Minutes[*]

Senate Committee on Educational Policy
Wednesday, September 5, 2012
2:00 – 4:00
202 Johnston Hall

Present: Alon McCormick (chair), Thomas Brothen Lee-Ann Breuch, Megan Chock, Emily Combs, Robert McMaster, Nic McPhee, Thomas Michaels, Kristen Nelson, Jane Phillips, Leslie Schiff, Henning Schroeder, Elaine Tarone, Cathrine Wambach, Susan Wick

Absent: Barbara Brandt, John Cwodzinski

Guests: Kris Wright (Office of Student Finance); Professor Fred Morrison (Senate Committee on Finance and Planning)

Other: Suzanne Bardouche (Office of the Vice Provost and Dean of Undergraduate Education), Sharon Dzik (the Office for Student Conduct and Academic Integrity), Tina Falkner (Academic Support Resources), Jeannine Rich (University Senate Office), Vice Provost Gerald Rinehart

[In these minutes: (1) welcome, introductions, overview of committee charge; (2) resolution of appreciation; (3) policy review process; (4) plagiarism definition; (5) financial aid and student debt; (6) discussion with Provost Hanson]

1. Welcome, Introductions, Overview of Committee Charge

Professor McCormick convened the meeting at 2:00, welcomed everyone and called for a round of introductions, and reviewed the charge to the Committee. He noted that issues can come to the Committee from a multitude of sources, including the Faculty Consultative Committee, the provost, the president, committee members themselves, or just from the news. He also reviewed the list of issues pending.

2. Resolution of Appreciation

Professor Wambach reviewed the history of the appointment of the ad hoc committee to review policies on graduate education. She noted this Committee had just completed a review of all the existing educational policies and would have had to review the graduate-education policies in any event. She had worked with Professor Nita Krevans in the past and had been impressed by her commitment to graduate education and her ability to deal effectively with policy issues; Professor Krevans graciously agreed to chair the ad hoc committee. The subcommittee worked in a difficult environment to develop a new set of policies and get them through the variety of administrative and Senate committee processes to have them approved. It took the patience of a saint to get the job done and the Committee and the University are extremely fortunate that Professor Krevans and her

[*] 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.

colleagues on the subcommittee were willing to do the work; it owes them a great debt of gratitude for what they accomplished. Professor Wambach moved the following resolution:

> The Senate Committee on Educational Policy recognizes the outstanding contribution to graduate education made by Professor Nita Krevans, chair of the ad hoc Graduate Education Policy Committee, and her committee members Professors Ilja Siepmann, Linda Lindeke, and Ray Newman and graduate student Mandy Stahre. Under the leadership of Professor Krevans, and with support from the staffs of the Graduate School, the University Policy Office, and Academic Support Resources, the ad hoc committee worked from June of 2010 to August of 2012 to provide the University of Minnesota with an updated set of policies to guide graduate education in the 21st century. The University owes all of them a deep debt of gratitude and we are grateful for their service.

The Committee adopted the resolution unanimously.

<u>3. The Policy Review Process</u>

The Committee was informed about how policy proposals are dealt with once they have been approved by the Committee. Ms. Bardouche reviewed the contents of the "Uwide Policy Library" website, what policies look like, and how people can raise questions. She said that they do keep track of comments about policies so they can clarify language or add an FAQ. Policies indicate which campuses they apply to and, where applicable, there are links to specific campus resources on the same subject. Dr. Falkner reviewed the process that educational policies go through before they reach this Committee, a process that includes widespread discussion with appropriate groups (e.g., academic advisers) and identification of issues related to cost, implementation, etc.

<u>4. Plagiarism Definition</u>

Professor McCormick next took up the definition of plagiarism being proposed for the Student Conduct Code. He reported that Vice Provost Rinehart and Ms. Dzik had been working on revisions to the Code for some time and late in the process, when a definition of plagiarism had been developed and discussed in other Senate committees, the definition came to his attention and to that of faculty members in the writing program.

Vice Provost Rinehart told the Committee there was nothing earth-shaking in the Code revisions; they are intended to match the language to the practices. The plagiarism language struck a chord with a number of people and they have appreciated the conversations. This is a topic that crosses a number of boundaries—student affairs, undergraduate education, graduate education—and the language before the Committee has benefited from the discussions. The definition will go to the Board of Regents next week (as part of a broad review of the Code) for information and for action in October if the language is ready.

Ms. Dzik reported that a number of faculty members had seen the definition that was proposed and had raised questions, after it had been vetted with three Senate committees, so Professor McCormick convened a meeting with committee representatives as well as faculty members involved in the writing programs. She provided definitions used at other Big Ten schools and she also contacted peer institutions—and received dozens of definitions as a result of her inquiries. The language being presented today is a result of work with those faculty members and the different definitions that are being used around the country.

