

Minutes*

Faculty Consultative Committee
Thursday, May 19, 2005
1:15 – 3:30
238A Morrill Hall

Present: Marvin Marshak (chair), Gary Balas, Susan Brorson, Jean Bauer, Charles Campbell, Nancy Carpenter, Carol Chomsky, Tom Clayton, Gary Davis, Barbara Elliott, Dan Feeney, Mary Jo Kane, Kathleen Krichbaum, Scott Lanyon, Judith Martin, Fred Morrison, Jeff Ratliff-Crain, Steve Ruggles, Martin Sampson, John Sullivan, Jennifer Windsor

Absent: Emily Hoover, Morris Kleiner

Guests: President Robert Bruininks; Senior Vice President and Provost E. Thomas Sullivan; Vice President Carol Carrier

Other: Kathryn Stuckert (Office of the Chief of Staff); Joe Kelly (Office of the Vice President for Human Resources), Shelley Carthen Watson (Office of the General Counsel)

[In these minutes: (1) election of 05-06 vice chair; (2) legislative liaison; (3) task force names; (4) Regents Professorships; (5) discussion with President Bruininks; (6) thank you; (7) discussion with Provost Sullivan; (8) statement on strategic planning; (9) Advisory Committee on Athletics; (10) Benefits Advisory Committee; (11) UMC collective bargaining election; (12) Senate clerk and parliamentarian; (13) another thank you]

Professor Marshak convened the meeting at 1:15 and began by welcoming the new members of the Committee: Professor Carpenter from Morris, Professor Elliott from the Duluth Medical School, Professor Ruggles (the incoming chair of the Senate Research Committee), and Professor Windsor from CLA.

1. Election of the 2005-06 FCC Vice Chair

The Committee elected Regents Professor John Sullivan to serve as vice chair for 2005-06.

2. Legislative Liaison

Professor Marshak said that the incoming chair of the Committee, Professor Bauer, should play the lead role in identifying the structure and appointees to the legislative liaison role.

3. Task Force Names

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

Professor Marshak said the President wishes not to solicit nominations for the various strategic planning task forces until the Regents act in June because it would be inappropriate to pre-judge what the Board may do. The Committee can, however, publicize the fact that it will be soliciting names, including self-nominations, if the Board approves the strategic positioning recommendations from the President. He said that individuals from outside the University could be nominated, although he noted that the Committee has already spoken strongly in favor of faculty majorities and faculty chairs or co-chairs of all the task forces. He asked that Committee members continue to forward names of individuals they would recommend for task forces.

4. Regents Professorships

Professor Marshak reported that he had raised with the President the questions that the Committee has posed concerning the Regents Professorships. There is an administrative plan to increase the number of Regents Professorships from 20 to 30 and to increase the stipend/research support from \$25,000 to \$50,000. Members of this Committee have suggested that the stipend/research support should be for a fixed term (e.g., 10 years) but that an individual keep the title for as long as he or she is on the faculty. Professor Morrison said he would encourage the President to adopt a term limit on the financial support and move to a practice of appointing three Regents Professors per year. Professor Campbell said he would not favor anything that would reduce the stature of the Regents Professors; with respect to Professor Morrison's suggestion, he wondered if a requirement of selecting three per year might mean appointment of someone who might not otherwise have been selected.

Professor Martin asked what the two Regents Professors on the Committee thought. Professor Sullivan said his reaction would depend on the purpose of the change. Since the Regents Professorships were begun, there have been five levels of McKnight Professorships also created. The latter were intended to help the University with faculty retention. The Regents Professorships were never intended to be for retention but were instead a capstone to a career. The McKnight Professorships are designed to develop and retain faculty; the Regents Professorship is a quite different award, not a carrot to affect performance. What is the purpose of imposing a limit on the financial support? If it is because too many of the current Regents Professors seem to be too old and not taking a leadership role on major issues, it seems like it is a mildly punitive proposal.

Professor Balas said he brought this issue up three years ago. Awarding a Regents Professorship is an opportunity to celebrate faculty accomplishments; without a mandatory retirement age, there are too few such opportunities at the level of Regents Professor. There is nothing subtracted from the award if the financial support is limited to ten years.

