

MSCF Minute



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FAMA

by Kevin Lindstrom, MSCF President

Have you heard of the Faculty Assignment Management Automation (FAMA) project? If not, you likely will soon. FAMA is a system office effort to integrate and automate faculty assignment data. It will, for lack of a better descriptor, be an electronic load sheet that is used consistently throughout the system.

Those of you who have worked with faculty workload data over the years know that we have been calling for something along these lines for many years now. The lack of information, lack of consistency, and lack of contract compliance in current and past faculty workload accounting practices have long been issues of great concern. While some colleges have clearly been making good faith efforts and achieving satisfactory results, others have often appeared to be making it up as they go when it comes to accounting for faculty workload.

There have been several times over the years when our faculty rights committee has left a campus contract compliance visit with a long list of potential contract

violations. Sometimes that list was a function of simply not being provided with the data necessary to confirm contract compliance. When we requested the data, we often found that it didn't exist. We communicated our concerns and thoughts to the system office and they responded with FAMA.

So, the problem is solved, right? Yes and no. On the upside, FAMA is going to provide structure, consistency, and clarity. In a technical sense, the demonstrations we've seen indicate that the system IT folks have built quite a mechanism. It seems to do everything we've asked for. I get the impression that if we were to identify something that is missing, they could build it in fairly quickly and easily.

So, what are the problems? I would suggest there are two major categories of problems. Both have to do with the information input into FAMA. First, FAMA is built on the system office interpretation of contract terms. As you know, there are instances where we disagree with the system regarding contract language

meaning and intent. One need look no further than the recent summer workload arbitration for evidence of my claim. If FAMA were built on the system office interpretation of summer workload calculation, it would be built incorrectly. It might be equally incorrect on a number of other workload measures recently arbitrated.

The second category of potential problems arises out of the fact that the sole data source for FAMA is ISRS. My experience tells me that ISRS is a less than reliable source of accurate data for faculty workload. To test my contention I encourage you to take a look at your college's master schedule in ISRS and decide if the information in it is precisely accurate. If it's not, you're going to have some problems.

As issues with the implementation of FAMA arise, it is critically important that you turn to your local grievance representative and the MSCF field staff for assistance. It's also critically important that we not concede contractual ground in this process. Just because the

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information comes out of a slick computer program doesn't make it right. As the old adage goes, "crap in, crap out."

Delegate Assembly Reminders

The Delegate Assembly is next week! Delegates, please make sure you are reviewing the DA documents posted online before the assembly next week. For those who chose to Go Green this year, do not forget to bring your electronic devices.

Plan on attending one of the hospitalities. It is a great place to network and share campus successes, challenges and common issues.