Committee members commended the language and bullet points that provided examples. They also endorsed the language suggesting that instructors and students need to have a dialogue about what plagiarism means in the context of a particular course and discipline and the responsibility of students to know what is required.

The Committee voted unanimously in favor of the proposed language. [Note: The language underwent further revision following this meeting as a result of suggestions from writing instructors and FCC; the final version will appear in the September 6, 2012, minutes of the Faculty Consultative Committee.]

5. Financial Aid and Student Debt

Professor McCormick now welcomed Ms. Wright to the meeting to join Vice Provost McMaster in a discussion of financial aid and student debt.

Dr. McMaster began by noting seven general principles to guide financial aid at the University, four additional principles specific to merit-based aid, and five additional principles specific to need-based aid. These principles have been endorsed by the provost and other University officers. They also have a financial aid group that meets every other week to discuss the principles, review data, and make recommendations. . He and Ms. Wright presented a series of PowerPoint slides providing information and data about student financial aid at the University. Some of the highlights were these:

-- The 2012-13 Cost of Attendance on the Twin Cities campus (resident undergraduate living on campus) is $24,872, or approximately $100,000 for four years. The cost of attendance is determined following federal guidelines and varies by campus, level (undergraduate, graduate, professional), whether living on campus or not, and whether resident or non-resident.

-- A student's financial need is calculated by identifying the Expected Family Contribution (EFC) and subtracting it from the Cost of Attendance (COA). The EFC is determined by the federal government through the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). The University, as with many public institutions, requires the FAFSA for all forms of aid.

-- Dr. McMaster presented trend data for the five years 2006-07 through 2010-11. Gift aid (Pell grants, state grants, University scholarships and other scholarships) increased from $85 million to $147 million; work-study remained the same; loans increased from $139 million to $177 million; there were also about $8-$10 million in waivers (varying by year). The total aid rose from $237 million to $337 million over the five years. Gift aid as percent of total aid rose from 36% to 44%; loans as a percent of the total declined from 59% to 53%. The lines are going in the right direction, Dr. McMaster observed.

Professor Wambach commented on using cost-pool dollars to support student financial aid. The colleges are paying money into the cost pool that then goes to aid, and that is where most of the increases in gift aid from the University are coming from. And private gifts, Dr. McMaster added. Ms. Wright said that the $30 million in Promise Scholarships has not changed very much in recent years but the way it is given to students has; it is now provided on a scale of need, which has allowed a greater proportion to go to the lowest-income students. But the pot of dollars has not changed much in the last three years. Colleges pay into the cost pool from their tuition revenue for student aid, so high-income students are supporting low-income students, Ms. Phillips observed. There are also state funds in the colleges, which are part of the college's O & M funds used to pay the cost pools, Dr. McMaster said, and the model of institutions providing need-based aid is one that is used all over the country.

-- The percent of Bachelor's degree recipients with no debt declined over the five years from 37% to 34%; the average loan indebtedness for Minnesota residents with debt increased from $21,027 to $25,786 (and $23K to $31K for non-residents).

-- The Cost of Attendance (Twin Cities resident undergraduate) rose from $19,258 to $23,058 over the five years; most of the increase was tuition. University scholarships increased from $28 million to $49.9 million and the average award increased from $2,924 to $3,599.

-- A bar graph depicted the share of cost of attendance (Twin Cities resident undergraduates) by parental income level and financial aid type: In general, the lower the parental income, the greater the amount of gift aid, and the higher the income, the greater the expected family contribution and the greater the loans offered and accepted. Dr. McMaster provided examples: Parental adjusted gross income of $25,000 would mean an expected family contribution of 0, of $50,000 would mean $4,750, and of $100,000 would mean $14,478.

-- There is an emphasis on affordability, effected in four ways: Strong need-based aid programs (e.g., U of M Promise scholarships for low-income and middle-income students), financial literacy programs, controlling tuition increases, and improving graduation rates (reducing the length of time a student is in school, and thus the student's costs).

-- The number of students with Pell grants increased from 5,542 to 8,553; the percentage of students with Pell grants increased from 15% to 22%, and the average Pell grant increased from $2,627 to $3,970. Dr. McMaster commented that the increase in the number of Pell-eligible students says much about the stresses on families and means the University must work harder to be sure it can provide adequate resources to students. Ms. Wright said that state and local support for aid has dropped considerably and the state is signaling it will no longer pay up to the cost of tuition plus fees. The Pell grant has increased—and so have the number of students receiving it. (She noted that Pell funding was increased by $60 billion because the federal government moved to direct loans.)

