

Minutes*

Senate Committee on Educational Policy
Wednesday, May 19, 1999
1:00 – 3:00
Room 238 Morrill Hall

Present: Judith Martin (chair), Darwin Hendel, Gordon Hirsch, Laura Coffin Koch, Darcia Narvaez, Kathleen Newell, Palmer Rogers, Tina Rovick, Richard Skaggs, Suzanne Bates Smith, Thomas Soulen, Steven Sperber, Craig Swan

Regrets: Robert Johnson, Christine Maziar, Jeff Ratliff-Crain

Absent: Shumaila Anwer, Laura Beauchane, Angela Bos, Martin O'Hely

Guests: Professor John Adams (chair, ROTC Subcommittee); Executive Vice President Robert Bruininks

[In these minutes: report from the ROTC subcommittee; issues for next year (including the impact of the change to semesters, the liberal education requirements, the meaning of the 4-year degree, diversity, and student academic dishonesty); the legislative outcome (with Dr. Bruininks)]

1. Report from the ROTC Subcommittee

Professor Martin convened the meeting at 1:00 and welcomed Professor John Adams, chair of the SCEP ROTC subcommittee. She noted that there had been issues raised in recent years about who was responsible for the governance of ROTC and whether faculty were involved. Professor Koch last year led the effort to revitalize faculty participation.

Professor Adams distributed a handout about ROTC, and highlighted parts of it. There are three units (Air Force, Navy, and Army), each led by a professional officer, and each with about 80-90 students (including some from nearby colleges that do not offer ROTC programs). Most ROTC students receive support for their education through scholarships from the Department of Defense.

The three departments report to the Executive Vice President and Provost through Vice President Boston, and the SCEP subcommittee is to provide an overview of academic matters. The subcommittee consists of four faculty, three students from ROTC, and the three ROTC department heads. Asked if students participate, Professor Adams reported that there had only been one meeting this year (the subcommittee got off to a late start), and the students were not present, but the point was noted and he will arrange meetings so the students can attend.

The duties of the subcommittee include reviewing appointments. The ROTC programs hire temporary instructors, people who are here 2-3 years. They do not meet tenure-track criteria; they

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either have a Master's degree or are qualified to enter a University graduate program (and many work on graduate degrees while they are here, because advanced education helps them in their careers). The department heads all hold the Master's degree and carry a courtesy professorial title, and all who teach are officers.

Professor Adams said that on the basis of six months' involvement with the programs, he is satisfied things are run professionally, that the people are conscientious, and that the ROTC programs are pleased with Professor Koch's initiative and want to be part of the University.

No one at the meeting knew the number of credits one could take in a ROTC program toward graduation, but one cannot major in a military science program--all ROTC students major in a regular University program. There is a minor in Military Science offered through University College. The ROTC students are also free to major in whatever they wish, Professor Adams noted, and he promised to obtain information about credits and degrees.

In response to a question, Professor Adams said the subcommittee does function as a curriculum committee; he did not know what happened after the subcommittee review, because no changes have been proposed. Review by the Office of Student Development and Athletics would not constitute faculty review, it was said; it was also pointed out that many of the courses are set by the military, and are the same all over the country.

Students can join ROTC their first year in college, or early in their second year, but not after. Professor Adams said he did not know if the opportunity to be in ROTC is a factor in the decision of some students to come to the University. The scholarship seems to be an attractive feature, and they are also portable, so increase the competition among programs. Some students may take it for one year, and then decide whether to commit to ROTC.

Professor Adams reported that not all graduates receive regular commissions and go on active duty in the armed forces; some go into active reserve. The commitment, however, is for four years. Enticements are being increased, however, because the military is losing officers.

Professor Martin thanked Professor Adams for his report.

2. Issues for Next Year

Professor Martin next asked Committee members to identify issues that the Committee should focus on, whether there should be a retreat, and what issues a retreat might focus on. A number of suggestions were made.

-- Evaluation of whether the new semester calendar and curriculum is working better, or not, and what the role of SCEP should be in evaluating them. Evaluation of the liberal education curriculum should also be considered, including the new writing-intensive courses. (Professor Martin noted that there has been concern expressed by FCC about connecting the Council on Liberal Education more closely to the governance system; she also commented that SCEP may not be in a position to evaluate the new calendar and curriculum for a year or so after it has been implemented.) One concern is that once the change to semesters has been made, all the semester groups will disband; SCEP may need to take the oversight role and look at issues that arise.

-- What is the meaning of the 4-year degree in the United States? What goes into it? More and more, there is a connection between education and short-term employment; what role should SCEP play in furthering a different understanding of the links between education and employment. There is no group that looks at this issue.

One part of any such evaluation should include international education.

It is very important to distinguish higher education from short-term career goals, to distinguish between a university and a technical college (without destroying the links between them that already exist, and without negating the partnership degree programs), in order to clarify the mission of the University and to help students decide if they should be at a university or a technical college.

There are several things going on now that bear on this. Enrollment in two-year degree programs is dropping all over the country while enrollment in four-year programs is increasing. Students may be more interested in the latter because of the economic return, but any argument about the four-year degree should not be based entirely on economics.

It was agreed that faculty members who have given years of thought to what the curriculum should be might be invited to the retreat. Such a discussion might be at a retreat, or continued over the year, parallel to the FCC discussions of the University's intellectual future.

-- The climate for and recruitment of people of color. Might SCEP consider an annual review of diversity issues? This should include meeting the needs of students from diverse backgrounds as well as consideration of what students are being taught about diversity. Review of the diversity problems the University faces, and how it is addressing them, should be included.

