

Minutes*

Faculty Consultative Committee
Thursday, November 30, 2006
12:00 – 2:15
N204 Mondale Hall

Present: Carol Chomsky, (chair), Gary Balas, Jean Bauer, Nancy Carpenter, Megan Gunnar, Emily Hoover, Mary Jo Kane, Kathleen Krichbaum, Judith Martin, Richard McCormick, Steven Ruggles, Martin Sampson, Geoffrey Sirc, John Sullivan, Jennifer Windsor

Absent: William Durfee, Barbara Elliott, Scott Lanyon, Nelson Rhodus,

Guests: President Robert Bruininks

Other: Kathryn Stuckert (Office of the Chief of Staff)

[In these minutes: (1) various items of committee business; (2) discussion with President Bruininks]

1. Committee Business

Professor Chomsky convened the meeting at 12:10 and touched on several items of business.

-- The discussion about courtesy titles will be postponed. Vice President Carrier and Ms. Wilhelmson are not ready, because while they have developed a set of categories of courtesy appointments, they are not certain how units are using them—and they have also discovered that units are using titles that are not on their list. They need to identify titles and who has them before they can ascertain if there are problems.

-- She and Professor Lanyon have spoken with Vice President Kathryn Brown about the process that will be used to replace Vice President Thrane. There will not be a full search since it is less than two years since the last one, so they can look at candidates in the previous search. They have had a lot of conversation about the position and have, after reviewing candidates, identified one potential appointee. The Committee will be invited to meet with the person prior to a decision about hiring.

-- One strategic positioning task force has not yet reported: University culture (which is separate from the Faculty Culture task force). Vice President Thrane was chair of the task force, and there will be a report, but it is not ready yet. She said that she and Professor Lanyon would talk to (now former) Vice President Thrane about the report.

-- In the pre-FCC meeting with the President, he expressed strong feelings about the tuition-remission statement that is on the University Senate docket. He said he would like to talk with the Senate Committee on Faculty Affairs about the proposal.

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- The Committee discussed when it should close its meetings to anyone other than Committee members and its own staff.
- She reported that some of the Committee members who had initially indicated they could make the trip to Morris on December 15 have since had conflicts arise. She again solicited Committee members for their availability.
- She reported on the three meetings scheduled with faculty senators.
- The Committee discussed the structure of the agenda on December 14, which will include discussion with Provost Sullivan (probably focused on the tenure code revisions) as well as preparation of the points that are to be made in the meeting on December 19 with the senior officers based on the discussions with department chairs and with faculty senators.

Professor McCormick asked if the contents of Section 7.11 are not already mostly known. Professor Kane said one of the major questions faculty want answered is about what happens if an associate professor stalls on the trajectory to professor and whether such a stall would provoke post-tenure review and possible lost of tenure. Professor Chomsky said that question could not be answered because the tenure code revisions have not reached that point. [NOTE: At the Faculty Senate meeting that followed this committee meeting, the Provost told the Faculty Senate that he did not see the provisions of Section 9.2, which establish criteria for promotion to professor, as linked to Section 7a, which sets out the process for post-tenure review, and that failing to be promoted to professor would not in and of itself lead to invoking the post-tenure review process.] Professor Martin commented that the University protects assistant professors (from service) and abuses associate professors; if the University tells associate professors they must devote all their efforts to research and teaching, in order to stay on the trajectory to professor, who will do the work of the University? It would be a major culture change at the University to reduce the expectations that tenured professors contribute to the work of the University. Professor Sirc reported that the Committee on Faculty Affairs did not endorse the recommendation for a three-year "hard" review of probationary faculty; SCFA members did not believe the system was broken and did not believe such reviews would be helpful.

Professor Chomsky observed that there is a difference in attitude toward the tenure code revisions between those who were here 10 years ago (who worry that what the Regents were trying to do then is now being done quietly) and those who were not part of the tenure debate. The question, Professor Kane said she is hearing from a number of faculty, is about the intentions and why the process must move so fast.

Professor Chomsky said the Committee will wish to take a look at the "Procedures For Reviewing the Performance of Tenure-Track Probationary Faculty," a document now approved only by the Academic Freedom and Tenure Committee and the Provost. One question is whether this document should also be approved by the Faculty Senate.

If the Academic Freedom and Tenure Committee can be done with its work by then, there will likely be Faculty Senate meetings on February 1 and 15 to deal with tenure code revisions and the Procedures document, if it is determined that that should also come to the Faculty Senate. Professor Chomsky said it is her view that all of the changes should come in one package for approval and the Faculty Senate should not be asked to vote piecemeal on tenure code proposals.

