselves out of the classroom.'

Tracy Bergstrom reported more generally that the AAUDE survey better encapsulated the issues which have been of concern to this committee over the last several years, such as mentoring, atmospheric conditions, and general environmental conditions. Prof. Ohmer added to the list hiring and opportunities for leave. Prof. Ryan agreed with this assessment. She suggested that

a question on committee service might usefully ask about the type of committees on which the faculty member has served. She noted that female faculty often state that while they serve on a lot of committees, they do not have the opportunity to serve on significant committees. A question that might retrieve information pertaining to this perception of committee service might be identify what is perceived as real participation in terms of governance. Members agreed that committees form a hierarchy, and that this can differ among departments. It was suggested that this question might also identify distinctions based on gender and on rank.

Members noted that this instrument does not address faculty's comfort with ethnic and/or religious diversity on the campus. It is a topic which comes up frequently in exit interviews. Ms. Hoffman asked if a question on religion or ethnicity would be viewed as inflammatory to faculty. She noted that this information could be retrieved through a question or by marrying the survey with institutional data. Members were noncommittal about the delicacy of the question but noted that the information would be useful.

Prof. Curtis also asked if the survey might be broadened to include other teaching classifications, specifically the SPFs. It was agreed that while there are intersections, there are also distinct concerns for the tenure track and non-tenure track instructors.

Prof. Curtis suggested a missing question is 'what brought you to X institution? And what were your expectations about that institution?' She also noted that the HERI instrument elicited material about the intangibles of community, while the AAUDE instrument is more centered on the academic experience. She said that since ND's rhetoric is specifically focused on community, it would be especially beneficial to assess the climate of the community.

Prof. Curtis also suggested that in addition to the survey, convening focus groups from which qualitative information can be gathered would be essential to insure the effectiveness of the collection process.

The graduate student representatives noted that graduate students have concerns about mentoring; it would be helpful to ask the faculty if and how they provide extra-academic mentoring to graduate students. Another question might focus on the interaction between faculty and students, including graduate students, undergraduates, and advisees.

Prof. Milani noted that the AAUDE survey assumes that all stress is harmful. He suggested specifying 'dysfunctional stress.' Prof. Curtis replied that she liked the baldness of the question (#12) because she thinks 'lightning bolt questions' might elicit particularly interesting results. She suggested adding a dysfunctional stress question to the one already given.

Prof. Pieronek suggested a question that addressed life outside the institution, concerning the city in which the institution is located. Issues like schools and the life of the community are problems the institution cannot solve. Jannifer Crittenden noted that questions 29-30-31 on

HERI addressed some of the diversity and community issues that others have mentioned. Overall she prefers the AAU survey. Prof. Curtis suggested adding some questions that addressed the role played by nearby metropolitan areas (such as Chicago for ND) in the social and communal lives of faculty.

Members turned to the second instrument, HERI.

Ms. Hoffman noted that one advantage in HERI is that it is easier to administer whole cloth. In addition, it is likely that some of the peer institutions have administered it for a significantly long time, and they will be reluctant to move away from it. Therefore, even if it is not chosen by the group for use, it would be useful to select some questions from it to add to the final instrument; the answers to these questions can then be compared with historical data.

Members named some preferred questions: 17, 18, 27, 19. It was noted that community, both institutional and city, could be added to the choices in question 27. Graduate students could be added to question 18. Part time faculty could be added to questions about teaching techniques. Ms. Combs commented that one of the challenges of HERI is that it tackles so many topics. An advantage is that changes over time can be tracked and analyzed, since the instrument has long been in use.

Asked if gender will be addressed through the survey, Ms. Hoffman explained that the current plan is to administer the survey for the first time by a census method, and then look at reweighting the results afterward, for categories such as gender. She affirmed that Prof. Pieronek would be welcome to present the instruments to the SPF Executive committee for its input. The primary focus of the eventual data sharing, per the Provost, will be on the full time faculty. One approach to collecting information about other colleagues would be to append an addendum to the instrument. There will likely not be comparative data from the rest of the institutional group; that would not prevent ND from collecting it. Ms. Hoffman noted that the Colonial Group will be meeting at the end of May, so that is a deadline for sharing impressions about the instruments.

Prof. Newman commented that overall the HERI survey strikes her as bland, and as primarily focused on non-science college issues and concerns. For instance, science colleagues struggle with flexible work schedule issues, as they must do a large percentage of research elsewhere. Others have complained about the size of the role played by social issues at ND. She would suggest inclusion of questions that broach these kinds of issues and questions of intellectual and academic freedom, and intellectual and social comfort at the institution, issues that touch on uncomfortable and challenging concerns.

