

MINUTES

Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research and Graduate Education
Committee on Academic Staff Issues
1:30 p.m. – 3:00 p.m., Monday, May 11, 2020
<https://us.bbcollab.com/guest/bc7a4516046a441cbac35215233be129>
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Attendees: Denny Hackel (vice chair), Shane Hubbard, Moira Harrington, Jenny Hackel, Nagesh Adluru, Rebecca Adams, Chris Huffman, Mallory Musolf, and after 2 p.m. Steve Ackerman and Julie Karpelenia

1:30 Call To Order

1:31 Automatic Consent Business

- Quorum was lacking so there was no approval of OVRGE-CASI minutes of April 13, 2020. Chris Huffman will prepare the minutes of March 9, 2020. These minutes will be on the June agenda.

1:35 Subcommittee Reports

- Communications (Bendfelt (*chair), Heinritz, J. Hackel)
J. Hackel reported that the [webpage](#) should be updated with the exception of subcommittee members. Hackel is getting some html training later in the week to be able to complete the final updates.
- Nominating and Districting (Johnson(*chair), Hubbard)
Hubbard said he would distribute emails later in the day to gauge the willingness of two existing members, up for election, whether they wanted to run for another term.
- Personnel Policies and Procedures/HR Design (D. Hackel(*chair), Meyers)
No update.
- Professional Development and Recognition (Harrington(*chair), Adluru, Adams, Huffman)
No update.

1:45 Business

- ASA/ASEC Update (Hackel)
D. Hackel attended the April ASA meeting. He said telecommuting seems to enable greater participation, ~180 people. The provost and Mark Walters, vice chancellor for finance and administration, discussed the furloughs. They talked about the complexity of formulating them and communicating about them. Employees cannot take more than eight hours of furlough in a single week. It could be a possible but very difficult for employees to take on the furloughs of other employees. Some adjustments to the furlough timeframe of May 15 to Oct. 31 may be forthcoming for employees in research groups such as those working on coronavirus and those deployed at the South Pole as part of the IceCube Project. For those with 9-month appointments, guidance may be coming about the difficulty of taking furloughs before the summer—packing in multiple furlough days in a single pay period before the academic year ends and then packing in multiple days in the fall when the semester is again ramping up. This is a financial hit as well as a difficult time for a workload to take a furlough.

Today's meeting, following the CASI meeting, will include the chancellor and the provost.

- Discussion of next vice-chair
D. Hackel will explore offline the interest of committee members to serve as a vice chair. The election will be held at the June 8, 2020 meeting.
- Next OVCRGE-CASI meeting June 8, 2020; video conference, for decision
The plan is to conduct this meeting and likely via video conference.

2:00 OVCRGE-Chair: Steve Ackerman, Vice Chancellor for Research and Graduate Education

Ackerman is meeting with the associate vice chancellors for research and graduate education and the associate deans at colleges to develop guidelines for the bringing research enterprise more fully back to campus, bearing in mind that safety is the No. 1 priority. They will develop a web-based form to collect information on individual labs and researchers, which will feed into a larger database so they can see how not only that particular lab will maintain COVID-19 safety protocols but also how that lab links to what's happening in other spaces in that building. Any researchers returning to campus will need approval first from their center director or department chair, then their dean, or in the case of the centers, Ackerman, to restart. He hopes to distribute this policy next week.

Norman Drinkwater has returned to head up a committee on health protocols on campus as it reopens. The committee expects to submit a report by the end of the month.

Another committee is looking at different scenarios for bringing back graduate students.

D. Hackel outlined an experience he had when he entered the Space Science and Engineering Building last week with permission and to complete work. He noted a bat in a hallway and was disturbed to learn after the fact that he should not have used the water in the building. Others had been informed of that fact, but he was not. He felt there should have been better communication regarding this.

Ackerman agreed that it was unfortunate that D. Hackel was not informed. He also noted that there is yet another committee reviewing conditions within buildings, such as HVAC, water quality, and animal and pest control.

Adams asked about foreign graduate students and their return to campus, and how they might get paid if they are telecommuting.

Ackerman and Karpelena replied that it's complex. Ackerman said he's concerned about graduate students deferring their admission. Karpelena said campus has discovered a gap in its policies relative to foreign students telecommuting. There is no current policy and factors such as cyber security need to be addressed.

D. Hackel asked why furloughs were being applied to employees who are 100% grant funded. Ackerman said it came down to the philosophy that we are all in this together. He said he recognizes the difficulty the furloughs pose to individuals.

He concluded by thanking CASI members for their service and all the contributions under difficult conditions such as having young children at home while telecommuting. He said people should feel free to reach out directly to him with questions and comments.

- **HR Update (Karpelenia)**

She credited the centers with accurate and timely tallies on essential employees and their ability to work at a full-time capacity from home. Karpelenia said there are many needs to be filled regarding the furloughs and they are working and accomplishing things “just in time.” One example is the system to record furlough leave. The system was not built to accommodate furloughs so retooling is happening and should be completed this week. Development is also underway on two calculators for employees—one to assess personal costs associated with the furloughs and another regarding unemployment compensation.

Information is also forthcoming—hopefully, next week—on an employee loan program administered through the Division of Business Services and at 0% interest.

In addition to the committees Ackerman mentioned, she said there is another one that is looking at opening all of campus. It has completed a draft report that is being reviewed by senior leadership. That committee’s work will align with the one focused on research. Adams asked if there would be consideration given to employees who don’t feel comfortable to return to campus. Karpelenia said there were provisions for this during the H1N1 outbreak and it’s being discussed in regard to coronavirus.

More information will be coming on a hiring freeze. Hiring will be carefully scrutinized, even to the level of student hourly employees.

She has been asked what she knows about the 2% UW employee pay increase approved by the Joint Committee on Employee Relations and which is set to go into effect in January 2021. The answer is that she does not know. Likewise, she does not know if, through the furlough process, employees will remain whole in terms of the Wisconsin Retirement System, as had been the case during the 2008-09 furloughs. Conversations on this topic with the governor’s office are ongoing since such a situation requires an executive order.

She said no buy-out programs are on the table.

She cautioned that when looking for furlough information be sure to use as a source the UW-Madison policy, not UW System’s or other campuses. Madison’s policy is specific to Madison.

She concluded by inviting emailed questions or comments.

2:30 Business continued

No further business conducted.

3:00 Adjourn

Future Minutes

Heinritz(June), Johnson(July), Hubbard(Aug), J. Hackel(Sept), Meyers(Oct)

Minutes respectfully submitted by Moira Harrington.