

Minutes Part II*

Faculty Consultative Committee
Thursday, September 3, 2009
1:00 – 3:00
238A Morrill Hall

Present: Marti Hope Gonzales (chair), Melissa Anderson, Nancy Carpenter, Carol Chomsky, Shawn Curley, Kathryn Hanna, Caroline Hayes, Emily Hoover, Brian Isetts, Walt Jacobs, Jeff Kahn, Russell Luepker, Jan McCulloch, Michael Oakes, Kate VandenBosch, Becky Yust

Absent: Chris Cramer, Janet Fitzakerley, Martin Sampson, Cathrine Wambach

Guests: Vice Provost Billie Wahlstrom (Academic Affairs); Twin Cities Athletic Director Joel Maturi

Other: none

[In these minutes (Part II): (2) distance/e-education; (3) discussion with Twin Cities Athletic Director Joel Maturi]

2. Distance/E-Education

Professor Gonzales welcomed Vice Provost (for Distance Education) Billie Wahlstrom to the meeting to discuss e-education.

Dr. Wahlstrom began by saying that exciting things are happening, in part because they have to and in part because they are fun. E-education can enhance student learning as well as help rejuvenate faculty who have been using the same teaching techniques for years. She recalled that she taught the second online graduate course at the University, in 1997, and had to learn how to do everything. Now technology has caught up.

Dr. Wahlstrom said she believes distance education is part of the University's future as a major research university. 48% of incoming students have taken an online class, and if the University does not offer such courses, they will be provided elsewhere and the University will be left with the more expensive parts of education.

She has been asked to create a system-wide system, Dr. Wahlstrom said, which is a daunting task. There was never a catalogue of online and hybrid courses; there is now, although she does not believe it includes all such courses because some departments hide them. There are about 1400 distance-education courses, or about 9% of the total courses offered by the University. One can look up a course but cannot determine if it is offered this semester because the schedule and the catalogue do not work together.

* These minutes reflect discussion and debate at a meeting of a committee of the University of Minnesota Senate; none of the comments, conclusions, or actions reported in these minutes represents the views of, nor are they binding on, the Senate, the Administration, or the Board of Regents.

About 33,000 students took online or hybrid courses last year, which generated about \$20 million in tuition revenue. Up to now, there has been no central support for faculty to develop online courses, but she has been charged with evaluating the need and would like the faculty governance system to look at what the University has. There are oddities in the distribution of online courses; there are a lot of composition courses but no biology or microbiology courses. There is a lack of key required courses in some fields, so the University must send those students elsewhere—or the students must come to campus to take a course. Major questions that need to be addressed include (1) How can the University provide incentives for faculty to offer needed courses on line? and (2) How should such activity be counted in promotion and tenure decisions?

The University has not taken the Illinois approach of a global campus that is a for-profit organization, which crashed when the faculty revolted. Those are not the orders she has, Dr. Wahlstrom said; she is charged to make sense of things in online education.

Another oddity, Dr. Wahlstrom said, is that a student can complete liberal education requirements at a community college and come to the Twin Cities campus—but one cannot complete liberal education requirements at the Morris campus and transfer to the Twin Cities, because there is a financial incentive not to let students go back and forth. Does the Council on Liberal Education need to look at this issue?

Professor Chomsky said that two issues come up when the Committee discusses e-education. First is the need for it; is it to be offered because students want it? How does approval fit in? The incentives do not address the question of whether offering a course online is the RIGHT way to deliver it. There needs to be faculty participation in the decision about whether online delivery is appropriate. Second, the University can make money from online courses, but how do they intersect with the demands on faculty time? Online courses take more time; how can they be offered without adding to the burden of faculty work?

