

Minutes\*

**Senate Committee on Educational Policy  
Thursday, June 9, 1994  
1:30 - 3:15  
Room 606 Campus Club**

Present: Kenneth Heller (chair), Anita Cholewa, James Cotter, William Van Essendelft, Gayle Graham Yates

Regrets: Craig Bursch, Thomas Clayton, Robert Johnson, Manuel Kaplan, Michael Pawlicki, Darren Walhof, Sara Hornstra

Absent: Megan Gunnar, Darwin Hendel,

Guests: none

Others: none

[In these minutes: Morse-Alumni award changes; calendar subcommittee]

[NOTE: The minutes of the meeting of May 26 incorrectly reported the number of students who will participate in the residential college pilot project; there will be 94 students, not 300. It should also be noted that the Senate Consultative Committee declined to endorse the 5/26 SCEP recommendations to change the teaching evaluation form. The form will thus remain the same as it was during the 1993-94 academic year.]

**1. Morse-Alumni Teaching Award Changes**

Professor Heller convened the meeting at 1:40 and turned to Professor Graham Yates to enumerate a series of possible changes to the Morse-Alumni award. She reviewed the procedures by which nominations and the awards are made, noting that some departments have a nominee every year while others have NEVER had a nominee and that the nomination process appears to be haphazard. She then made suggestions for changes in this, the 30th year of the awards.

- Recognize all the finalists--usually about 21 or 22--as winners, even though only ten receive the award and stipend. They could perhaps be identified as the college winners; those selected by SCEP would be the University-wide winners. Would the colleges dissent? Perhaps not if the announcements came before the identification of University-wide.
- There be a more extensive and standardized process for nomination. The Committee should not fix what isn't broken, but if there are good teachers who are not being

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considered, SCEP could be more active in urging each college to appoint a nominating committee to be sure there are nominees.

- The award dollars should be added to the base salary of the recipient, on the model of the Regents' Professors. This would require additional funding. (A rough calculation at the meeting suggested this would require an additional \$500,000.)
- Broaden the publicity about the winners and do something honorary, perhaps sponsor invited lectures by the ten winners, perhaps on undergraduate education (some might see that as punishment, it was suggested). Or perhaps for one quarter let them teach whatever they wish.

A corollary reason for increased publicity has less to do with the individuals than with promoting the University as a good place to get an undergraduate education, with these faculty as exemplars.

- Attach the award in some fashion to the Bush Sabbaticals.

Committee members then discussed these items and made the following points.

- The amount of money that would be required to add the Morse Award to the base salary of the recipient for life is not very large if one considers the University's focus on undergraduate education. Perhaps the Alumni Association could try to establish an endowment for this purpose--while the Committee should not be naive about the funding necessary, that should not bar consideration of the idea if it is otherwise a good one.
- If teaching is truly to be rewarded at the University, should the rewards come at this level or through the departments? If this, are departments willing to see the money taken off the top of the salary pool? The salary in perpetuity would probably increase the number of applicants.
- This would be an enforced contribution, but as a fraction of the salary pool it would only be a small amount. It would help entire departments, however, as an addition to the base salaries, and would also encourage better undergraduate teaching.
- Rather than spending that much money on Morse-Alumni winners, would it be better to spread it around to more people? The Committee could consider additional awards.
- There should be more faculty in the process, because there are some superb contributions to undergraduate education made by people who are never nominated. It was agreed that the Committee would ask Academic Affairs for a demographic summary of the nominees for the last ten years.
- Perhaps the invitation to nominate should come from SCEP, and should note that the process only needs to go through the college, not the department and that faculty members in other colleges can be nominated.

- The Senate could direct colleges that do not have a formal nomination process to develop one in order to ensure that nominations are made. It might be helpful for the colleges to have Morse winners serve on their committees.
- It was noted that the process to nominate really needs to begin NOW, even though announcements are made in January.
- Another possibility is to gather all the Morse winners once a year to talk about teaching and to offer their collective advice to the University on undergraduate education; the President should attend. They might also interact with the Board of Regents, as do the Regents' Professors, and could serve as an advocacy group for undergraduate education.
- The ceremony announcing and presenting the awards should be larger and more public than a gathering at Eastcliff. Intimacy with the President has its advantages, however, so perhaps both the public ceremony and the smaller group should be considered.
- The support of the Alumni Association for the awards must be gratefully acknowledged. Were the Foundation to become involved in raising money, its participation in the ceremonies would also be appropriate.
- Students should be encouraged, early Fall Quarter, to nominate faculty, and should be encouraged to contact departments about nominating faculty.

Professor Graham Yates then commented that the preparation of the dossiers may be a barrier for some candidates, because it is a time-consuming process. She itemized the requirements that now exist and inquired if they could be streamlined further than they have already. Several Committee members were reluctant to see information condensed and summarized any more than is the case at present, but they were also mindful of the comments of department chairs that the process is too much work. (In one department reported on, everything else shuts down for a day or so in order that the secretaries can prepare the Morse-Alumni nominee dossiers.) A screening process might be helpful, although that is the purpose the college processes are intended to serve. The possibility of a kit, with forms to fill out--thus eliminating worry about the appearance of the dossiers--was considered.

Discussion turned to the composition of the nominating committee. There was sentiment to open up the process, but it was also noted that the membership is somewhat constrained, in that members must come from the Alumni Association, from SCEP, and from among the previous winners. In addition, committee members typically serve 3-year terms, so on a 7-member committee, there are effectively only 2 or 3 new members any one year. Professor Heller said he would provide SCEP members sufficient notice so that they could come prepared to nominate individuals to serve on the committee, and agreed that the committee should be appointed early in the year so that it could oversee the entire nomination process.

Professor Graham Yates said she did not believe action on any of the ideas was necessary today, but said she would be responsible for developing concrete policy proposals for an early Fall meeting of SCEP.

## **2. Calendar Subcommittee**

Professor Heller then reported that Elizabeth Grundner, in the Registrar's Office, has asked for a subcommittee of SCEP to help her draw up the proposed calendar because she feels uncomfortable developing them for presentation to SCEP without Committee assistance. The calendar is a contentious issue that she should not have to tackle alone, he observed, and said he would be appointing a subcommittee next Fall to work with her.

Professor Heller then thanked the outgoing members of the Committee--Professors Clayton, Donaldson, and Phillips, Ms. Cholewa, and Tim Swierczek--for their service to the Committee. He commended the work of the Committee in responding to challenges and in improving proposals brought to it. Committee members also thanked Professor Heller.

It was noted that a summer meeting may be required if the Committee wishes to review the biennial request proposal.

Professor Heller then adjourned the meeting at 3:10.

-- Gary Engstrand

University of Minnesota