

**UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON  
SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON MINORITY FACULTY AFFAIRS**

The Special Committee on Minority Faculty Affairs met on **May 23, 2001**, at 1:30 p.m. Chair Brian Fabien presided.

**PRESENT:**     *Professors* Fabien (Chair), Lindenberg, Madison and Ramulu;  
                  *ex officio members* Gallardo, Teng and Zhao.

**ABSENT:**     *Professors* Gamboa, Koenig and Spigner;  
                  *ex officio members* Butler, Colonnese, Pine, Remick, Shaw, Vaezy and You.

**Approval of minutes**

The minutes of February 21 and March 28, 2001 were approved as written.

**Review of the special faculty meeting – Brian Fabien**

Fabien mentioned two items of special interest that resulted from the special faculty meeting.

First, Robert Crutchfield (chair of Sociology) has petitioned the administration to set aside funds for support of new minority faculty in their first summer at the University. Many incoming minority faculty are not as well advised as other incoming faculty about support needed for their first summer at the UW, and could greatly benefit from such funding.

Second, a decision was made at the special faculty meeting to have GOMAP lunches – probably in Autumn Quarter – at which faculty and graduate students will be able to interact, and students will be able to learn what projects their faculty are engaged in.

Fabien said he met several new faculty at the meeting, which again had a preponderance of faculty from the School of Medicine. (This happened at the last special faculty meeting.) Fabien said his impression is that minority faculty want more meetings like this one. He said special faculty meetings conceivably could be held once each quarter (open, as they must be, to general faculty). Ramulu said individual colleges and schools could be highlighted at separate meetings. Though in principle the special committee liked this idea, the problem is that not enough faculty come to the meetings as it is. And it is hard to imagine that highlighting individual schools and colleges would increase the overall attendance.

Fabien said the feedback from the special faculty meeting has been “quite broad” in scope, and “quite good.” This will definitely be an agenda item for SCMFA next year, he said. Gallardo said four department chairs were present at the meeting. He said there was an impressive exchange among many faculty in attendance about the various kinds of research they are doing at UW. And there was interest among many faculty at the meeting in sharing their research work with other faculty before submitting it for publication.

This is one kind of project that could take place on the SCMFA Web site. Gallardo said he would get the Web site off the ground, and Madison – though leaving the council and retiring from the University – will do whatever he can to assist Gallardo in the coming months. One main purpose of the Web site is to create a network allowing the review of common interests, not only for SCMFA members, but for anyone who chooses to go into the Web site. And some of these people will be reached through the links established on the SCMFA Web site to specific Web sites throughout the three campuses of the University.

Another purpose of the SCMFA Web site is to establish a “message board” on which dialogues and “discussions” can develop over time. At first, the message board will be confined to the University community, and will go through Marilyn Gray in the Faculty Senate Office. “We need a Webmaster,” Fabien said, “to answer questions and to see that the Web site is properly maintained.” A volunteer to serve as Webmaster will be sought in Autumn Quarter meetings of the special committee.

## **Mentoring for minority faculty**

Madison said the special committee will have to continue to put the issue of mentoring for minority faculty before President McCormick, who said recently that the University no longer has an official mentoring program. Fabien said he can urge the FCFA (the Faculty Council on Faculty Affairs, on which he has an ex officio position as chair of SCMFA) to recommend that the mentoring program be reinstated. (The College of Engineering has a mentoring – or “advocate” – system that works, and works well, Ramulu said. Fabien, also in Engineering, concurred.) Fabien said a lot of junior faculty are not getting honest evaluations of their progress towards tenure and promotion, then are understandably taken aback when told that they do not qualify [for tenure or promotion].

Zhao said a review is needed by people who have a good knowledge of the junior faculty member’s field. Ramulu said the mentor – or “advocate” – does not need to have exact knowledge of the junior faculty member’s field, but should be someone chosen by the latter. It should be someone the junior faculty member wants to have as a mentor. Madison agreed, but said Zhao was right in suggesting that the mentor must be able to evaluate a paper given to him or her for appraisal.

Zhao said Fabien might ask FCFA to recommend that each department have its own mentoring program, both to educate junior faculty about the tenure and promotion process and to provide consultation to those who request it. Fabien this it is important to keep in mind that mentoring must be voluntary. It was pointed out that Dean Denton said that junior faculty should also look to other areas for specific mentoring. Zhao concurred, saying, “Mentoring only works if it’s voluntary.” And, as Gallardo noted, “You have to develop a relationship with your mentor, which you are not likely to do if mentoring is imposed.”

Ramulu said, “Colleges [and schools] should have this policy and implement it. And junior faculty need to be assertive in seeking out faculty for mentoring.” Zhao said mentoring “could be a ‘service’ function.” Madison said that, though he agrees that mentoring cannot be something that is imposed on junior faculty, unfortunately, if exclusively left to their own initiative, many junior faculty would not come forward to seek out mentoring.

Fabien said that, if there is no official mentoring in place at the UW, there is nonetheless a “good advocate system that is working well, if not a University-mandated system.” It is an informal system that only works well if faculty and junior faculty both accept responsibility for making it happen.

Fabien said, “Even if a junior faculty member has an advocate who says, ‘You’re doing well,’ the University has the final say.” But it should be mandated, he added, “that some kind of mentoring process accountably occur.”

“This whole idea of accountability in mentoring is nowhere to be found in the Faculty Code,” Fabien said.

## **New SCMFA chair for 2001-2002**

SCMFA voting members who are interested in serving as chair for 2001-2002 should contact Brian Fabien at [fabien@u.washington.edu](mailto:fabien@u.washington.edu) or at 543-6915. Lindenberg said she would be available to serve as vice chair.

## **Next meeting**

This was the final SCMFA meeting for the 2000-2001 academic year. The first 2001-2002 meeting of the special committee will take place in October 2001.

Brian Taylor  
Recorder

