



To: Colleen Conway, Immediate Past Chair, SACUA

From: Durga Singer, Chair, AAAC

Subject: Report on Activities of AAAC for 2020-2021

Members: Lola Eniola-Adefeso, Rachel Goldman, Michael Hess, John Pasquale, Rebekah Modrak, Mark Rosentraub, Sergio Villalobos Ruminott, William Schultz, Priti Shah, Chitra Subramanian

SACUA Liaison: Annalisa Manera

Meeting Dates: 9/8/20  
9/23/20  
10/28/20  
11/11/20  
12/9/20  
1/20/21  
2/24/21  
3/31/21  
4/14/21

Overall Summary: This year was complex with several issues that arose for our discussions on AAAC including anti-racism efforts, semester planning and feedback on teaching during COVID, discussions about impact statements, and feedback on OIE proceedings. While we had discussions with administration on topics it was unclear if feedback from AAAC influenced decisions but in many cases, we were able to share and provide feedback and perspectives from our broad group of faculty on AAAC.

This document summarizes the activities from the initial charge, further issues raised during our meetings, and issues that arose that we propose to continue discussing in 2021-2022 are highlighted **in bold**.

The topics of focus for the year largely based on our original charge included:

Summary Topic 1 – Understand and provide input into changes to Office of Institutional Equity (OIE) and its processes in the context of implementation of Title IX requirements and the Umbrella Policy.

We had discussions with Tami Strickman with the Provost related to OIE proceedings at our first and last meeting this year. With changes arising from the umbrella policy, we voiced our concerns and interest in better understanding how feedback was being received and plans

going forward for getting and incorporating input, but we never received detailed information about these plans. At our last meeting it was clear that feedback was mixed but it did not appear that any changes were to be made about the single investigator vs hearing model, employee advisor use for faculty/staff vs attorneys for students, and the question of appeals. **With the creation of a new advisory group next year, it will be important to understand how these concerns have been addressed.**

We also had a meeting with Gloria Hage with the Office of General Counsel to discuss supervisor/subordinate relationship policy, but this was not further brought up although the group voiced concerns and perspectives on both sides. This SPG (201.23) is still being reviewed and may be a discussion for future AAAC work.

Summary Topic 2 – Ensuring due process for faculty under OIE review to include the opportunity for appeals, and at a minimum the same rights afforded to students.

This year we were able to nominate our faculty members to the WilmerHale Task Force, interact with guidepost consultants, and discussed perspectives from those victims of sexual harassment. These discussions were all in dependent of the Provost. **Due process is so critical and during discussions with the OIE director it was voiced that we would like faculty to have the same appeal process and that the Wilmer Hale report recommendations need to be discussed transparently with campus. Since this was not completed this year this topic should continue on the charge.**

Summary Topic 3 – Consider the ramifications of COVID-19 on the tenure and promotion process.

We had two type of discussions related COVID-19 impact statements in relation to P&T as well as in annual evaluations. This is clearly an issue of great importance especially for junior faculty. Our discussions engaged with Vice Provost Sara Blair and Provost Collins who described that schools were recommended to make their own plans for such statements and discussions had occurred with chairs. However, it is not clear that there were strong recommendations requiring this and there may be discrepancies in interpretation of what statements are being asked and how external reviewers may interpret how COVID impacted academic work at U of M. **Given that COVID is going to have long-lasting impacts on careers it is critical to continue future discussions. Martha McComas chair of CESWF (Committee on the Economic and Social Well-Being of the Faculty) joined our discussions and a group of us reviewed a survey they sent out, but we have not seen results. Discussing these results will likely be necessary for future AAAC work.**

Summary Topic 4 – Facilitate faculty feedback on winter, summer and future planning while encouraging early decision-making.

The question of COVID management and university opening was a topic of several meetings with the Provost. There was concern until the COVID task force was formed that the process of

decision making was not clear. There has been concern that the faculty preferences were not considered initially, and that each school used different parameters to make decisions and not all engaged faculty equally. We were also asked feedback on vaccine policies.

Summary Topic 5 – Understand the process for review and response to faculty evaluations of administrators, feedback on policies, and feedback on areas of budget priority. Identify best practices for faculty to help facilitate the process so that feedback and evaluation is most effective and constructive

This work overlapped with the tasks of COAA and the chair John Pasquale was able to help us communicate the work of his committee with the Provost. We as a committee had several discussions about the reappointment of deans without evaluation or without feedback from faculty. While there is a process of feedback and evaluation from faculty senate assembly (AEC) that only goes to the leader being evaluated and not the supervising leadership and 360 evaluations were not clearly objective but are the only evaluations from the Provost's office. **This is a topic that will require further follow-up by AAAC or COAA next year as the process needs more transparency.**

While unrelated to our current AAAC charge our committee did discuss the Anti-Racism efforts and cluster hire planned and provided feedback to first strengthen the current community of faculty/units that do this research so that on-boarding of new faculty will be welcoming them to a community that already exists.

We did not address the following issues from prior years that would be relevant to consider discussing in the future including:

Topic 1: Repercussions of faculty-student relationships/felonies (SPG 601.22 and 601.38)

Topic 2: Faculty salary disparities by gender and race – As seen in prior AAAC summaries this has moved off of AAAC to CESFW but it is important that it is discussed with the Provost especially in the current environment.

Topic 3: Sanctions for faculty (Prof John Cheney-Lippold) who retracted an offer to write a letter of recommendation for a student (protection or threat of 5.09 (tenure dismissal)). Overly broad interpretation of SPG 201.96 (professional conduct)

Broader issues:

Issues about committee function were identified last year so we revised the format:

1. Agenda items currently are sent to the Christine Gerdes and the Provost who provide comments and other topics for discussion but this year it was difficult to truly keep to the agenda/charge. We were able in our AAAC members only meetings to further discuss these issues and consider which guests could help drive our understanding of the issues.
2. Slides, documents, and questions were sent in advance for AAAC to review and I think that this worked best.

3. We encouraged guests to have questions for the group rather than giving presentations allowing for more discussion.

While this improved discussions, going forward it would be beneficial if we received feedback from the Provost's office about if this information and discussion was beneficial and how it might have influenced decisions.