-- There has been a change in the distribution (percentage) of students (Twin Cities resident undergraduates) in various household income ranges between 2001 and 2011:

0-$30K	24%	20%
$30K-$48K	14%	8%
$48K-$75K	21%	12%
$75K-$110K	18%	16%
$110K+	9%	23%
Unknown	14%	21%

It has become more difficult for households in the middle ranges to afford to send students to the University. The University has become more attractive to students who do not need to file a FAFSA, from families with incomes over $110,000. Or less attractive to students who cannot pay, Professor McPhee commented. The financial aid model tries to provide funding to low-income students, Dr. McMaster responded. But there is a significant drop in rows 2 and 3 of the table, Professor McPhee observed, so students from those households are either going elsewhere or are not going to college.

Committee members discussed briefly the fear of indebtedness on the part of low-income families and whether this more true in the case of families with first-generation college students rather than those who have already had a student in college and better understand its value. Ms. Wright said that low-income households are risk-averse, the middle-income households are most likely to borrow, and the high-income households don't need to.

-- In 2011-12, undergraduates on all campuses earned $30.7 million through student employment.

-- Median loan debt in 2006 was $17,842; in 2011 it was $24,337. The average loan debt in 2006 was $19,484; in 2011 it was $27,086. Dr. McMaster noted the difference between the average and the median.

-- Dr. McMaster presented a table indicating the estimated minimum salary required for loan repayments (assuming 10-year repayment, 6.8% interest rate, and maximum of income for loan payment).

Amount	Monthly payment	Estimated Income Level
$10K	$115	$14,400
$20K	230	28,800
$30K	345	43,200
$40K	460	57,500
$50K	575	71,900
$65K	754	94,200

There are a variety of options available, Dr. McMaster pointed out, and one should not default on federal loans, but there are other loans one can get in trouble with, some of which are not forgivable even upon death.

-- Dr. McMaster also reported the average debt burden of students who have debt and graduate in four years ($28,426), five years ($35,958), and six years ($37,022). There are maxima for federal loans, Ms. Wright said, so students with higher debt loads (as undergraduates) are taking out other loans (such as one student who graduated from the University after six years with over $132,000 in loans). Many forms of student aid run out after four years, so students face higher costs because they must take out more loans.

-- Survey results from students at research universities suggest that many of them are cutting back on personal and recreational spending, many of them worry about their debt, but they increasingly believe (over 76% in 2011, up from 71% in 2009) that the benefits from attending the University of Minnesota were worth the financial costs.

-- They have conducted a campaign on fiscal literacy for students, Ms. Wright reported, and believe students received it well. It was part of Welcome Week.

Professor McCormick said that points for discussion later will be what can faculty, staff, and students do to emphasize four-year graduation and living like a student in order to avoid harsh loan payments later. And to emphasize that if students face a problem, they should come to her office, Ms. Wright added. They can sometimes change financial aid. Professor Wambach pointed out that financial stresses can conflate with family stresses and emotional problems; there are short-term funds available. Ms. Wright concurred, and said they also treat freshmen differently from juniors and seniors because the problems of the former can be more difficult for them to overcome.

Professor McCormick thanked Vice Provost McMaster and Ms. Wright for the presentation.

6. Discussion with Provost Hanson

Professor McCormick welcomed Provost Hanson to the meeting to discuss the issues she believed most important the Committee address and to set the tone for the year.

Provost Hanson began by saying there are policy matters on which she would appreciate receiving guidance from the Committee. One is the definition of a credit hour, something hugely important given the changes in the learning environment that have been facilitated by digital technology and important also for accreditation. The federal government requires a definition—and it has to be more than seat time. This is something the faculty must have control over. Another matter that needs Committee attention is the Twin Cities campus accreditation, including assessment. Provost Hanson said she would also like the Committee's opinion on program quality reviews.

Provost Hanson urged the Committee to engage in robust discussion of policy matters and devote less attention to reports that are available to all. She suggested the Committee think about pressing issues and be more proactive rather than reactive. One example is a focus on the educational quality of what the University is delivering and the character of faculty work. Apropos of the intersection of governance and the administration, she wished to underscore the importance of Committee involvement in setting policy and said it is not a good use of the Committee's time to just hear reports. There are big issues facing the University that need faculty guidance.

The provost reiterated the point that the University will devote considerable attention to the enhancement of quality, and to that end Vice Provosts McMaster and Schroeder are in the process of developing effective program reviews. It will be useful to have the Committee's views on how to structure the reviews and what campus-wide metrics would be desirable.

