

UW Law School CASI Board
Annual Report of the Chair
2019-2020

Overview of CASI

The Committee on Academic Staff Issues (CASI) Board is a body of nine elected members (three clinicians & six members from other academic staff areas) that represents academic staff across the Law School. Academic Staff Document #210, approved January 12, 1998, is the source document for all campus CASIs. *See:*

<https://kb.wisc.edu/images/group171/33990/210CASIFormation.pdf>

The Law School CASI is also governed by its own Bylaws:

<https://law.wisc.edu/casi/bylaws.html>

Under these governing documents, CASI's responsibilities include (at least):

1. Formulating and reviewing Law School policies and procedures concerning academic staff members, as appropriate.
2. Representing academic staff members in the development of all Law School policies and procedures concerning academic staff members.
3. Providing advice to the Dean on Law School program decisions likely to affect promotional opportunities or lead to nonrenewal or layoff of academic staff members.
4. Developing opportunities for academic staff members to participate in department, Law School, and University governance.
5. Developing opportunities for recognition of academic staff member contributions to the excellence of the Law School.

CASI also supports education, networking, and recognition for academic staff.

The CASI Board term extends from September 1 through August 31, roughly the academic year plus the summer following it.

CASI Board Members

Board members during 2018-2019 were: Emma Babler, Malinda Constant (until December 2019), Vicky Coulter (beginning January 2020, to complete Hu's unexpired term), Ben Heidke, Wenjie Hu (until January 2020), Erin McBride, Sarah Orr, Kim Peterson, Kira Stewart (beginning December 2020, to complete Constant's unexpired term), Trina Tinglum, and Gretchen Viney (chair). Associate Dean Bethany Pluymers served as a non-voting member *ex officio* according to the CASI by-laws and also filled the separate role as the Dean's designee. Associate Dean Ursula Weigold also attended CASI meetings.

As noted above, two Board members (Constant and Hu) resigned from the Board this year. The Board followed the process outlined in the bylaws for filling each vacancy. Dean Raymond appointed Stewart and Coulter to fill the unexpired terms.

CASI Meetings 2019-2020

In recent history, the CASI Board met (mostly) every-other-month. This year the CASI Board met more frequently: September 20, 2019; November 1, 2019; December 11, 2019; January 17, 2020; March 6, 2020; May 1, 2019; June 5, 2020; August 7, 2020. The meetings in May, June, and August were conducted remotely, via the Teams platform. Each meeting was appropriately noticed to members of the academic

staff and to the campus office of the secretary of the academic staff. Approved minutes of all meetings are posted to the CASI website.

Priorities & Projects in 2019-2020

The CASI Board determined early in the year that it would prioritize its responsibility to be a policy-advising group. It also prioritized diversity and inclusion.

Board member Erin McBride organized and presented a program (September 26, 2019) detailing “Employee Perks on Campus for UW Employees.” This program, an updated version of the successful April 2019 program, attracted more than 55 participants and included an excellent taco bar lunch. The PowerPoint presentation from this program is posted to the CASI web page. Also posted there is the campus-wide Benefits 101 PowerPoint, which includes additional resources focused on HR benefits.

The Board, under the leadership of Gretchen Viney and with input from interested academic staff members, drafted and presented to administration recommendations for revision and increased transparency of those aspects of the parking system under the control of the Law School. The building-wide meeting to discuss the parking policy, originally scheduled in Spring 2020, was canceled when the building was closed due to the pandemic.

Specific efforts and initiatives in the area of diversity and inclusion are included under the reports of standing subcommittees, below.

Jake Smith, newly-appointed Secretary of the Academic Staff, was our guest speaker at the June 5, 2020 meeting. Smith discussed the supports that continue to be available to CASI and provided an overview of the CASI network campus-wide. Smith encouraged CASI to continue to work toward becoming a policy-advising voice for academic staff at the law school.

Board member Kim Peterson served as a member of the Dean Search Committee. Board member Sarah Orr served on the Clinical Hiring & Promotions Committee.

Standing Subcommittees & Projects

CASI has four standing subcommittees: 1) Recognition and Retention; 2) Website, Communications & Outreach; 3) Elections & Membership; 4) Diversity & Inclusion [created in 2018].