Dr. Wahlstrom agreed that online courses take more time—and that the added effort needs to be reflected in the promotion-and-tenure process. There are no incentives in place for the faculty right now. This is a faculty governance issue, she maintained. Microbiology is a good example; there are five Academic Health Center programs with overlapping course requirements and prerequisites that are not online so students can only take them at MNSCU. The University has no control over the content of MNSCU courses. She works with departments to identify the critical courses needed online, and it may be that microbiology should not be taught online—that is for the faculty to decide.

The University has joined Quality Matters, "a faculty-centered, peer review process designed to certify the quality of online courses and online components" (<http://www.qualitymatters.org/>). Only faculty who have taught online or hybrid courses may be reviewers for Quality Matters. Professor Oakes asked if there is a potential problem if faculty who have offered online courses are the only ones who review online courses? The courses are stellar, Dr. Wahlstrom responded. Professor Oakes said he would be less inclined to say that a course must be taught online. Dr. Wahlstrom said she did not disagree but pointed out that microbiology is taught online elsewhere and she would like the University's faculty to look at what is being offered.

Professor VandenBosch noted that a number of courses have laboratory components; could those be hybrid courses? Dr. Wahlstrom said there have been outside reviews of the Physical Therapy program, in which students only need to be on campus for nine days per semester, with the rest of their work done

online. There is a lot of interest in the online program, but students must be on campus for their labs. Some programs allow supervised labs in the community, although not Twin Cities programs. There is also "lab in a box," something one can do at home, but she has questions about it, Dr. Wahlstrom said; one can log in and use the machines to obtain data, but the University does not permit them. Students must work with local preceptors or come to campus for lab work.

The activities of her office are not driven entirely by students or by tuition revenue—because e-education is something the University is already engaged in. There are about 20 policies, however, that create problems for e-education, Dr. Wahlstrom said, that need review.

Her office has three major initiatives, Dr. Wahlstrom reported. One is the Learning Platform, which is "the University's strategy to integrate many independent applications into a unified system to support education" that "eliminates the need for faculty, staff, and students to use a variety of software applications that require visits to many different Web sites and multiple log-ins [and] content can be personalized to the user." First-year students have been using it to talk to each other since last April. The libraries have matched for students the resources needed for every first-year class. The School of Public Health has done, which is to let every faculty member create a Moodle shell (which they are not obligated to use or teach with), but they are available to students anywhere in the world and the faculty can drop an item into the Moodle shell for a course and it will automatically go to all students in the class. Faculty can use Vista for the same purpose, but Moodle is easier to use. Faculty can put in the syllabus, quizzes, information, something from NPR, etc. And at a time when up to 70% of students could be out of class at some point during the semester because of H1N1 flu, this is one way to allow a course to move ahead and to make information available to students.

Professor Chomsky said she saw two issues to be addressed. One is policy matters, which is what the Committee deals with. Two is getting information out; the Committee is part of the governance system, not the communication system. The question is how effectively to spread the information. The handouts Dr. Wahlstrom provided look exciting and interesting but the hurdle is getting people to actually USE the technology that is available. Are there plans for getting over that hurdle so that faculty can see the technology in use? One can say they are easy to use, but learning them takes time. If she were in charge, Dr. Wahlstrom commented, she would create a Moodle shell for every course being taught at the University. But faculty sometimes do not want it because students will click on it and there will be nothing there and the faculty look bad. Her office has been directed not to provide the Moodle shell, but perhaps it is time for the governance system to look at that option and give her advice. She does have an agreement with Associate Vice President/CIO Ann Hill Duin and Assistant Vice President Barbara Brandt that there will be Moodle shell for every course offered in the Academic Health Center.

That is an operational question, not a policy question, Professor Chomsky opined. There should be a group of faculty to address the questions she has raised, Professor Chomsky suggested, but that is not something this Committee focuses on.