Professor Wambach observed that there has been considerable discussion of graduate program metrics and priorities in reviews. It sounds as if the provost is saying the reviews of graduate and undergraduate programs should occur together. Provost Hanson said that is what she is suggesting. That makes sense, Professor Wambach said, but it is a very different way to do reviews and it will require thinking through the process. Provost Hanson said she believed that is the direction the University must go and that it must engage in reviews on a more robust schedule that also considers research, faculty productivity, resources, and so on. The model for reviews needs to be changed.

Such an approach will require some flexibility, given the diversity of graduate programs, Professor Schiff commented. In the biological sciences, for example, there are many cases where there is no direct match between the undergraduate and graduate programs. It will not be easy to roll them into one review. Provost Hanson said she was thinking more about cases where there are academic units; where there are interdisciplinary units, they will need to be looked at all together—faculty research productivity, the graduate programs, the undergraduate program—but she agreed that there is a wide range of programs that will need to be accommodated.

Who organizes the review effort may also be different, depending on the program (graduate/undergraduate), Professor Schiff said. Faculty members can wear many hats and report to different academic units (for example Medical School versus College of Biological Sciences); some would be logical choices and some would not. Provost Hanson said she did not see this as a bar to reviews.

Professor McPhee asked if this process would be oriented only to the Twin Cities or also the coordinate campuses. Right now, they are just trying to figure out how to do the Twin Cities, Provost Hanson said, but in the long term, if it is about academic quality, it should involve all the campuses.

Ms. Phillips suggested it would help to tease out different elements of reviews, such as faculty productivity, educational policy, etc., because this Committee needs a narrower focus on educational policy and quality. That is precisely the way she hopes the Committee would think about reviews, Provost Hanson responded: From the standpoint of educational policy, what should be included in a holistic review? That is why she would prefer something more than just a reaction.

Professor Schiff said she knows about upcoming needs for faculty responses regarding accreditation: articulation of student learning outcomes, and assessment of those learning outcomes. Because faculty members can be reactive, in response to multiple requests for related information, are you thinking of program reviews before, during, or after the request for information about learning outcomes/ assessment of student learning outcomes? Simultaneously, Provost Hanson answered, because they are related, not disjoint. It is a difficult task to specify learning outcomes, especially at the undergraduate level, she said, but if one wants to talk about program quality, they must be addressed.

These questions also involve resources, Professor Breuch pointed out. Provost Hanson said that is not the place to start. Much work that has been done has been funded, Professor Breuch said, and should be built on. Provost Hanson said the Committee should think about how robust the discussion has been about quality measures for graduate programs. One must look for quality measures; the job of this Committee is to identify the ones the University should focus on. Implementation can be left to others. The business of the Committee is to advise on what the University should focus on to carry out its educational mission.

The focus cannot only be on quality of scholarship, Professor Tarone said. There may be programs that improve quality of teaching and learning across colleges or that are part of the land-grant mission.

Provost Hanson said that the allocation of resources is an administrative task. Guidance on mechanisms to use in doing so is where the faculty come into the process.

Professor Nelson commented that it would be beyond the ability of the Committee to advise as one "gets into the weeds" on which metrics to use with which programs. What the Committee can do is develop a process. The provost agreed that the process will instantiate differently in different programs.

Professor Brothen turned to the subject of the credit hour, which was originally established by the Carnegie Commission in the early 20th Century as a measure of faculty work when it was establishing a retirement system for faculty. He said that he had looked back at the 1922 Senate minutes, when the Senate defined the credit, and pointed out that it had been defined here as a measure of what students do. The whole question of the credit hour carries the implication that faculty members are "goofing off" by teaching online courses and there is a need to hold them accountable. It would be better to focus on what students learn. The University's definition of a credit hour does focus on student effort. Professor Tarone observed that faculty must spend a lot MORE time on online courses, not less.

Provost Hanson agreed that institutions use the credit hour in making faculty assignments but that it should be a measure of what students have done. Technology is making it difficult to use the credit hour as a measure of seat time. It would help if this Committee could provide a definition, because by doing so it would be helping with a number of large policy questions, including the integration of e-learning with the work that faculty have traditionally done.

Ms. Phillips observed that there were no colleagues from the Academic Health Center present and few on the Committee, so it might be best to appoint a subcommittee that includes representation from units that have more complicated credit structures. Professor McCormick agreed.

Professor McCormick thanked Provost Hanson for joining the meeting and adjourned it at 4:15.

-- Gary Engstrand

University of Minnesota