5. Discussion with President Bruininks

Professor Marshak welcomed the President to the meeting. The discussion began with the appointment of and remits to the strategic positioning task forces. The President said he will work with the Committee on what the task forces will do and who will be appointed—but not before the Board of Regents acts on the strategic positioning recommendations. Up to that time, the Committee might give some thought to key issues and people who might serve, and the architecture of the groups and subgroups, but no formal action will be taken that would pre-empt the decisions of the Regents. Whatever task forces are eventually appointed will work most intensively during fall semester; the President said he would set aside one-time money to support their work.

The President agreed with a suggestion from Professor Campbell that there ought to be a coordinating committee and that it should include any task forces appointed to follow through on the administrative as well as the academic recommendations. The President also assured the Committee, in response to a query from Professor Morrison, that there should be and will be interaction between the task forces and governance committees as the work of the task forces moves forward. He also agreed that the deadlines for the task forces can be open to discussion; he would like, in any event, a preliminary report by the December deadline. He said he would like to press on the recommendations concerning undergraduate education so that they can be implemented for the 2006-07 academic year.

In terms of task force size and composition, the President noted that he has the recommendations from this Committee. He said the task forces will be balanced, as appropriate. He observed that the majority of the work of appointing and assisting the task forces will be in the Provost's office. More on these topics can be discussed once the Regents have acted in June. Of greatest concern is framing the issues in order that the task forces get done what is necessary. The President also said that the issues would be brought to FCC and other key Senate committees.

Professor Windsor asked if the task force recommendations would affect budget allocations. They should, the President said. If there are cost savings from restructuring, those funds should be segregated, reinvested in University priorities, and tracked. He said he expected that all task forces would come up with ideas and all will assume the University will spend more money on them—or spend money in different ways.

The Committee and the President discussed the outcome of the legislative session. The numbers are better than they have been for some time, the President commented, and while that does not mean the University is flush with money or that it has made up what it lost, it does mean the institution is in a decent position. The President said he would like to appoint a working group at the end of the summer to rethink the University's budget strategy vis-à-vis the state. The Committee also discussed tuition rates and the campus at Rochester. The President noted that for the University to replace with private funds the money it lost in recent legislative appropriations, it would have to engage in record-breaking fund-raising for 25-30 years. It is not appropriate to say that the University will become a private institution.

The President again thanked the Committee for its help this year, and extended a special thanks to Professors Morrison and Sampson, who spent much time at the legislature on behalf of the University. Professor Marshak thanked the President for joining the meeting.

6. Thank You

Professor Martin, following up on the President's comment, moved that the Committee thank its legislative liaisons, Professors Morrison and Sampson, for their steady work and for keeping the faculty so well informed about legislative issues. The Committee gave both colleagues a vigorous round of applause.

7. Discussion with Provost Sullivan

Professor Marshak next welcomed the Provost to the meeting.

The Provost began his comments by also extending thanks to Professors Morrison and Sampson for the enormous amount of work they had done in St. Paul on behalf of the University. The Committee and the Provost discussed the budget situation and faculty salaries. On the latter, the Provost noted that the Legislature specifically approved an item for merit salary increases; the University must now develop principles for allocating the money. Professor Morrison reported that the budget also includes money for general faculty and staff salaries in addition to the extraordinary pool for merit increases. The Provost agreed and said he hoped the additional appropriation for merit would allow the University to make faculty salaries its top priority. He said he has informed the Board of Regents that the University cannot achieve its goal of being among the top three public research universities with small incremental salary increases.

Discussion turned to the appointment of the strategic positioning task forces. Professor Chomsky raised again the questions about how they would be appointed, how this Committee would be involved, and how the faculty would be able to express interest in serving on them. The Provost, like the President, observed that no action will be taken in advance of Regental action in June, but made a few comments about the task forces, and said he would work with the Committee on their appointment and charge. The Committee discussed with the Provost possible problems caused by his suggestion of taking existing staff members and significant numbers of the best faculty for a large number of task forces. He reassured the Committee that there were resources available and he would be mindful of these issues.

