

EQUITY, ACCESS & DIVERSITY
MINUTES OF MEETING

March 21, 2011

Morrill Hall Room 238A

[In these minutes: equity during budget cuts resolution; academic civility resolution; MLK Day resolution; diversity issues and the restructured graduate school]

[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 represent the views of, nor are they binding on, the Senate, the Administration or the Board of Regents.]

PRESENT: Irene Duranczyk (Chair), MJ Gilbert, Susan Cable Morrison, Dorothy Schlesselman, Natalia Tretyakova, Yu Fu, Peg Lonquist, Richard Graff, Michelle Page

REGRETS: Janet Thomas, Lauren Beach, Gregory Sawyer, Keya Ganguly, Michael Goh

ABSENT: Aisha El-Huni, Anne Phibbs, Kimberly Boyd, Linda Bearinger, Patrick Troup, Aaron Pierson

GUESTS: Henning Schroeder , Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate Education, Belinda Cheung, Assistant Vice Provost Graduate Education

Professor Irene Duranczyk called the meeting to order and welcomed those present. The Equity Access & Diversity (EAD) Committee first considered three resolutions: Equity During Budget Cuts, Academic Civility, and MLK Day Events.

Equity During Budget Cuts

Professor Duranczyk state that she presented the Equity During Budget Cuts Resolution to the Senate Consultative Committee (SCC) and the SCC suggested several revisions to the resolution in order for it to proceed to the University Senate. She asked the EAD to consider whether to accept these recommendations. Several committee members expressed concern about changing the language in the first paragraph of the motion from “adopt” to “seriously consider.” The EAD discussed whether it would be better to accept the changes or continue negotiating the language and bring the resolution at a later University Senate meeting. The majority of EAD members voted to adopt the SCC recommended changes to the resolution in order for the resolution to remain on the March 31 University Senate docket.

Academic Civility Resolution

Dawn Zugay, University Senate Office, explained the procedural history of the Academic Civility Resolution. She stated that Professor Duranczyk and Jan Morse, Director of the Office of Student Conflict Resolution, had presented the Academic Civility Resolution to the Senate Committee on Educational Policy (SCEP) and the SCC, and had worked together to revise the resolution in response to comments from these committees. She

also noted that the Social Concerns Committee and the Student Affairs Committee supported the resolution. Professor Duranczyk asked the EAD to vote on the revised resolution. The committee voted in favor of the revised resolution.

MLK Day Events Resolution

Professor Richard Graff noted the revisions to the MLK Day resolution since the committee reviewed it in November. He stated the revisions were made in response to comments from the committee and the Office of Equity and Diversity (OED). The OED reviewed and supported the revised version of the resolution. He also noted the importance of getting other University groups and committees and public/community groups to endorse the resolution. The EAD committee voted to approve the resolution and suggested seeking support from the Social Concerns Committee.

Equity and Diversity in the Restructured Graduate School

Professor Duranczyk introduced Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate Education, Henning Schroeder. She explained that the primary reason EAD had invited him was to learn how equity and diversity issues would be addressed in the restructured graduate school, but it had also recently become aware of graduate student financing issues affecting wages and benefits for graduate students, and hoped Dean Schroeder would also address this topic.

Dean Schroeder stated that when the restructuring of the Graduate School began, Stanford University was cited as a model for a decentralized graduate school system. But when he spoke to his colleagues at Stanford University about the process of decentralizing their graduate school, they stated diversity suffered as a result of the decentralization. He noted that it was one of the reasons Stanford University recreated a Graduate Studies Office with oversight over diversity issues. Dean Schroeder reassured the EAD that although the University of Minnesota is in the process of decentralizing it is taking a pragmatic approach to decentralization. It is carefully evaluating which things should remain under centralized control, and is moving those functions to the colleges that are best handled at a local level.

He went on to explain that the Graduate School is in a period of transition. The staff has decreased, but the old student services functions are still in place, and at the same time these functions are being transitioned to the colleges.

He next noted some concrete measures the graduate school has initiated in relation to diversity.

- A new budget line item was created and approved for FY 12 to provide matching funds for training grant applications to contribute to a diverse science and engineering work force (IGAARD interdisciplinary training grant), and
- A provostal team provides an additional \$50,000 in administrative support to assist with IGAARD applications.

Professor Duranczyk stated that she read the Final Recommendations on Graduate Education (Recommendations) and she was concerned that it only mentions equity and diversity a few times. Dean Schroeder responded that the Crouch Committee, the first

committee that considered restructuring graduate education, discussed diversity in its report and recommended that the Office of Diversity in Graduate Education (ODGE) be moved to the Office of Equity and Diversity (OED). This report discussed the protection and expansion of diversity at the University. Because the Crouch Committee met before the working groups considering the restructured graduate school, these groups did not look specifically at the issue of diversity.

