

Minutes*

Faculty Consultative Committee
Thursday, January 19, 2012
1:00 – 3:00
238A Morrill Hall

Present: Chris Cramer (chair), Linda Bearinger, Avner Ben-Ner, Peter Bitterman, Elizabeth Boyle, Thomas Brothen, Carol Chomsky, Nancy Ehlke, Janet Ericksen, Caroline Hayes, Walt Jacobs, Sally Gregory Kohlstedt, Russell Luepker, Elaine Tyler May, Jan McCulloch, James Pacala, George Sheets, Kathryn VandenBosch

Absent: Colin Campbell, Richard Ziegler

Guests: President Eric Kaler; Vice President Kathryn Brown (Human Resources), Associate Vice President Sharon Reich Paulsen, Joseph Shultz (Office of the Provost)

Other: Ken Savery (Office of the Board of Regents), Jon Steadland (Office of the President)

[In these minutes: (1) committee business; (2) discussion with President Kaler; (3) department chair/head terms; (4) reviews of administrators]

1. Committee Business

Professor Cramer convened the meeting at 1:00; pending the arrival of the President, Committee members discussed issues to be taken up at a visit with a member of the legislature at its next meeting. It completed the discussion after the President's departure.

2. Discussion with President Kaler

Professor Cramer welcomed President Kaler and noted that he and Professor Jacobs had met with the President the day before and had identified a number of topics to be taken up.

President Kaler turned first to the Governor's budget recommendation. Governor Dayton has been a tireless advocate for the University and he has been grateful for the Governor's support. The University requested \$209 million in state funding for capital improvements; the Governor's proposal funds \$107 million (\$78 million in state funds and \$29 million in University funds), including the new power plant and the Itasca laboratory and facilities improvements. The Governor, however, only recommended \$20 million of the \$90 million the University requested in HEAPR funding (renewal and renovation), which is disappointing. The University has about 29 million square feet of space to manage, 70% of which is more than 30 years old, the President observed. The University will continue to articulate its needs with the legislature.

The President next commented on the gender-equity study: The next steps will be high on the list for action by the new provost. The plan is to look at individual units for inequities; this is the right thing

* 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 represents the views of, nor are they binding on, the Senate, the Administration, or the Board of Regents.

to do and the University will do it. As the review takes place, it is likely that it will identify men who are underpaid as well. While the institution may not have the funding to deal with all of the situations immediately, it will start to move on them on a case-by-case basis.

The President met with faculty members from the College of Food, Agricultural and Natural Sciences to discuss the impact of UMore Park plans on their research. He has also asked for a reassessment of the path forward with respect to UMore Park, given the real estate market and that the market for the gravel is also down. There are a variety of constituents that will need to be involved in the conversation.

With respect to merit versus across-the-board salary increase, President Kaler said he is sensitive to the fact that the lowest-paid University employees have been disproportionately affected by the increase in health-care costs and increases in the cost of living, so he is prepared to consider an across-the-board increase for that group. For faculty members, the increase should be based on merit as much as possible. He said he was thinking about an across-the-board increase that diminishes as one goes up the salary scale and that vanishes at some point. Another option would be an increase of a fixed amount for everyone and decisions based on merit for the remainder of the funds. He said he would be open to suggestions along these lines but would be less excited about any proposal for an across-the-board increase for everyone. He would like to see something done for lower-paid employees (consistent with collective bargaining agreements), however.

One of the issues that has been raised is enhanced University outreach activities, and the President suggested the Committee might wish to hear from Dean Beverly Durgan to learn more about what is being done at present. There are important issues around STEM education and the achievement gap between various groups of students. He agreed that outreach is important and should receive attention as research and teaching do.

The University has a mandate to do things that are more innovative and out-of-the-box in delivering education and it needs to find ways to educate more students more efficiently and spend less money at the same time. President Kaler said he would like to lay out two challenges in this vein. One, he would like the institution to find a better way to use technology to also better optimize its physical space and to fund technological innovation in instruction; the University has a big brief and a large number of students, so there is an opportunity to think big in a meaningful way. Second, he would like to see the institution consider the feasibility of a full summer (third) semester. Adopting such a calendar would put the University in the front ranks of major research universities and could have a significant impact on delivering instruction. The upsides of such a step could include allowing students to finish in three (or fewer) years, making use of an infrastructure that in part lies fallow during the summer, and additional tuition revenue that could be used to hire more faculty members. There are also pedagogical reasons to teach all year and this would provide an opportunity to stretch the calendar in interesting ways, such as adjusting winter break so there could be a period for study abroad or short courses. The President said he is aware of the immovable State Fair. He concluded by saying that such a change could position the University very well.