-- Professor Chomsky noted a small amendment to the bylaws governing who is eligible for service on Senate committees: the title "attorney" should be deleted from the proscribed titles because the people who hold that title are Law School clinical faculty and attorneys who work in the student legal services office. The intent was to preclude attorneys in the Office of the General Counsel from serving on committees, because of the potential for conflict of interest, and those individuals are covered by having the title "counsel" on the proscribed list.

-- Professor Balas asked that the Committee be provided a list of administrators hired in the last X years as well as the staff positions hired in those same offices.

-- There will be potentially five vacancies on the Nominating Committee, the body that identifies candidates for this committee and the Committee on Committees. The Committee agreed to renominate two of the individuals currently serving and to identify candidates for other positions.

2. Discussion with President Bruininks

Professor Chomsky welcomed the President to the meeting. The discussion touched upon a number of matters.

-- The resignation of men's basketball coach Dan Monson.

-- The play "The Pope and the Witch" and associated issues of academic freedom. President Bruininks described events that had taken place. He emphasized that there is in some quarters the perception that there is only room for one view at the University, which is not true. This is a part of the tenet of academic freedom, which has been part of universities for centuries. The President suggested the Committee be aware of the views of Regents' Chair Dr. Baraga and of CLA Dean Rosenstone.

Since the Board's discussion in November, Regent Baraga, citing the Board's policy on academic freedom, stated that the Board not only defends academic freedom, it encourages it. He recognized that the University seeks to create an environment of respect and appreciation for diverse perspectives and values, and that the Board's role is to articulate and support the fundamental values of open inquiry and respect for diversity, not to interfere with the administration and management of the University or with curricular or academic choices. He stated the Board's support for the plans underway in CLA to use the production of the play to generate dialogue on all the relevant issues.

The views Dean Rosenstone expresses when he writes to those who communicate with him about the upcoming performances of The Pope and the Witch are these:

"The play is written by Nobel Prize winner Dario Fo and is housed in 167 United States college and university libraries, including the Catholic University of America and the College of the Holy Cross. It has been performed over the past 11 years in a number of higher education venues including the University of Denver in 1995, Yale University in 1997, and the University of New Mexico in 2000. It is just one of five plays being produced as part of the University of Minnesota's 2006-07 theatre season. Theatre department faculty have carefully designed this year's season to engage students in exploring how very different plays resonate with current historical moments, to provide students with exposure to a

number of theatrical techniques, such as comedy, satire, physicality, and farce, and to challenge audiences to think about fundamental issues that affect the human condition.

"Academic freedom and the free exchange of ideas are the hallmarks of higher education. The University of Minnesota hosts hundreds of events each year that are intended to promote dialogue and discussion on a wide range of opinions and viewpoints, and we have never shied away from controversy. It is in the nature of vibrant intellectual discussion or artistic expression that not everyone will have the same response or opinion, yet an academic institution that ended a discussion because people disagree with the views expressed would be neglecting its mission and the pursuit of higher education.

"The University is also sensitive to and appreciative of the feelings and views of individuals who object to the play's staging. President Bruininks and Provost E. Thomas Sullivan had a cordial and productive meeting with Archbishop Flynn in late October to discuss this issue.

"Plans are currently underway to engage the community in a discussion of the play and the issues it presents. "Talkbacks," an integral part of the University Theatre Season, are public discussions hosted and facilitated by the theatre department about each University theatre production. They are intended to encourage dialogue about the play, and to familiarize diverse audiences with the play's production history, theatre historiography, specific issues raised by multiple aesthetic and cultural perspectives, and different social and political contexts that inform theatre and dance. The talkback for "The Pope and the Witch" will follow the play's performance on March 8th."

-- A review with the Committee on Faculty Affairs of the tuition-reimbursement proposal and the context of widespread public concern about the cost of higher education.

-- The University of Minnesota at Rochester. The state has decided it is important for the University to be in Rochester, it will be a major growth area in the state, but it will not be a traditional campus with a marching band and mascot.

-- The biennial budget request.

-- UMore Park, the long-term value of which for the University is very exciting. The President suggested the topic be on the FCC agenda because of financial and academic issues for the long term; he surmised that if managed well, UMore Park could double the University's endowment in the next 25 years.

-- The Governor's proposal to make college tuition-free for the top 25% of high-school graduates.

Professor Chomsky thanked the President for joining the meeting, and adjourned it at 2:15.

-- Gary Engstrand

University of Minnesota