He went on to state that the Dove fellowship funds remain within ODGE, and have not been diminished. But because ODGE is no longer in the Graduate school, Dove Funds are no longer mentioned with regard to the Graduate School. He also noted that the Graduate School continues to communicate with Kris Lockhart, OED Associate Vice President, Louis Mendoza, OED Associate Vice Provost, and Patricia Jones-Whyte, Director of ODGE. He stated there is a great deal of exchange about diversity issues even without the direct lines of reporting that were present when ODGE was part of a centralized Graduate School.

Dean Schroeder next referred to the National Research Council (NRC) Assessment of Research Doctorate Programs and noted one of the metrics it measured was diversity of the student body in graduate programs. He stated he believes that the graduate school will be implementing an economic analytics system to centrally monitor data so that programs can enter data and it will be centrally available. This would be helpful in tracking and benchmarking issues of diversity, and would alleviate waiting for the next NRC study in order to evaluate the University's progress.

Dean Schroeder also noted that he and several graduate students met with President-Designate Eric Kaler and he believes based on these discussions that graduate student diversity is high on President-Designate Kaler's agenda.

Professor Duranczyk noted several places in the Recommendations that conflate diversity and international students. Dean Schroeder stated that he recognizes the difference between international students and underrepresented populations and it is something the Graduate School must keep in mind.

Professor Duranczyk commented that she appreciates the University's efforts in the areas of recruitment and funding a diverse group of graduate students, but it is also important to create a welcoming culture at the University with support systems, advising, and institutional cultural elements to help underrepresented populations succeed. She stated these issues are not addressed in the Recommendations and there are a number of places where they could be included.

Dean Schroeder recognized the importance of including this information in documents like the Recommendations, but stated it must also be included in presentations to decision makers.

Dean Schroeder next commented on his recent experience on a review team for emerging graduate programs in the Netherlands and Germany. He noted that European universities

have not yet reached the understanding that diversity increases attainment for everyone in the group. Diverse environments make discussions more fruitful and intellectually productive to everyone involved. Diversity is not only necessary from a moral perspective, but also to become a better University.

Professor Duranczyk expressed the concern that if diversity implementation is being left to the colleges and the colleges no longer have as much central support the University could end up in the same position as Stanford. She further emphasized the need to insure support systems are in place for the diverse populations that are brought to the University of Minnesota. These support systems are not outlined in the Recommendations. Peg Lonquist stated she believes Dean Schroeder and the EAD are philosophically on the same page, and she asked how the committee could encourage additions to the Recommendations to make them stronger and fit the vision Dean Schroeder expressed to the committee.

Dean Schroeder noted that the decentralization process at the University is quite different from that at Stanford. The Graduate School is constantly in contact with the collegiate deans. Ms. Lonquist asked who tracks the numbers on diversity each year. Assistant Vice Provost Belinda Cheung stated the information on applicants is available on the Graduate School website, it is broadly divided between international students and domestic students. She recognized that this is labeled in a broader fashion than the EAD is seeking. Ms. Lonquist questioned whether the Graduate School is providing an annual report on diversity issues. Assistant Vice Provost Cheung responded that a report is provided to ODGE on graduate school applicants and ODGE tracks the underrepresented groups that apply through the DOVE program. There is not a coordinated report that separately addresses diversity, but these numbers are easily accessible. Dean Schroeder stated that he receives them regularly from the admissions office. He stated that the student body is roughly 25% international students and 5% underrepresented students. Assistant Vice Provost Cheung noted it is possible to separate underrepresented from international students, but currently the diversity statistics include international students.

Ms. Lonquist commented that the committee would like future graduate school documents to reflect the equity and diversity philosophy expressed by Dean Schroeder. Dean Schroeder commented that a new administration provides an opportunity to insure that diversity in the Graduate School is on the top of their agenda. He noted that he and Associate Vice President Lockhart and Associate Vice Provost Mendoza had recently prepared a document for President Bruininks addressing the collaboration between the Graduate School, ODE, and ODGE. This document will also be provided to President-Delegate Kaler.

Professor Natalia Tretyakova asked Dean Schroeder if there was any likelihood the new administration would reinstate the centralized graduate school. Dean Schroeder responded that this was not likely. But he stated the Graduate School would not disappear and give up all authority to the colleges. Currently, the Graduate School is designing a model so that only a portion of the fellowships and grants will go to the

colleges. It is working with the deans, programs, and college representatives on defining the metrics on which the funds will be allocated. These are primarily student outcome metrics such as whether students are in a position early in their studies to contribute to their fields. Another outcome metric could be the diversity in a college's program.