Professor Brothen reported that the Senate Committee on Educational Policy has endorsed the idea of a Twin Cities campus curriculum committee. One issue that has led to its creation is the duplication of courses and the tuition flow between colleges; one concern is whether a faculty committee can do something about mission creep. President Kaler said he loves the University but its culture of

decentralization is not its best feature. Mission creep does happen but one cannot let it happen because resources are too precious. There are things he can fix by fiat but there are legitimate faculty arguments about courses; they are not wrong, and these kinds of debates need a faculty committee to develop rules and recommendations. It will be the administration's job to carry them out. He said he believed that would be the healthiest solution.

Professor Ehlke expressed thanks to the President for coming to the St. Paul campus and talking about UMore Park with the faculty—and added that she is glad he is reassessing the vision.

Professor Chomsky said she was pleased to hear about the President's interest in funding teaching innovation. She suggested considering a model used in the Multicultural Teaching Fellows program through the Center for Teaching and Learning. What they found successful was not simply handing out dollars to fund faculty projects but creating fellowships so recipients of the funds would meet together periodically to talk about their innovations and receive feedback and support, and also requiring that they disseminate in some fashion information about their projects, whether through brown bags in their units or presentations at conferences or some other way they chose themselves. The problem at an institution this size is getting faculty members connected and developing a communications structure so that innovative work is known by others who might adapt it for themselves. President Kaler thanked Professor Chomsky for the suggestion and said that Provost Hanson will pursue the project; he agreed that dissemination is important and said he did not want to nibble around the edges but wanted to work for significant changes.

Professor Bitterman asked if there would be a request-for-proposals process; the President said he thought so. Professor Bitterman suggested that such requests might align with the implementation of the summer semester; innovative teaching could be put in the new semester. The President agreed that is an idea worth thinking about.

Professor Bitterman also recalled that the gender-equity study did not include the Academic Health Center. The data, however, suggest that this is a University-wide problem and he urged that the health sciences be included. The President said he needed a longer and better-informed discussion around Medical School funding and related issues. He emphasized that he wants equal pay but surmised that the issues could be more challenging in the Medical School because of the many contributors to salary there.

Professor Cramer asked about the timeline for moving forward on the gender-equity study; would there be a review process in place in time to inform any 2013-14 salary increases? That seems to be a fair schedule, the President said. He said he did not want to make a commitment on behalf of Provost Hanson but it seemed reasonable.

Professor Bearinger said there needs to be comparability across schools in the Academic Health Center. President Kaler said she raises an interesting point that opens a conversation that is probably needed about field differences where fields are more heavily male or female. He said he did not know if that is a challenge that could be tackled and resolved.

Professor Bearinger also noted that in terms of innovative teaching, that is one of six criteria for NIH grants: One must demonstrate innovation, and the institution must provide matching dollars to compete. The University is not there yet.

Professor Ben-Ner said, apropos of teaching innovation and decentralization, that it would be better not to start with a request-for-proposals process but instead to put concrete suggestions on the table, such as the summer semester. President Kaler responded that the process for the summer semester would be different from advancing innovative teaching. In the case of the summer semester, he proposes to work with a group to develop a firm proposal; for teaching, however, there is a need to look at faculty proposals because he and the administration do not know the best way to use the money.

Professor Hayes commented, apropos gender equity there does not appear to be any obvious relationship between the degree of salary equity and the percentage of men or women in a field. The College of Science and Engineering (CSE), with proportionately fewer women than other colleges on campus, is in the middle of the spectrum in terms of salary equity while the School of Public Health, which has proportionately more women than CSE, appears to have more salary inequity. Professor Anne Joseph (Department of Medicine) has set up an analysis appropriate for the health sciences; they need to be included in periodic evaluations, and barring necessary differences in the analyses for the health sciences, the rest of the variables need to be as similar as possible to those looked at for the non-health-sciences disciplines. The President agreed that there needs to be a decision on the best methodology and then movement on a study.

Professor Cramer asked the President if he could comment on the graduate-student unionization effort. The President reported he had received a letter from the graduate-student organization indicating they had signed authorization cards from a majority of graduate assistants and had provided them to the Bureau of Mediation Services; the letter also asked the University to jointly petition with them for a union. The University will not do so. There will be an election if the cards are certified. What union will the graduate assistants belong to if they vote to unionize, Professor VandenBosch asked? The United Auto Workers, the President said.

