

Senate Committee on Educational Policy

-Minutes-

May 14, 1987

Attendance: Andrew Collins (chair), Robert Myers, Shella Corcoran, Marvin Mattson, Lawrence Goodman, Patricia Thomas (staff), Crystal Hanscome, Gretchen Kreuter (ex officio), Naomi Scheman, John Clark, Susan Collison, and Roland Guyotte (via telephone from Morris).

Guests: Richard Jones, Darwin Hendel, Marjorie Cowmeadow, Evelyn Hansen, Sandra Flake, and David Glese.

Minutes: The minutes were approved as amended.

Announcement: There will be a change in the meeting schedule. The last meeting of the quarter will be June 4, 1987, instead of May 28.

Proposal from the Student Academic Support Services Committee

Professor Richard Jones, committee chair, introduced two motions for consideration by ACEP. The first motion recommends retention of a record system that converts "I" grades to "F" or "N" grades after one quarter for undergraduates on the Twin Cities campus. Professor Jones explained that CLA regards the "I" as a registration mark and believes it should not be converted to a grade. However, the registration office states the only registration mark is a "W". All other grades are assigned by professors. The "I" is a contract between the student and the professor that the course will be completed. If the course is not completed, the student should be given an "F".

Discussion followed. Robert Myers said students should have more than one quarter to finish a course. Lawrence Goodman said that students should be given at least 2 or 3 terms. He often has his students make up incompletes the next time a course is offered and sometimes classes are offered only once a year. The length of time should be extended. Professor Jones said his committee didn't give lengthy discussion to the time period in the motion. He also said that the records department is putting all "I" grades on hold until a decision is made. Andy Collins said ACEP will make a formal request to CLA to communicate with Student Academic Support Services to resolve the different policies. ACEP will also ask SASS to reconsider the policy regarding the length of time a student has to make up an incomplete.

The second motion presented by SASS recommends institution of an eleven point "+" or "-" grading system similar to the one used at the University of Minnesota, Duluth, as the official grading system for the Twin Cities campus. Robert Myers said he supported the motion but recommended that consideration be given to students who get mostly "A" grades. The +/- system will lower their GPAs, and honors programs and other award criteria should take this into account. He also wondered how this would affect transfer students. Lawrence Goodman supports the +/- system as a more favorable system overall. He noted that the present "A," "B," "C," and "D" grades have specific definitions and asked if there will be definitions of the distinctions between pluses and minuses. There will not be definitions for these grades. Professor Jones said results from a survey show that 56%

of the undergraduate students responding to the survey and 71% of the faculty support the +/- system. Thirty-three percent of the students and twenty-four percent of the faculty oppose the system. He also said Professor Thomas Clayton has asked the committee to add an "A+" grade to the system, but the committee hasn't responded to the letter yet. It was moved, seconded, and passed that ACEP forward the +/- grading system proposal to the Twin Cities Campus Assembly.

Class time per credit hour

Lawrence Goodman developed two schemes to show ways of incorporating 50-minute class hours into the schedule. After a brief discussion, SCEP decided it should not commit itself to a specific schedule; the resolution should simply be to endorse the 50-minute lecture hour.

Professor Ed Coen, Economics, suggested in a letter to ACEP members that instead of requiring a four-credit class to meet for forty-five minutes four times per week, the class meet for sixty minutes three times per week. Each method allows the student 180 instructor-contact minutes per four-credit course, but the 60 minute period allows classes to keep a MWF or TTh schedule.

Naomi Scheman said there were definite merits to longer class periods rather than more class periods per week. She said longer periods lead to more discussion groups and other active learning strategies. These things are difficult to do in shorter periods, and professors are more likely to lecture the entire time. Sheila Corcoran noted that on a commuter campus, fewer periods per week for a longer time might be good. John Clark said that both teaching and research efforts could be enhanced by having longer periods.

Lawrence Goodman stated that a proposal to establish as a norm one lecture hour per credit would have major effects. Some courses would cut back from four to three credits to meet the requirements. This would increase both the number of courses a student would take to graduate and the total tuition paid if a student were to stay in school longer to complete a four-year degree. It would have some educational advantages in that it would produce somewhat greater contact between faculty and students, and it would bring the university closer to standards in the United States. He recommends that ACEP acknowledge there are advantages to the proposal and suggests that the curriculum committee keep this norm in mind when developing courses.

