

Minutes\*

**Senate Committee on Educational Policy  
October 24, 1991**

Present: Stanford Lehmberg (chair), Victor Bloomfield, Thomas Clayton, James Cotter, Joanne DeMoss, Michael Handberg, Kenneth Heller, Karen Karni, Clark Starr, Susan Wick

Guests: Elayne Donahue (Athletic Academic Counseling), Elizabeth Grundner (Office of the Registrar), Darwin Hendel (Academic Affairs), Theodore LaBuza (Assembly Committee on Intercollegiate Athletics), Daniel Meinert (Men's Intercollegiate Athletics)

**1. Policy on Missed Class/Work**

Professor Lehmberg began the meeting by drawing the attention of Committee members to a draft policy requiring faculty to permit students to make up missed work in the event of verified illness or because of participation in officially-sanctioned University activities. At present there is no policy, he informed the Committee, and he is aware of instances where students were not permitted to make up missed work even though they were hospitalized for illness, which seems unreasonable. He also related that he had been in a meeting earlier in the summer and had been informed that students who participate in approved University events (in this case, athletic events) were denied the opportunity to make up missed work. If appropriate University regulations are followed, he said, the student should not be penalized.

Individual Committee members expressed several points of view on this issue:

- The exception for extra-curricular events is inappropriate; academic work should be first priority and the decision on permitting make up work should be up to the instructor. In any real sense, moreover, work cannot be "made up"; students are adults and have to make their choices.
- Faculty miss classes for lectures and meetings and that is seen as appropriate; it would be consistent to allow small and carefully regulated exceptions for students as well.
- Students are imaginative and could exploit the policy; there could be an endless string of requests for make-up work. The policy would be especially difficult for faculty who teach large classes.
- If a policy is to be adopted, there must be clear reference to the appeal process for the student. That appeal process, in any event, should not include SCEP.
- There should be a policy; it should inform faculty that if a student has a good and verifiable reason for missing class or an exam, the faculty member has an obligation to

---

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

permit the student to make up work.

-- The policy should only cover examinations, not classes.

The question of "reasonableness" ran through all of the comments made. After discussion, it was agreed that Professor Clayton would redraft the policy in light of the comments made.

## **2. Policy on Scheduling of Final Examinations**

Professor Lehmborg next turned to a draft policy on the scheduling of final examinations. He has been informed, he told the Committee, of instances where the final examination is scheduled for the last day of classes, which works a disadvantage on some students and also robs them of the last day of instruction.

Following brief discussion and a few amendments to Professor Lehmborg's draft, the Committee voted unanimously in favor of the following policy:

"There shall be no exceptions from the University final examination schedule except by concurrence of the department chair, the dean of the college concerned, and the University scheduling offices. This prohibition precludes moving a final examination from a scheduled time to study day or to the last or earlier meetings of the class. All requests for adjustment of final examination hours should be made on the form provided by the scheduling offices and submitted at least a month before the beginning of the relevant examination period. Instructors requesting any variation from the official examination schedule must agree to give a make-up examination to any student having examination conflicts or three examinations in one calendar day because of the change in hours."

The policy will be forwarded to the Senate Consultative Committee for placement on the docket of the Winter Quarter Senate meeting.

## **3. The 1994-95 Calendar, Twin Cities Campus**

The Committee next reviewed with Ms. Grundner the various options for the 1994-95 calendar. The problem the Committee confronted was whether to approve a Winter Quarter schedule which has only 8 Mondays, in order to permit a Study Day, or to eliminate Study Day for that quarter in order to permit 9 Mondays of instruction. (The shortage of "instructional Mondays" is caused by observation of the Martin Luther King holiday, which always falls on Monday.) To delay start of Winter Quarter by one week (in order to start on a Monday rather than a Tuesday) would then run Spring Quarter classes and exams past June 15, the last day of work for faculty on "B" appointments. It would also be possible to abbreviate spring break, but that option was presented to the Assembly two years ago and the Assembly rejected it.

After reviewing the options and factors, the Committee voted unanimously to approve the proposed 1994-95 calendar. It will be forwarded to the Assembly Steering Committee for placement on the Winter Quarter Campus Assembly meeting.