Professor Cramer thanked the President for joining the meeting.

3. Department Chair/Head Terms

Committee members next reviewed information provided by the deans on the length of terms for department chairs and heads.

There is enormous difference across colleges, Professor Cramer observed; in some colleges, people actually want to be chair or head, while in others people much prefer to avoid the job. In the health sciences, it appears there is prestige associated with the position. Professors Bitterman and Pacala said that the positions come with many resources and considerable authority and independence; they are very prestigious. (Professor Bearinger cautioned that that description is not true for all of the health sciences.) So there are significant cultural differences, Professor Cramer observed.

If one comes in from the outside, Professor Luepker said, one must state a vision for the mission of the unit, which is very different from selecting an insider to serve a three-year term as chair. In the latter case, the person is not in a position to move the unit in new directions and serves more as a manager than a leader. That is, he said, a generalization, but largely true in his experience.

Professor May asked what the difference is between a chair and a head. Professor Cramer said that generally heads have more authority; Professor Luepker said it varies by school. The resource issue is critical, Professor May commented, as important as authority.

There is great variation across the non-health-sciences units of the University, Professor McCulloch said. She noted that she is in a college that was only recently put together and the units that came together had two different models, one that conducted external searches and one that had the practice of three-year terms served by an insider. There are differences even within colleges about what serves the unit best.

Professor Chomsky, commenting that she comes from a unit, the Law School, that has no chairs or heads, recalled that the Committee was asked if it had any advice for the deans arising from the Committee's survey and discussions. She said that she cannot look at the information the deans provided and conclude that there is one best model. The Committee could suggest that the subject be explored within the colleges and that information be provided to the faculties, describing the different models so that the faculties can consider whether other models might be appropriate for them.

Professor Ben-Ner said, with respect to differences across colleges, that much has to do with the size and complexity of the enterprise. In small units, the chair needs to assign teaching but everything else is up to the faculty member, and they can take turns being chair. In bigger units, especially those with labs, materials, assistants, etc. (such as the Medical School), there is a need for a different kind of leader. What he found surprising, he said, is the lack of systematic evaluation of chairs. That should be regular, periodic, and 360 degrees—that should be the mainstay of good management. He said he would like to see more faculty involvement in reviews because they are the main possessors of the pertinent knowledge.

4. Reviews of Administrators

Professor Cramer now welcomed Vice President Brown, Associate Vice President Paulsen, and Dr. Shultz to the meeting to discuss reviews of administrators.

Associate Vice President Paulsen recalled that the Committee discussed the comprehensive reviews of deans with Provost Sullivan last month and that she would not go over that process again, but said she would be glad to respond to questions. She said that Dr. Shultz, Associate to the Provost, has been in touch with incoming Provost Hanson and that he can carry any Committee concerns to her.

Professor Cramer said that the Committee wished to expand the discussion beyond decanal reviews to administrative reviews in general. As background, he said that to the extent there is discontent among those who are surveyed about the performance of administrators, the discontent often arises because they are not sure their voices were heard, or if they were, if any attention was paid to them. What mechanism can be adopted to make the process more transparent and leave fewer people feeling unhappy about it?

A standard process for review is applied in all cases, Vice President Brown commented. They solicit comments from many people but the review itself is private personnel data under the provisions of the Minnesota Data Practices Act. Her question is this: What is the Committee looking for? What the Committee has discussed, Professor Cramer responded, is providing a detailed description at the time of

comment solicitation to make clear what is to happen and who will see and use the result. (He noted that as chair of this Committee, he serves on the committee that reviews the deans; he has seen the files with the de-identified data and can report that every comment is indeed included.)

Professor Cramer recalled that the Committee has also talked about the fact that no administrator who has been reviewed is required to respond to the public or anyone; they could be urged that good leadership includes speaking to constituents about the review and its outcome. Professor Chomsky commented that sharing the results need not be in a public meeting; it could, for example, take place with a college consultative committee. These are like mid-semester course reviews, where one must respond and say what will change. There could also be a question in the next review: What feedback mechanism did the person have after the previous review and what did he or she learn? There could also be a question to constituents about what came from the review. This addition to the process could be more than just a suggestion to the person being reviewed.

Vice President Brown commented that one development in the technology market is software that allows rolling input. Her concern, she said, is that conducting a review only every three years creates a long gap; the new technology would permit reviews in real time. At the same time, if there were a "bump" in events, there could be temporary churning in reviews.

