

# university of minnesota memo

To Penny Krosch

From Martha Kvanbeck, Senate

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| <input type="checkbox"/> For your information | These items were distributed at the University Senate and Twin Cities Campus Assembly meetings yesterday (Nov. 1, 1990). |
| <input type="checkbox"/> For your approval    |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Per your request     |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> For your attention   |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Note and file        |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Note and return      |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Note and forward     |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Please advise        |  |
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Date \_\_\_\_\_

Student Senate Agenda, Nov. 1, 1990

(Immediately following Faculty Senate)

- I. Approval of Agenda
- II. Minutes of April and May - Action (2 minutes)
- III. Old business (10 minutes)  
Elections: Chair and Vice Chair
- IV. Student Senate Consultative Committee Chair report (5 minutes)
- V. SLAC report (5 minutes)
- VI. Student Senate Chair report (5 minutes)
- VII. New business
- VIII. Adjournment

BYRON MARSHALL  
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DATE: October 21, 1990

TO: Marilee Ward, Clerk of the Senate

SUBJECT: November 1, 1990 Meeting

Question for President Hasselmo

Media coverage of scandals among college athletic programs in recent years have brought to public attention the prevalence of arrangements between college coaches and sports equipment companies--contracts by which coaches agree to purchase only certain brand names in return for substantial cash payments and/or other considerations. Is it the policy of the University of Minnesota to permit this and, if so, what policies govern the potential conflict of interests?



Byron Marshall, Professor of History

**Progress Report  
of the Twin Cities Campus Task Force on  
Liberal Education  
October 26, 1990**

On February 9, 1990 Provost Leonard Kuhl and Professor Warren Ibele, Chairperson of the Twin Cities Assembly Steering Committee, appointed the Task Force on Liberal Education for the Twin Cities campus. The letter of appointment, recognizing "that there are few issues as important [to undergraduate education on the Twin Cities campus] as the one we ask you to take up," called upon the Task Force to:

- articulate for liberal education, goals which are broad enough to encompass the intellectual diversity of the Twin Cities campus colleges;
- in light of these goals, review the current provisions for liberal education which obtain on the campus and make recommendations to change or improve those policies as needed, and
- recommend the organization and procedures for a continuing policy review group to work with the faculty of the undergraduate colleges on the Twin Cities campus to oversee the liberal education curriculum and monitor new policies as they are implemented.

As these instructions make clear, the effort on which we are embarked is important to the University community. It is timely as well, for it has been twenty years since our present, campus-wide liberal education requirements were framed. Our work is also timely because liberal education concerns lie close to the heart of President Hasselmo's "Initiative for Excellence in Undergraduate Education." It is timely, in a third sense, because of the remarkable changes that the last twenty years have brought to the fields of knowledge that we teach, the educational goals of our students, the broader social and economic environment in which the University exists, and the mission statements that guide the University's work.

Though our letter of appointment bears the date of February 9th, we began our meetings during the early weeks of Spring Quarter. We continued to meet as schedules would permit through the Summer, and since Fall Quarter began have been meeting weekly as a full task force as well as in numerous subcommittees. We have been asked to prepare a draft report by the end of Fall Quarter, circulate it within the University community for debate and criticism beginning in January, and produce a final, revised document by Winter Quarter's end -- altogether a daunting and almost imaginable schedule! As we prepare our draft report this quarter, we have been actively consulting on a wide range of issues throughout the University community. Several weeks ago we mailed a liberal education questionnaire to all regular faculty on the Twin Cities campus. We have held two meetings with groups of undergraduate advisers, and are organizing discussions with the curriculum committees of the Undergraduate colleges, student groups, Senate governance committees such as SCEP and the Consultative Committee, the President's Cabinet and the Board of Regents. In each of these arenas we have sought to stimulate people's thinking about issues of undergraduate liberal education and become better informed about those issues, especially as they apply to the University of Minnesota.

Throughout our discussions, we have been concerned that our recommendations be appropriate to this University at this time in its history. Our deliberations have thus been guided by the recognition that we are a large, complex, decentralized institution; that our students are very numerous (though are gradually decreasing in number), have diverse educational objectives, bring to the University gradually improving levels of high school preparation, and reflect increasing social diversity; that our resource environment over the coming years is likely to be constrained, with reallocation at least as important as new resources in funding new initiatives; that one of the University's major planning goals is to reduce academic programs and focus academic effort on behalf of improved quality; that renewed attention to undergraduate education is an important part of that improvement; and that all our educational programs, including undergraduate liberal education, take their basic definition from our central mission as a public, research University.

Though it would be premature to anticipate our detailed recommendations in this progress report, some indication of our major concerns is surely in order.

Issues of academic breadth, or general education, are central to any discussion of liberal education. We expect to recommend a breadth distribution scheme that is grounded in broad fields of knowledge familiar to a research university, informed by clearly articulated educational objectives, implemented by courses specially designed to serve those objectives, and taught by the University's regular faculty.

Study in depth is also an essential dimension of liberal education. In an institution such as ours, that dimension assumes special importance. We are thus exploring ways to strengthen the undergraduate major both as an area of specialized study and as a vehicle for achieving broader liberal education outcomes.

Studies conducted here and at other universities reveal substantial student dissatisfaction with their lower division years. Though a good part of this dissatisfaction lies beyond the reach of our liberal education agenda, we are concerned to find better ways to transmit the values of liberal education to newly entering students, help them understand the purposes of the general education curriculum, grasp the academic culture of our research University, and engage in more purposeful planning of their own liberal education. Toward these ends, we are investigating the possibilities of freshman seminars and strengthened advising.

There is by now an entire literature bewailing the decline in English literacy and numeracy. We intend to develop recommendations pointed toward the strengthening of these essential academic skills.

We are persuaded that a liberally education person should have the capacity for critical thinking and manifest a continuing curiosity about the world in which s/he lives. We are exploring ways of encouraging those habits of thought.

To be liberally educated is to develop perspective on oneself, clarify one's values, engage in the ongoing task of ethical reflection, and fashion a confident sense of one's relationship to the larger society, which is to say, a sense of civic responsibility. All are fostered by a variety of life experiences, but we are examining ways in which they can be appropriately nurtured within the University's academic setting.

Among the dominant characteristics of the world we inhabit are its pervasive international context and the increasingly multicultural character of our democratic social order. We are discussing how these understandings can be most appropriately strengthened in the context of liberal education.

Finally, in our decentralized University, there needs to be some agency to oversee the development and maintenance of the general education curriculum, as well as take responsibility for more general, campus-wide liberal education issues. We are likely to recommend the creation of such an agency for the Twin Cities campus.

These are the major initiatives that we have been developing. Each of them will come before the university community for discussion, reconsideration, and hopefully approval. Once approved by appropriate faculty and administrative bodies, each will require careful implementation. In addition, each initiative presents different resource implications. Taken together, they will call for a substantial infusion of human and dollar resources into undergraduate liberal education. Even where the costs can be viewed as transitional, as in the development of the general education curriculum, they will not be insignificant. As we discuss the educational merits of the Task Force proposals, we should discuss as well their funding priority among the University's multiple mission needs.

John Howe, Chairperson  
Task Force on Liberal Education

October 26, 1990