

Faculty Council Agenda October 9, 1998
Faculty Grievance Committee
Annual Report

Members: John Rubin (1997-99) Chair; Joan Brannon (1998-1999); Jean S. DeSaix (1997-2000); Roberta A. Dunbar (1998-2001); Vanessa Hodges (1997-2000); Ernest Kraybill (1997-2000); Megan M. Matchinske (1996-99); Cynthia M. Powell (1998-2001); John H. Schopler (1998-2001); Dorothy Verkerk (1997-2000).

Members leaving committee during the past year: Evelyne Huber, Outgoing Chair; Frayda Bluestein (1997-98); Reginald F. Hildebrand (1995-98); Erika C. Lindemann (1995-98).

Meetings during past year: 9-25-97; 1-19-98; 4-29-98.

Report prepared by: John Rubin (Chair) and Evelyne Huber (Outgoing Chair).

Committee charge: "The Committee is authorized to hear, mediate, and advise with respect to the adjustment of grievances of all persons designated as members of the Faculty." (The Faculty Code of University Government)

Previous Faculty Council questions or charges: None

Report of activities

In the 1997-98 academic year, the previous chair, Evelyne Huber, followed up on one inquiry about a possible grievance that was made at the very end of the 1996-97 academic year. In addition, she received three new inquiries about possible initiation of a faculty grievance; a further inquiry came from a person with whom she was acquainted and thus was directed to Erika Lindemann as Acting Chair. Two of the five filed formal grievances. Subcommittees composed of three members were put in charge. One grievance was withdrawn at the pre-hearing meeting. A formal hearing was held on the other grievance. A report with recommendations concerning this grievance was presented to the full Committee, which adopted the report. The report was transmitted to the relevant parties and school/department authorities. The recommendations were accepted by the relevant parties.

The Committee went through an introductory mediation training provided by the Orange County Dispute Settlement Center. The members were sufficiently impressed that they decided to follow up on this experience and study the possibility of introducing a mediation process for faculty. Dick Hatfield, Director of Employee Relations at UNC Hospitals, came to talk to us about the mediation option offered by the Office of Human Resources at the hospitals. Subsequently, the Committee decided to bring the following recommendation to the Faculty Council.

Recommendations for Action by Faculty Council

Study the possibility of introducing mediation by trained mediators into the conflict resolution process regarding issues currently handled by the Faculty Grievance Committee. The reasons for this are multiple; one of the most important is that the committee felt that often conflicts are simmering for too long, and when they come to grievance, positions are hardened. Mediation at an earlier stage might go a long way toward smoothing many work relationships and reducing the need for grievance processes.