Professor Kahn related that he had had experience last spring with a cross-college ethics course—and there were a number of glitches, both pedagogical and technological. If her office is going to roll out technology support, they need to be ready. In this case, the technology was not ready. If she proposes to provide a Moodle or Vista shell for every course, but has no technical support for the project, it will go down in flames. That is the lesson they learned with their course. This Committee can make it clear to the administration that there must be resources to provide technical support if the technology is to be

made available on a widespread basis. Dr. Wahlstrom agreed. She said she hopes that as a result of this discussion to have a small group of faculty to consult with on policy questions. For example, for PSEO math courses there are five different policies (one each of the five campuses), so students have to apply in five different ways. Faculty need to provide insight on what they want to see, because it is not fair to students to set up these kinds of barriers.

Professor Curley reported that many of these tools are already available to and used by Carlson School of Management, and he said he is not worried about student absences because of H1N1 flu. He is more worried about HIS absence. What tools are available to deal with faculty/instructor absences? They have a number of tools that can provide any level of interaction the faculty member wishes, Dr. Wahlstrom said. Faculty need to know what is available; she is going to talk to the Humphrey Institute faculty about how to pool resources so that faculty can cover classes.

Professor Hoover commented, apropos accepting online and PSEO courses, that there are also problems with AP courses. These seem to be solvable problems. She also agreed that transfer courses are a faculty issue. When the University talks about more students graduating in four years, Dr. Wahlstrom said, the point is about raising the level of the University's profile, not about the possible loss of student aid for students who take longer, etc., and she expressed doubt that the talk is always about the best interest of the students. This is said to be a faculty issue, Professor Hoover responded, but she has never known of a faculty discussion of it. She said she is not sure where the problem is.

Professor Hoover went on to comment that while faculty of her generation see online courses as more work, younger faculty do not see them as such a burden. She said she is amazed at how fast junior faculty can assemble an online course; as current faculty retire, the question of the time required may be less of an issue. Dr. Wahlstrom agreed that almost all new faculty have either taught or taken an online course.

Professor Hoover said one question is to whom a faculty member may give email addresses. If a student has said he/she cannot come to class, can she give the student's email address to a vetted student organization? To a Facebook page?

Professor McCulloch agreed that online courses will probably not be an issue for younger faculty. What she finds frustrating, she said, is that when one calls for assistance, one receives a telephone message and must wait a long time. Can they be reassured that if the resources are available, the frustration level will be reduced? Dr. Wahlstrom observed that she is not in charge of the Office of Information Technology; she reports to the Provost. If there is trouble, faculty should send her a message and the Provost's office will try to help.

Professor Chomsky said the separation of technology and instructional support is a problem. They have a lot of in-house support in the Law School, which costs money, but they can call and someone in the office will respond quickly. How would faculty know to call her, she asked Dr. Wahlstrom. Dr. Wahlstrom pointed out that 60% of the learning technology is in the academic units, and she can't fix those problems. If the central service cannot respond quickly, that is a problem, Professor Chomsky said. And if the resources to provide support are not available, Professor McCulloch added, some faculty will simply quit trying to use the technology (although probably not the younger faculty). When there is a problem it is immediate and that's when the help is needed, Professor Kahn said; or when one does not know where the problem is, Professor Hoover added.

They have created the Minnesota Learning Commons, Dr. Wahlstrom said that can highlight programs and make resources available to hundreds of people. They can protect intellectual property, if there is other material one wants to make available. They want to be part of the international community. There is a studio available in Morrill Hall that she will help people with, and one can put something on iTunes.

Professor Gonzales thanked Dr. Wahlstrom for her presentation and observed that the Committee has a lot to think about.

3. Discussion with Twin Cities Athletic Director Joel Maturi

Professor Gonzales next welcomed Athletic Director Joel Maturi to the meeting to provide a report on the intercollegiate athletics program.

Mr. Maturi thanked the Committee for the opportunity to join it and said he believes there are more things in common than there are differences between the athletic and academic programs of the University. He went on to explain what he has tried to accomplish during his seven years at the University, noting that Minnesota is his home and taking this job was coming back home.