-- There could be a look at the link between data and practices, such as that between data on the characteristics of students entering the University and how they could be useful in designing courses. Who is responsible to see that data are used to improve policies and practices?

-- The critical measures remain largely unchanged, except that there is one new measure relating to international issues. The measures need to be defined, and this requires conversation with SCEP.

-- Making available to students teaching evaluation data has happened in a small scale way; data from a few hundred instructors will be will available soon. This has not been pushed a great deal because all the data are quarter-based, and may not apply fully to semester-based courses. Next year the system will be designed so it encourages more instructors to release results, and the data will be made more a part of the registration system.

-- One Committee member claimed that cheating has increased because of the web, and the availability of items to copy. The Center for Teaching and Learning has a website on ways to minimize cheating (the website is <http://www.ipums.umn.edu/%7Egardner/cisw/>). Professor Martin pointed out that the Faculty Consultative Committee and the President have both charged SCEP to look at academic misconduct next year (after the reports about the allegations in men's basketball have been completed). It will be essential to look at procedures--what the University can do to support

faculty. The CHRONICLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION has had stories about the disastrous results for faculty when they pursue allegations of academic dishonesty.

Relatedly, the Committee should look at the Student Conduct Code. There is also language defining academic misconduct in the draft proposal Professor Koch has prepared concerning classroom expectations, and with the new writing-intensive courses, there will be opportunity to talk about what academic dishonesty means.

-- SCEP should look at the one-stop web site for teaching.

-- It has been some time since SCEP looked at advising. It should do so.

3. Discussion with Executive Vice President Bruininks

Professor Martin now welcomed Dr. Bruininks to the meeting, to discuss the outcome of the legislative session and the plans for Rochester. Dr. Bruininks said he had additional topics he wished to raise.

-- About the biennial request, Dr. Bruininks said the University should feel good, but there is disappointment because it could have done better. The result is a good budget, that allows the University to move ahead in a number of areas, but not as far as had been hoped. All the funds are recurring, unlike the last biennial appropriation, and it was also encouraging that the Governor and legislature affirmed all the ideas that were in the request.

In terms of what will be done, the administration will allocate 3% for compensation and encourage units to add funds from any sources; increases are to be based on merit and market. Instead of hiring 100 new faculty for enriching the undergraduate experience, there will probably be 20-30 hired. A major effort was made on behalf of the libraries; they will receive over \$1 million in recurring funds and about \$1.5 million in non-recurring funds. There will be about \$1 million for technologically-supported learning, but there were no new funds to improve advising or study abroad; funds for those will have to come from internal reallocation. The state established an endowment that will pay about \$8 million per year for health professionals education the next two years; the amount could increase in future years. Additional funding to support residents will also be available. (The amount for the Academic Health Center is about half of what the University requested.)

-- As part of the appropriations process, the University agreed to increase support for Rochester, and will spend about \$2.5 million over the biennium (of which about \$1 million will come from the AHC for allied health programs). Most of the funds will go to the colleges to shore up/increase what they are already doing.

Dr. Bruininks reviewed the commitments the University made to the legislature as well as the statutory language concerning Rochester. An academic plan is to be submitted to the legislature by January 30, 2000, and it will be brought to this Committee first. This effort will call for academic relationships across three cultures as well as integration with the business and non-profit sectors in Rochester. It is an important opportunity for the University, because it will be working in circumstances such as this in the future, and is a chance for research, development, and study of the use of organizational resources in higher education.

Programs at Rochester will be upper division, technical, and professional. Dr. Bruininks has talked with Dean Rosenstone about the role of CLA, there are opportunities for research and development ventures, for working in K-12 education, and so on. There is much that can be done that will also benefit the Twin Cities campus, if done wisely and strategically. This can be made to work if the University is thoughtful and creative. It would be hard to find a more loyal group of friends and alumni than those in Rochester, and the community values education highly.

Professor Martin urged that Dr. Bruininks return to the Committee if there is any way it can help.

-- There are tensions between funding student financial aid and support for the core institutional programs. Minnesota is among the most generous states in providing financial aid to students; with the new funds appropriated, it may be the MOST generous. These aid funds can be used at private as well as public institutions, and the private institutions will be the major beneficiaries of the increased funding. This may take students away from the University, said one Committee member, because they will now be better able to afford to attend private schools. That may not turn out to be true, Dr. Bruininks ruminated, unless the student and parents believe the high-quality private school is a better deal for the cost, but the University has been moving to improve quality, and this is all the more reason to keep improving so the University's education is the best one that can be obtained for the money.

-- Dr. Bruininks discussed a learning initiative, a set of ideas that are not formal now and may not be, to improve teaching and learning. He urged that the Committee examine a handout he provided and send comments/critiques to Ann Hill Duin or Geri Malandra. The goals, he said in response to a question, are to improve teaching and learning in all programs, so there is a better classroom experience, better faculty training, and a more positive learning environment, so that the learning and performance of students increases. The University's competitiveness would also increase. Dr. Bruininks pointed out that the state puts a large amount of money into the University as a teaching and learning institution, and the University has an obligation to think about how it delivers teaching and learning. There are a lot of people on the campus working on the SCIENCE of learning, in neurology and cognitive sciences, but very few know about such research. There have also been big changes in assessment and measurement of performance, and those ideas have to get into programs. Dr. Bruininks concluded that better and more timely graduation rates are important, but that they should flow naturally from doing the job right.

Assessment needs to be done with the learner, but also with the program, campus, and system. Is the University using the right indicators?

-- The Committee discussed with Dr. Bruininks proposals made to the Bush Foundation.

Professor Martin thanked Dr. Bruininks for joining the meeting, and adjourned it at 3:10.

-- Gary Engstrand