Naomi said it could be very disruptive to initiate this all at once. ACEP needs to get information on how the University's credits transfer. John Clark said students might have to meet three hours per week for some four-credit courses and four hours per week for others if the changes are implemented gradually. Naomi said it is important not to reduce the credits per course in order to meet this requirement. John Clark said there is

enormous pressure by faculty and students to have a MWF or a TTh class rhythm. People will use a lot of creativity to maintain this schedule. Crystal Hanscome said that while there a lot of student apathy for the number of hours per credit, students would not like a reduction in the number of credits per class. Marvin Mattson added that maybe the issue really isn't the class length and whether it's 45, 50, or 60 minutes but rather the quality of the students the University graduates.

Darwin Hendel drafted a survey and a sample cover letter. He said that David Olson, chair of the Calendar Committee, is open to putting in questions on class length in his survey on early-in/early-out start times. Professor Olson is already beginning the process of randomly sampling 1,000 faculty and students. Darwin recommended that questions concerning a fifty-minute class hour be put in this survey and that a larger, more complicated survey be done at a later date. This questionnaire is an opportunity to obtain useful information for further discussion and a foundation for future surveys. Andrew Collins and Darwin will develop questions for the survey.

General College

Evelyn Hansen, Marjorie Cowmeadow, Sandra Flake, and David Glese explained the plans for General College under its new mission. Professor Glese said President Keller wants all developmental efforts at the University to take place in General College. Professor Glese has been working with the Math Department and beginning Fall Quarter, 1987, all the Math 0009 courses and lower courses will be taught in General College. G.C. faculty are developing teaching modules similar to those in the Math Department, and TA hiring practices, work load, and pay scale will be competitive. A student who passes G.C. 0631, Intermediate Algebra, with a "C" or better will have a reasonable chance of succeeding in Math 1111. The new G.C. teaching assistants will get 2-3 years of training in recitation, lecture, and conferencing. This is more extensive than the training in the Math Department now.

Professor Glese said high schools are not prepared to handle the increase in the number of students taking intermediate algebra. This could decrease the over-all level of competence of incoming students. He said the transfer of developmental math courses from the Math Department to General College is the first shift in functions between colleges. This also provides a legitimate area of research for G.C. faculty. Teaching basic levels of math to adults requires special techniques, yet there has been little research done in this area.

The question of admission policy and procedure was raised, and Andy asked what the pressures were that made these changes necessary. Evelyn Hansen said in 1992 there will be 1550 students in General College, a 450 reduction from 1986-87. She stated this was not a debatable point, but mandated by President Keller's Commitment to Focus plans. Before this, open enrollment

has always meant unlimited enrollment, and General College has always exceeded its budget because of unlimited enrollment and an enrollment-based budget. Now the question is how to adapt to the enrollment target in conjunction with other Minnesota University systems and the General College mission.

Marjorie Cowmeadow said the General College current admission standards require either a high school diploma or a GED. Now G.C. must look at fiscal responsibility and educational ethics when admitting students. Class size, ratios between faculty and students and between students and advisors must be carefully considered. G.C.'s admission plan represents a response to that. Now there are priority deadlines, floating deadlines for special populations of students, and standard deadlines. July 15 is the deadline for Fall Quarter, 1987. Applications are increasing. Thirteen-hundred students have been accepted for admission to G.C., and one-thousand are expected to actually register.

A goal of General College is to help students plan a successful first quarter in college. One way to do this is to screen carefully the types of students being admitted. G.C. advisors look for qualities in students that will enable students to complete a baccalaureate degree. Because these qualities often can't be measured solely by high school transcripts and SAT scores, General College is considering a supplement to the University application for special populations which would consider work experience, community involvement, and extra curricular high school activities. General College still hasn't lost its commitment to minority or special population students. G.C. wants to move to the point where it can counsel students when they come in; the faculty needs to know more than just the student's reading score.

Sandra Flake said the kind of student G.C. is hoping to attract is little different from the current student profile. They don't expect the academic profile to change. Students will still need reading, writing, and math developmental courses. They don't want CLA rejects or those who miss the CLA deadline. G.C. wants students who want the G.C. experience and who will stay in G.C. 3-7 quarters.