#### **4. Exemption Request from Policy on Scheduling Events on Study Day or Finals Week**

Professor Lehmborg next welcomed Dr. Donahue, Professor LaBuza, and Mr. Meinert to explain the request of the Department of Men's Intercollegiate Athletics (MICA) that the basketball team be permitted to play in a televised basketball game against Ohio State on Study Day of Winter Quarter, 1992. Existing Senate policy does not permit such an event; requests for exemptions must be approved by SCEP. Committee members were provided several pieces of material in support of the request, including information about possible legal difficulties with ESPN (which is scheduled to broadcast the game) and the final implications of canceling or moving it (possible forfeiture of \$100,000).

Mr. Meinert began by explaining that MICA supported the Senate policy and expressed certainty that this would be the only occasion on which the Department would request an exemption. Normal practice, in the Big Ten Conference, is for each institution to submit "black out" periods--times when events may not be scheduled. The problem arose, this year, because, for reasons which are not now clear, the "black out" period for the University only included the final examination period and not Study Day. (The Big Ten has, recently, clarified that the "black out" periods should include study or reading days.) Letters have also been sent to all coaches and the Western Collegiate Hockey Association making clear the University's policy; this will not in the future be a problem, Mr. Meinert assured the Committee.

With respect to the basketball game with Ohio State, he then explained, every possible alternative has been considered. Moving the game to a later day runs into finals week. Moving it back a day or so would mean that Ohio State basketball players would miss an additional day of class, in violation of OSU policies.

The impact on the student-athlete, Mr. Meinert said, has been the primary concern of the Department. Arrangements have been made so that the academic counselor to the team would travel with it on an earlier trip and time will be set aside for study; expectations for academic performance for the quarter would be established; other discussions have been held with Coach Haskins to ensure that special efforts to attend to the academic needs of the students will be made.

Committee members discussed the arrangements which had been made to provide study opportunities. One Committee member suggested that they provided for nothing more than what an average student would do under any circumstances rather than extraordinary efforts to provide time for study. It was also pointed out that travel time could be used more effectively for study.

Committee members inquired of its guests about a number of other factors pertaining to team travel, NCAA regulations, the role of the coach in emphasizing academic performance, the nature and timing of scheduling of basketball games, the amount of scheduled study time for student-athletes, and various alternative arrangements that could be made to provide time to the basketball players for study. Mr. Meinert concluded by reiterating that he wished this request did not have to be made and that it would be a one-time only event.

Professor Lehmborg thanked Dr. Donahue and Mr. Meinert for their comments and excused them from the meeting.

Committee members then reviewed with Professor LaBuza the history and procedures of ACIA

with respect to involvement in granting exemptions from University policy. Up until the adoption of the Senate policy, the responsibility for granting exemptions rested with an ACIA subcommittee on scheduling--which, for the most part, granted any exemption that was requested. More recently, however, the faculty have been less inclined to do so.

Also discussed were these issues:

- Time demands on student-athletes (now, by NCAA regulation, scheduled practice and weight-training may not exceed 20 hours per week, but that is largely bookkeeping inasmuch as it does not include travel, competition, or informal practice).
- The possible loss of income (a consideration, said Professor LaBuza, that is irrelevant in terms of dealing with the student-athletes) and the possibility of a lawsuit. SCEP, it was suggested, should make its decision on educational policy grounds and let the President make the final decision, taking all considerations into account.
- The ability of ACIA (rather minimal) to emphasize academic values and practices, in opposition to pressure from coaches, especially during the season of competition, on athletic performance.
- The proposed arrangements made to accommodate the loss of Study Day (seen as inadequate; the written proposal presented to the Committee, it was told, was weaker than an earlier version, which had been rejected).

Professor Lehmberg thanked Professor LaBuza for meeting with the Committee and excused him.

The Committee then deliberated whether or not to grant an exemption. It concluded that it had two options before it: 1) deny the exemption outright, or 2) grant a conditional exemption. In the case of the latter, the conditions would be that the Department prepare a more rigorous plan for providing the basketball players sufficient time for study in order to make up for the lost Study Day and that the plan be presented to SCEP for approval. Irrespective of the position SCEP takes, Professor Lehmberg noted, its vote would be advisory to the President.

**On vote taken, five Committee members voted to deny the exemption and four Committee members voted to grant a conditional exemption.**

Professor Lehmberg agreed to write a letter to the President informing him of the action of the Committee. If the President chooses to grant a conditional exemption, it was noted, the Department will be obligated to return to the Committee with a revised plan of study.

The Committee adjourned at 3:45.

-- Gary Engstrand