He came to the campus in August 2002, on the heels of the largest athletic-academic scandal in the institution's history. He was faced with the need to merge the men's and women's athletic departments, to eliminate three sports because of budget pressures, and a prediction that by 2009 the athletic department would face a \$31-million deficit. There were financial challenges, facilities issues, and the merger.

Many point to the new football stadium as the major success of the program. He does not, he said; he points to the merger of the two athletic departments. Many may not remember that the campus had two athletic departments, and it is a mark of the success of the merger that they do not. There was fear on the part of many that attention and money would be drawn from the women's programs to the men's, and vice-versa, but none of that turned out to be the case.

Mr. Maturi said he was also glad that the department is not \$31 million in debt. They are not able to set aside money in reserves but a number of factors have come together to keep the department operating in the black. The new Big Ten Network and corporate sponsorships have helped. So has being a "Nike school," which Mr. Maturi agreed is controversial in some quarters but the relationship has produced both equipment and money that total in the millions of dollars over the life of the contract. They saved the three sports that had been slated for elimination, and so have kept 25 sports in the program. He said he believes that athletics are an extension of the University—if it were a business, there would be only three sports (football, men's basketball, and men's hockey), because they are the only ones that generate a "profit." But athletics is not a business; it was established at universities to help attract students and provide opportunities and entertainment. Unfortunately, athletics is becoming a business more and more, and he commented that this is not why he got into intercollegiate athletics.

The budget of the department is \$74 million, of which \$4 million comes from O&M funds (down from \$8 million a few years ago) [money that the University received from the legislature to support women's athletics and which it agreed to continue to provide to athletics in return for the legislature

agreeing to fold it into the University's general appropriation]. The graduation rates for athletes is improving, although in federal government rankings, both the University and its athletic department are at or near the bottom of the Big Ten, something he is not proud of, Mr. Maturi said. But they are moving in the right direction; since 2002, 63% of students have graduated and 71% of athletes have done so.

There are also social issues of which he is not proud, Mr. Maturi told the Committee, and he asked for patience because the department is addressing them. He commented that he had served 20 years as a high-school coach, 19 of them at a Catholic high school. One time he was told by one of the sisters that one of his football players was disrupting a class; he told her that he didn't say to her that one of her math students made mistakes and lost a football game. When athletes mess up, it is not usually because they are athletes, it is for other reasons, and in some cases it may be that they should not have been recruited. He said he puts on his educator's hat when he says believes kids should be given second chances. The average GPA for the 750 athletes is 3.11, but the range is 1.0 to 4.0 and it is the 1.0 students who receive the attention. Of those who stay and play for four years, 92% graduate.

The athletic department developed a new mission and value statement at the time the two departments were merged, Mr. Maturi related.

To serve as a window to the University, in an environment of integrity and equity, that enables student-athletes to achieve excellence in their academic and athletic pursuits.

"To serve as a window to the University": That need not be a negative window, Mr. Maturi pointed out, although it often seems like there is a fight over something (coaching salaries, etc.). But many groups do not know the University had a Nobel Prize winner or his name. Few know that, but many know of the men's basketball program and can name the coach. He said he believes to his core that is wrong—but he can't change it and the Committee can't change it because it's the culture. (He noted that men's basketball coach Tubby Smith has a \$1.8-million guaranteed salary, which places him fourth in the Big Ten, and he took a cut of \$300,000 to come to Minnesota. Those numbers are insane, Mr. Maturi said, and they should stop, but he said he didn't know if it is possible to do so.)

Professor Jacobs inquired if there are guidelines on how he makes decisions, such as construction of a basketball practice facility. Mr. Maturi said the facility must be constructed if the University is to retain Coach Smith—someone who can go anywhere, who is a great person—and every dollar for it will be raised from private sources. Coach Smith can probably raise the money more easily than he can, Mr. Maturi commented. There are no written guidelines for those kinds of decisions. As for salaries, the department pays what the market demands, so the basketball coach makes more than the tennis coach.