Professor Pacala said he would like to see something more substantial and tangible. Why not have as policy that as part of the review, the Provost will provide to the dean a short list of strengths and weaknesses and suggest that it be shared with the faculty of the unit. The dean ultimately can do so or not, but can be told that the items on that list are what will be followed up. Vice President Brown said she believes that is what happens now: The review identifies strengths and weaknesses; some may release it and some may not. What if the deans are urged to do so and someone does not? Professors Bitterman and Pacala both commented that failure to do so would itself be revealing and suggesting release of the list would be a good addition to the process.

Associate Vice President Paulsen agreed that what can be done in the future, beyond a "thank you" to those who participated in the review, is to suggest to the person reviewed that he or she communicate with constituents. It would be possible to have something written from the person reviewed indicating what he or she will focus on in the next year, Professor Cramer said; this can be a constructive process.

Professor Ericksen reported that the Morris campus chancellor was reviewed, and in that instance part of the review takes place on the Twin Cities campus and part at Morris. The Morris faculty heard nothing about the review. Any feedback would be regarded as extraordinary, such as what was done and who participated.

Associate Vice President Paulsen explained that in the case of dean reviews, which are conducted by the provost, post-review acknowledgements go back to the faculty and other review participants. Reviews of other senior administrators are conducted by other officers. Perhaps it would be helpful for the provost and other officers who conduct comprehensive reviews to get together and discuss with each other how they conduct and follow up on such reviews; each of them might learn something from the others who oversee comprehensive reviews.

These are good ideas, Professor May said, but there is a difference between a dean and a faculty member: The faculty have tenure and deans do not (in their position as dean). What if the overwhelming message from the faculty to the provost is "we need a new dean"? At that point the conversation is not about the next review or feedback. The question is whether the dean will be renewed in the position. Do the reviews make a difference? They do make a difference, Ms. Paulsen said. The conversation thus far presumes renewal and feedback and constructive criticism, Professor May said; it is a different question if it is about removal. The dean is not "fired," she said; the term ends, "thank you," and in extraordinary circumstances the person might be asked to take another term. The language about feedback and the next review assumes the dean is appointed for life. The reviews are used for constructive performance feedback and for decisions regarding reappointment, Ms. Paulsen confirmed, but they are a private personnel matter and under current law may not be communicated publicly by the provost or the University. The dean is in a public position, Professor May responded, and the reviews should not be private—that is how the University gets stuck with bad administrators for a long time. Vice President Brown reminded the Committee that some deans are not also tenured faculty members.

Professor Sheets said Professor Pacala's point is a good one: Deans should be expected to report back to constituents on the review. They can reveal as much or as little as they wish, and if the dean's communication is vacuous, the faculty will realize it. But if the dean says there are problems and he or she will try to address them, the faculty will see that the review meant something. His recommendation is that a report to constituents be obligatory; the dean can continue to keep the review itself private.

Professor Luepker noted that he has said before that the single word of importance is accountability. There is no public accountability with these reviews because it is said they are private data. He pointed out that he is evaluated a great deal, publicly; he said he would go farther than Professors Pacala and Sheets and say that it is not clear how a written abstract of strengths and weaknesses, made public, would violate any law. Right now nothing of substance is disseminated.

Vice President Brown said she is getting the message that the Committee sees reporting to constituents as an element of good leadership. Professor McCulloch said she believed such reporting should be mandated. The dean should report what he or she will devote efforts to improving during the next term in office so that there can be direct questions in the next review. That will be a helpful way to open up the process and people will respond to the surveys because they know something will happen.

It is exactly right to say what good leadership includes, Professor Chomsky agreed. It would be more helpful to view it as a constructive process to help develop the person, not a process that determines if they will be retained or fired; the review could take place midway through the term, and it would still be the case that a dean serves at the pleasure of the provost. A review can be about how things are going and there should not be a presumption that the person will go, that only in extraordinary circumstances would they be retained. Professor VandenBosch said she thought deans were initially appointed to a term and after that it was annual appointments. They may not even be annual appointments, Associate Vice President Paulsen said; they continue in office at the pleasure of the provost.

Legalities aside, Professor Ben-Ner said, if this is a top-down organization, there should be no questions about the evaluations. If this is a collegial organization, there should be some accountability. He said he views the University as a collegial organization.

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Professor Cramer thanked Vice President Brown, Associate Vice President Paulsen, and Dr. Shultz for joining the meeting, and adjourned it at 2:45.

-- Gary Engstrand

University of Minnesota