Ms. Hoffman asked for further comments about the gaps evident in either instrument. Prof. Pieronek suggested asking questions that would get at awareness of campus policies, such as pregnancy policies. She expects that the data will show an unevenness of awareness. It was

also noted that access to policies, and knowledge of who/where policy is disseminated is spotty. Another suggestion was to evaluate satisfaction with the Spousal Hiring Office. Prof. Milani suggested assessing the training given to faculty who take on administrative positions. Ms. Hoffman summarized the suggestions by noting that members would add ND-nuances to many questions as well as adding follow-up questions to many of the topics appropriately presented. She noted that there will be an open-ended final question that solicits comments on any issues or concerns not covered in the survey. This does not limit the inclusion of qualitative questions, however.

The discussion turned to procedural concerns. Since faculty are traditionally reluctant to complete surveys, the Office is concerned to overcome any obstacles. Ms. Hoffman asked about length, noting that tables and lists of options massively increase the amount responders are asked to absorb; the time and effort commitment is substantial. Suggestions for insuring comfort with participating were invited. She noted that the responses will be confidential; technically, in order to be able to send direct follow up messages to non participants, the initial links are individually coded. But Ms. Combs is literally the only person with access to these identifications, and she is scrupulous about not making use of this information. When the data is moved to SPSS for analysis, the links and addresses are erased.

Prof. Milani suggested that faculty in the Marketing Department might have suggestions for ways to get professionals to respond to surveys; they design and conduct surveys with CEOs, lawyers, accountants, etc, who might also be reluctant to participate. Ms. Hoffman noted that the ND Voice survey has a respectable 60% response rate; members suggested that this might be because the staff has a strong belief that the university responds to and acts on the information collected. It was agreed that stressing that there will be response to the issues inquired about in the faculty climate survey would be an important motivator for participation. Ms. Preacher noted that the follow-up town hall meeting which is an outcome of ND Voice could be replicated as well, supporting a claim for transparency. Perhaps this model could be modified to be in a more intimate format, due to the sensitivity of some issues; the focus group idea might be useful here. Prof. Pieronek also suggested that the questions recognize the levels of hierarchy—departmental, college, institutional—as is embedded in ND Voice.

The discussion was summarized thus: transparency, confidentiality, and application of the collected information are all of concern to participants. Perhaps pull down boxes could be used for some of the longer lists in the questions to make the initial length shorter.

Members discussed a number of possible incentives that might motivate faculty, noting that the incentives for students would likely be different. Ms. Hoffman reported that the single most effective tool, used with students, alumni, friends of ND, and parents, is the frequency of reminder emails. The Office uses a software package that targets only the non-responders (hence the individualized link). One suggestion was a paper format; for some departments, paper voting for elections elicits a higher return, while for others electronic voting does so. The

complex branching embedded in questions is more flexibly available electronically. Again, it was noted that the staff seems particularly to value the knowledge that there will be outcomes from participating in ND Voice. Members also discussed what month of the academic year is likely to generate more responses; October was the unanimous agreement, with February the choice for spring semesters. Ms. Hoffman noted that the release of information will come after there is an opportunity for analysis; this would mean that the information will be shared in the fall semester after the survey is administered. The promise of transparency should help to justify this slight delay. Ms. Hoffman also asked if the invitation to participate in this survey should come from any particular office. It was agreed that the Provost should send out the invitation, but that there needs to be explicit buy-in from deans. Sister Sue Dunn noted that in 2006 when the big graduate student survey was administered, participants were motivated by prizes like iPods, shuffles, laptops, etc. A free semester of textbooks works for students effectively. It was suggested that a free and centrally located parking spot for a semester might be a motivator.

Ms. Hoffman thanked the committee for its input. She welcomed any volunteers who would be willing to review a draft of the instrument when it takes form, after input from the participating institutions.

Prof. Ohmer thanked the guests for providing this information to the committee. The development of this survey is the outcome of several years of work by Ms. Hoffman and others present today; she said it is wonderful to see this dedicated work come to fruition in such a concrete way.

Prof. Ohmer announced that a special meeting of the committee will take place on Tuesday, May 10, at 3:00 p.m. Linda Kroll has kindly agreed to attend this meeting and discuss the broad issues connected with childcare needs and for ECDC for members of the campus community.

As time had expired, the meeting was adjourned.