

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

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Barbara Brandt, Ph.D.
Assistant Vice President for Education
Academic Health Center
Mayo Mail Code 501

Dear Barbara:

The Academic Health Center Educational Leadership Forum met August 24 to discuss the next year's agenda of important issues.

We understand that you will have issues of your own to add to the list, but we thought it might be helpful to do a little "prep work" in advance of your arrival.

We have not prioritized the issues below and recognize we will need to do that together with you. In any case, we hope it will be helpful to get everything out on the table and proceed from there. So here goes:

1. Pre-professional advising for the health professions

A void was created with the loss of pre-professional advising in the College of Liberal Arts. We believe rebuilding some kinds of connections with "feeder" undergraduate programs needs to be explored. The opening of the new College of Biological Sciences building in the AHC complex (and the presence of some several thousand undergraduates) should provide us an opportunity to re-think pre-professional advising to increase the number of our professional students.

2. Recruitment of minority students

This has always been problematic at Minnesota, and the situation has been made somewhat more difficult with the closing of the AHC's minority student office due to lack of funding. We continue to believe that recruiting minority students to all AHC schools is a priority, but how to do this needs to be revisited and re-built. "Grow Your Own" approaches and early admissions may be part of the strategy to consider.

3. Planning for the arrival of CBS on campus

The College of Biological Sciences building in the AHC complex is scheduled to open in winter 2002. We need to do some planning about the effects of this on AHC facilities. Specifically, how will the presence of several thousand additional students affect the facility overall, including the library, bookstore, study space, restaurants, and so on. Along these lines, you are probably aware of our efforts to promote an educational center for health sciences students. Although the AHC and Central Administration have been receptive to this proposal, much remains to be done to make it a reality. This



includes remodeling plans for the Biomedical Library, the development of an AHC reception area, remodeling of Mayo Auditorium, and more. We recognize the timeline is short here.

4. Classroom assignment and maintenance

This is a continuing troubling problem for us. We especially lack classrooms in the 50-70 capacity range. As the Fall Semester arrives next week, we continue to have too many classes as yet without assigned rooms. In some cases, we are looking for classroom space across the river (West Bank), a terrible burden for our students. A couple of years ago, the AHC conducted a classroom inventory. This may need to be updated, but should provide a basis for at least estimating what we have available. Along these same lines, students and faculty continue to complain about the quality of many classrooms and the lack of up-to-date computer projection equipment and other necessities.

5. Technology-enhanced learning

TEL is also a continuing priority. A report was produced last year containing some useful proposals for building an infrastructure to promote TEL, but it has yet to be acted on. This is an area in which we can't afford to drop behind. Student expectations are high here both in instruction and in library resources. We think it's important to develop an operational plan to move forward. The AHC report has a number of elements in it that might get us going if there are resources we can tap into.

6. Educational grant program -

As you know, the AHC has sought to stimulate educational innovation through an internal competitive educational grant program. Whether this program should continue in its present form or evolve in some new direction is an issue for discussion.

7. Professional and Graduate Deans Council

This organization is about 6 months old and was established by Central Administration to address some of the needs of professional and graduate schools (through joint sponsorship of Graduate School Dean Chris Maziar and Associate Vice President Robert Kvavik). To date, the Council has focused on "Enterprise System" (PeopleSoft) issues, but its full range of potential influence has yet to emerge. Several members of the AHC Educational Leadership Forum also sit on the Council. We wonder if this would be a good connection for you, too, and would like to discuss whether you should be a member. The group has considerable but as yet unrealized potential to direct policy in a number of important areas.

8. Rural program connections


How we address issues of educating health professionals for service in rural areas is also a continuing concern, especially in light of rural shortages of health professionals across the board, and the lack of financial support from the state and federal government. In this connection, there are also serious concerns about who pays for training and mentoring which presents some tough policy issues.

9. Interdisciplinary training in non-medical sites

This is also an issue for us which we hope you can help crystallize. What is needed is an operational plan to move forward.

We realize this is more than a full plate of issues and priorities. They will not all be solved or even addressed during the next year. But as you get your bearings, we would be delighted to discuss priorities with you. Please be assured of our support and assistance as we get started together.

Sincerely,



John R. Finnegan, Jr., Ph.D.
on behalf of the AHC Educational Leadership Forum