Mr. Maturi continued with a recitation of the mission: "in an environment of integrity and equity": there have been rules violations in the program, something they are not proud of, but they do not only pay lip service to the goal of integrity. His message to coaches is simple: If they are involved in any major violation, whether they knew about it or not, they are gone; if they are intentionally involved in secondary violations, they are gone. He has dismissed one coach as a result of these precepts. Everyone breaks the rules because the rulebook is 300 pages long, but the University reports every single violation (many institutions do not).

Professor Oakes said he supports the mission of athletics. He asked Mr. Maturi how he thinks about the balance between athletic demands on a student and his or her academic requirements. That is a

tough balance. A great majority of student-athletes can handle the demands, Mr. Maturi said, although it is not easy. Academically-disadvantaged students, many of whom are in men's basketball and football, concern him the most. The department spends over \$1 million per year on academic support, and much of the effort is devoted to about 50 academically-fragile student-athletes. He said he believes that if those student-athletes are admitted to the University, and hold up their end of the bargain, they will graduate. There is graduating and there is learning, Professor Oakes said; student-athletes have so many demands on them. Do they learn? If a student-athlete thinks learning is important, he or she will learn, Mr. Maturi said. Some believe they will play professional sports and do not take their studies seriously. But not many athletes flunk out if they work hard on their academic pursuits. He added that he has a child with disabilities, and has helped students with disabilities as a teacher, coach, and administrator, and believes they are disadvantaged, not dumb, and they need to be understood. The institution has to help them identify how to learn and the key is to motivate them to get their degrees—and to not let them fail. They do all they can to not allow students to fail—but if the student does not follow the rules, he or she will not play.

Professor Curley alluded to the possible new basketball practice facility. He recalled that President Bruininks told donors to the new football stadium that he wanted a parallel donation for academic programs. Will that be part of the program for the new basketball facility? Mr. Maturi said he did not know if that would be the general approach to facilities fund-raising. The President raised \$75 million for academic purposes through stadium fund-raising, but those funds came primarily from large donors. The basketball facility will be much smaller, in terms of cost, but he said they can try to include academic components if possible—because anything that supports the academic mission helps intercollegiate athletics, he said.

Mr. Maturi returned to the final phrase of the mission statement: "that enables student-athletes to achieve excellence in their academic and athletic pursuits." The department is there for the student-athletes, Mr. Maturi said, and while they sometimes do not do what the department wants them to, the department is there so they can succeed. He said he emphasizes this point at the full department meetings that take place three times per year.

Mr. Maturi said the TCF stadium has been a wonderful journey. The marching band has a new home, there will be classes offered, Recreational Sports will be able to use it, and there will be a multitude of other uses as well (meetings, wedding receptions, career fairs, and Olympic soccer in 2016 if the games are awarded to Chicago). He noted that in 27 years in the Metrodome, the football team was never first or second in the Big Ten, was third once. Of 337 Division I teams in the NCAA, this athletic program is the 14th-most successful—the teams achieve, but not the football team (yet). He said he hopes the new stadium will provide an opportunity to change the way the department does things, and not only in football.

Mr. Maturi noted that the budget of the athletic department is \$74 million. The budget of the Ohio State athletic department is \$120 million. The two schools play in the same conference.

As for events in the stadium, starting with the opening game, he expects everyone from the ticket-takers to everyone else to welcome people to the stadium, help them find their seats, have friendlier concessions staff, and so on. He said he believes that if they do things right, the chances for improving are increased. He said he wanted the Committee to be proud of the athletic department and that it can help the University achieve its academic goals—because the better the institution does academically, the

better the athletic department will do. He concluded by repeating that he remains excited to be a part of the University of Minnesota.

Professor Gonzales thanked Mr. Maturi for joining the meeting and adjourned it at 3:20.

-- Gary Engstrand

University of Minnesota