1) Recognition & Retention [Tinglum, Peterson, Orr]

This committee gathered information about all awards and grants available to academic staff and created a user-friendly resource for accessing this information on the CASI web site:

<https://law.wisc.edu/casi/awards.html>

The committee continues to consider how to encourage academic staff to apply for these grants and awards.

2) Website, Communications & Outreach [Heidke]

Board member Ben Heidke, a one-person committee, kept our web site up-to-date, posting minutes from each meeting and updating all CASI on-line resources. He also worked with IT to update the website to increase accessibility. He posted handouts and other resources available to law faculty and staff after CASI presentations.

3) Elections & Membership [Tinglum]

CASI was scheduled to have an election in Spring 2020, but the pandemic wreaked havoc with standard procedures in the law school. The tech department had its hands full keeping up with supporting faculty and staff in moving instruction and support services online after spring break. This seemed like a particularly terrible time to ask the tech department to run an election unless the election would be contested. The positions of Board members Coulter, Heidke, and Orr were set to expire in August 2020. All three were eligible for reelection and all three indicated they wished to run for reelection. Viney, via email, reached out to all members of the academic staff to determine if anyone else wished to run for the Board. When the deadline for response came and went with no expressions of interest, Viney declared that the election was therefore uncontested and the three Board members would be reelected without an actual ballot. The Board and Administration believed this process met the spirit of the bylaws and was acceptable under the circumstances. (As a side note, no one threatened to impeach Viney for overreaching.)

4) Diversity & Inclusion [McBride]

The Diversity & Inclusion Subcommittee was created to address diversity and climate issues highlighted in the 2018 Report & Recommendations from the Strategic Plan Task Force on Diversity & Inclusion. The need to address the current climate and tone in the law school, as perceived by academic staff, stood out as a main CASI priority area for the 2019-2020 academic year.

As a first step, Board Member Erin McBride brought in UW HIB trainers (March 10, 2020) to aid in that climate assessment, starting with a training on Preventing Hostile and Intimidating Behaviors in the Workplace. This workshop was designed to help university employees identify hostile and intimidating behavior when it happens, understand how to create conditions that prevent it, know the policies in place to address it, and become familiar with the resources on campus that can help. In a 90-minute case-based workshop, participants worked with one another to understand what their responsibilities are when they hear about or experience incidents of hostile and intimidating behavior. More than 40 members of the Law School community participated in the training (and completed a follow up assessment) and enjoyed a catered lunch. This was the last in-person program conducted in the law building before closing due to the pandemic.

As a second step, CASI hopes to devise 1.) means for ensuring Academic Staff feel able to speak freely and 2.) means for ensuring Academic Staff's comments and concerns are used, not just heard. The subcommittee continues to explore potential programs that are available campus-wide to aid in this priority area.

Other Projects, Issues & Interests in 2019-2020

Tuition Reimbursement Program. The Ad Hoc Subcommittee on Tuition Reimbursement [Peterson], and the Board as a whole, continues to monitor the progress, or lack thereof, of the proposed tuition reimbursement program that CASI developed and officially proposed two years ago. The program was included in the benefits survey conducted by the university in spring 2019, the results of which (still) have not been released. The information is months overdue with no word about when, or if, reports will be forthcoming. This project may be another casualty of the pandemic because staff resources are stretched so thin.

Clinical Teacher of the Year Guidelines. Viney appointed an ad hoc committee, chaired by Orr, to study and potentially make suggestions to clarify and improve the process and criteria for the Clinical Teacher of the Year Award. The committee's work was interrupted when all involved in the process were affected

by the pressures of turning the law school into an online community in spring 2020. The committee will resume its work in 2020-2021.

Representing Academic Staff. Last year, CASI determined that law school academic staff are spread over not fewer than eleven separate districts on campus. With law school academic staff so widely dispersed in campus representation, the Law School CASI is uniquely positioned as a potential unifying voice for academic staff in the building.

CASI Focus. The CASI Board is in ongoing discussion to become more active in law school policy matters in accord with the bylaws [*see Overview of CASI, above*]. We continue to grow into this role and look forward to working with Dean Tokaji and other members of administration.

On a personal note, I want to say that I am proud of the way the CASI Board has stuck together through the Covid-19 pandemic of 2020. Once we were able to regroup, remotely, in May, we have been meeting regularly and doing the best we can to continue to represent the academic staff. This is a dedicated and resilient group and I'm honored to be part of it.

Respectfully submitted,

Gretchen Viney
Chair [2019-2020]