Dean Schroeder stated that in addition to speaking with programs at the University, he recently spoke with peer institution graduate schools. Two important pieces of information came from these conversations: (1) there is only one other university that has less money for graduate education than the University of Minnesota, and (2) excellent graduate programs can be achieved with both centralized and decentralized programs. The keys to increasing the reputation, success, and productivity of graduate programs are funding and culture.

The culture issue the Graduate School is trying to address is the focus on the curricular notion rather than the research aspect of Ph.D. programs. Dean Schroeder explained that the current graduate tuition benefit model encourages students to complete all of their coursework requirements and thesis credits as quickly as possible in order to get to the lower tuition benefit rate, and does not place adequate emphasis on research work early in students' graduate studies. Dean Schroeder stated the Provost is aware of this problem and created the Graduate Student Financing Task Force (Task Force) to address it. Dean Schroeder provided the committee with the charge letter and a handout providing an update on the work of the Task Force.

Ms. Lonquist asked if the statistics on grants include students of color. Assistant Vice Provost Cheung stated the statistics apply to all students on graduate assistance (they are either TAs or RAs). The Task Force does not currently have the statistics on the percentage of grants that go to students of color. Dean Schroeder noted it would be important to learn this.

Dean Schroeder went on to describe the method of paying research students. There are two phases: an expensive phase when they take courses and a later phase when the tuition benefit drops significantly because they are no longer taking courses. This method of collecting tuition was initially implemented because it worked well for undergraduate students, and encouraged a high completion rate. This is different for graduate students, and may result in inadequate emphasis on research early in graduate studies and lengthening the time to degree.

Ms. Lonquist asked about the connection between this issue and equity and diversity. Dean Schroeder stated it pertains to all students. Prof Duranczyk stated that it responds to the questions presented by the committee about the potential loss of benefits to graduate students who receive NIH fellowships.

Dean Schroeder went on to state that primary investigators want to have their students in the less expensive phase of their programs. Therefore, programs that are heavily dependent on NIH grants encourage graduate students to take all their course work in the first two years, complete their preliminary exams, and take twenty four thesis credits

before they are in the less expensive phase and can be included in NIH grants. This delays time to degree. Dean Schroeder stated under this model, the way the University collects tuition is driving the method of education. This should be reversed, and graduate students should be in a position to do research from day one. The Task Force is considering allowing thesis credits to be taken at anytime during students' programs. The Task Force is also looking at what constitutes a credit in a graduate experience.

Professor Duranczyk asked if the Task Force has any data on the quality of the experience for minority graduate students, or the amount of time to graduation for minority and non-minority students. Assistant Vice Provost Cheung replied that the graduate exit survey has data on these issues, but it is only collected from those students who receive a degree. There is not currently a system for tracking the experiences of students who do not complete their programs.

With regard to the student experience, Ms. Lonnquist noted that graduate students and in particular female graduate students report a high level of incivility on campus. Dean Schroeder responded that he is working with Jan Morse, Director of the Student Conflict Resolution Center, on the incivility issue, and met with her several times regarding the Academic Civility Resolution.

Dean Schroeder noted that on April 18 from 11:00 to 2:30 there is a graduate education assembly devoted to program evaluation. The associate Vice Provost from Stanford University is one of the key speakers. George Walker, a national leader on Carnegie Initiative on the Doctorate will also be speaking.

Professor Duranczyk asked if the Graduate School has the resources it needs to support enhancing the graduate experience for underrepresented students. Dean Schroeder responded that he wants to emphasize the importance of recruiting in a diverse way. And he noted the close relationship the Graduate School has to ODGE.

Dean Schroeder asked EAD how it suggests the Graduate School stay in contact with OED and ODGE. Professor Duranczyk responded that when EAD spoke with Ms. Whyte, she expressed the concern that the decentralization of the graduate school has greatly increased the number of individuals ODGE must be in contact with and its staff has not increased. She also stated that ODGE's work is to influence and assist the colleges, but there are no specific requirements of the colleges. Dean Schroeder commented that it would be helpful to have a central system where statistics on each of the colleges' graduate programs was regularly recorded. Professor Duranczyk stated she would like to see each of the colleges graduate education programs have benchmarks for diversity and mentoring and support programs.

Professor Graff noted he would like to insure that the vision of inclusivity and diversity is in the formal statements and documents that come from the Graduate School in the future. He also emphasized the need to insure that the culture of the graduate programs is inclusive.

Dean Schroeder agreed that the culture toward diversity is important in many aspects of the Graduate School's work. He assured the committee that he would pay attention to the inclusion of diversity in documents coming from the Graduate School even though ODGE is no longer directly within the Graduate School portfolio.

Hearing no further business, Professor Duranczyk adjourned the meeting.

Dawn Zugay
University Senate Office