With respect to recent actions by the Faculty Senate: the Provost said he believed that exit interviews with faculty is an excellent idea and he will work on a mechanism to conduct them; he is sympathetic to the request that the two-year waiting period for new faculty for the Faculty Retirement Plan be dropped and that Vice President Carrier is looking at the issues; he is also sympathetic to the tuition benefit for dependents but this is a more complicated issue and also has the problem of unequal benefits (for those without dependents). He said that he is not sure the evidence is in that the University is losing or unable to recruit faculty because of the lack of a tuition benefit. One alternative might be to look at such a benefit for employees in lower-income brackets.

Professor Marshak thanked the Provost for joining the meeting.

8. Statement on Strategic Positioning

The Committee agreed it wished to adopt a statement for the Regents about strategic positioning. Through email exchanges in the two days following the meeting, the Committee unanimously approved the following statement:

The Faculty Consultative Committee strongly supports the strategic-positioning recommendations that the President has presented to the Board of Regents for approval at the June meeting. The Committee views the recommendations as a package. While each of you, and indeed each of us, may have individual opinions about specific elements of the President's proposals, the Committee believes that the recommendations should be viewed as a comprehensive plan representing the President's vision for the University and that the Regents should consider them as a whole, not individually. And the Committee strongly urges that the recommendations be acted on as soon as possible. Uncertainty attending any delay would affect adversely the University's ability to attract and retain outstanding faculty, staff, and students. It

would also undermine the authority of the President and defer for years any systematic efforts to improve the University.

The University Senate voted overwhelmingly (120 yes to 3 no) to support the strategic positioning recommendations to the President, and the President's recommendations to the Regents are strengthened by their incorporation of suggestions made in the course of Senate debate. The University Senate is the representative body of faculty and students; 80% of its members are elected by the faculty and 20% by the students. The faculty members come from all colleges on the Twin Cities campus as well as from the Morris and UMD Medical School campuses, the research centers, and the University of Minnesota Extension Service. The students come from all colleges and campuses, including undergraduate, graduate, and professional schools. The Senate has general legislative authority over educational matters concerning the University as a whole as well as the responsibility to advise the President on matters involving education and research. It is not only the most comprehensive body to advise the President but also the venue for debate and discussion of some of the most critical issues facing the University. We encourage you to pay careful attention to this strong expression of internal institutional support.

The Committee believes that most faculty members view President Bruininks's recommendations as only first steps toward the goal you adopted of becoming one of the top three public research universities. They are, however, critical first steps. If they are not taken, the goal will not be reached. If you approve the President's recommendations, the members of the University community will work together both to implement these changes and to plan the many additional steps needed in the future to reach the goal.

Professor Marshak said he would send the statement to the Regents.

9. Advisory Committee on Athletics

The Committee agreed on the names of individuals who it would ask to agree to be nominated as chair of the Advisory Committee on Athletics. Professor Marshak said he would contact them.

The Committee also agreed to propose a bylaw change for the Advisory Committee on Athletics changing the designated decanal seat to one that could be filled either by a faculty member or a dean. The problem has been that deans have so many demands on their time that they are typically unable to attend meetings of the Advisory committee.

10. Benefits Advisory Committee

The Committee agreed on the names of four faculty members to be nominated to serve on the Benefits Advisory Committee.

11. The Crookston Bargaining Election

Professor Marshak welcomed Vice President Carrier to the meeting to discuss the recent collective bargaining election at the Crookston campus. She was joined by her Chief of Staff, Joe Kelly,

and Shelley Carthen Watson from the Office of the General Counsel. Vice President Carrier asked that the discussion be off the record.

12. Senate Clerk and Parliamentarian

The Committee voted to recommend to the President the reappointment of Professors Goldstein and Charles as Clerk and Parliamentarian of the Senate.

13. Another Thank You

Professor Bauer extended thanks to Professor Marshak for his service as chair of the Committee, for being on target, consistent, and tenacious, and for accomplishing as much as he did. She also thanked Professor Kane for her work and especially her fun-loving approach to the discussions. She said she appreciated the steadiness of both of them on behalf of FCC. The Committee gave them a round of applause.

Professor Marshak adjourned the meeting at 3:45.

-- Gary Engstrand

University of Minnesota