

Minutes*

**Senate Committee on Educational Policy
January 12, 1989**

Present: John Clark (chair), John Clausen, Jean Congdon, Roland Guyotte, Timothy Mazzoni, Shelley Thomas

Guest: Associate Vice President Dolores Cross

1. Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the December 8 meeting were approved as written.

2. Report of the Chair

Professor Clark reported that the change to the 50-minute hour appeared to be inching forward. There remains a question whether it will be implemented in Winter, 1990, or Fall, 1990.

Professor Clark reminded the Committee members that they had put on hold the examination of the ratio of credits to class hours; the matter had been deferred pending the outcome of a decision on the semester system. He inquired of the Committee if the issue should be disengaged from the semester question and brought back for consideration; the Committee reached no conclusion on what action it wished to take.

A task force on liberal education, Professor Clark informed the Committee, might be appointed in the near future; it will probably not be postponed pending the appointment of a Vice Provost for Faculty of the Arts, Sciences, and Engineering. The work of the task force will likely take long enough that a Vice Provost will be in office prior to its completion.

The Committee on Undergraduate Education will proceed with its examination of the issue of large introductory courses in the lower division.

Professor Clark reported that he had received a letter from Professor Brenner, chair of the Consultative Committee, about writing to the Governor and members of the legislature concerning the appropriation for the University. There are, he reported, rumors that the Governor's recommendation will be worse than what has been reported publicly. He wondered if a recommendation that was too negative might not induce a backlash; it could appear that the Governor was being vindictive. It was observed that the University could do a better job of informing the Governor of the contributions the University makes to the State; there is much being done about which there is little hoopla and about which the Governor does not know. There are also implications for educational programs, such as the assignment of money to programs, large classes, ICR money, and so on, and the Committee should therefore remain current on the appropriations process.

* 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.

3. Discussion with Associate Vice President Cross

Professor Clark welcomed Dr. Cross to the meeting and asked that she outline what she sees as her position responsibilities, what she is doing, and how SCEP might assist or support her efforts. Dr. Cross began by distributing a mission statement for her office (which is still in draft form) and a "Project Areas" handout which outlined her activities for the previous five months and for the near future. (A copy of those items are attached to these minutes.) Dr. Cross spent about an hour amplifying on the contents of the two items.

Asked what would be different about the University if all of her goals and projects were accomplished, Dr. Cross said that her office operates in a way different from comparable offices elsewhere. They run programs, she pointed out; here her office is intended to serve as a catalyst for change. What happens will depend on what the colleges do. Some of what happens will depend on the total infrastructure of the University--registration, financial aid, etc. She said she was not hopeful that there would be quantum leaps in increases in the number of students of color at the University, especially with enrollment caps, but the University will do better in retention than it has in the past. There will be a problem in attracting students of color, she said, as well as non-minority students, because the University will lose a recruiting edge if there isn't a diverse culture at the institution. Students will learn this, she commented; it is needed for leadership training and one must have colleagues of all types upon whom one can call.

One Committee member noted that there are problems in the K-12 areas and asked how her office would address those problems. Dr. Cross said they are looking at early awareness and pre-college programs, but what they can accomplish will be dependent on the funds available. They are doing exposure work with 6th graders, which is an important time to intervene, but the main task will be to work with the deans to make plans for the colleges to undertake such activities. She agreed that her office could be of help to the colleges in working with elementary and secondary education but also warned that she could be overwhelmed; she had to clarify what her office responsibilities would be. She noted that it was unclear how the success of her office would be measured and much of the success it might achieve will be very dependent on what the colleges do. Dr. Cross pointed out that she understands a lot of good students are not opting to attend the University because they believe there is a more hospitable climate at other institutions; she noted, by way of example, that the University of Michigan has recently hired 14 new black faculty members.

One reason that the University may be losing high school students to other institutions and states, Dr. Cross observed, is because the University does not follow up on application and admission material. Students need to see reasons why they should come to the University and have not felt there were compelling reasons to do so.

Dr. Cross told the Committee that hiring and retention of minority faculty members has been more difficult than she thought it would; her office will continue financial support for an array of activities and programs which can lead to increasing the rates of hiring minority faculty members.

Asked if her office would become involved in curricular sensitivity to people of color, she said it had not, yet, but she had been asked about the matter. Dr. Cross commented that one way she would see

to approach that issue would be through a task force on the liberal arts, adopting an approach that would integrate it in larger concerns, rather than through a compartmentalized approach to departments and courses.

Dr. Cross concluded by telling the Committee she would like to work with it in the future on the liberal arts curriculum and diversity.

4. Discussion with Dr. Darwin Hendel

Dr. Hendel returned to the Committee, following his presentation in December, to inform it that the proposal submitted had been accepted by the Task Force on Quality Assessment. It now remains to be seen if the legislature will fund the projects which the Task Force has approved. If it does, they will move ahead; if not, the University will have to decide if it wishes to fund the pilot project out of its current resources.

In the course of discussion, Dr. Hendel said there was considerable interest, among the 30 faculty with whom he had worked, in assessing student learning and critical thinking ability. He observed that not everyone defines critical thinking in the same way; another controversy is whether or not critical thinking can be taught in the general sense or if it must be embedded in the disciplines. He expressed hope that if the project is completed there will be spin-offs which are of use to the faculty in curriculum development and revision; it would be desirable, too, he said, to connect the results with curriculum revision efforts currently underway in Agriculture and at Morris. The results could also help develop thinking on possible revisions in the liberal education requirements.

Dr. Hendel said he believed that those involved with the assessment effort were moving in an appropriately cautious fashion; some states have made horrible mistakes from which it has taken them a lot of time to recover. He reported that he had been invited by the Educational Testing Service to participate in a project to redefine outcomes assessment measures. He said that he would keep SCEP informed as events proceed and would be glad to engage in discussion whenever it wished.

5. Enhancement of the Morse-Alumni Teaching Award

Professor Clark reminded Committee members of contents of the letter that he had received from Associate Dean Jorgenson about their previous discussion of enhancing the Morse-Alumni teaching award. He reported that the Senate Finance Committee had also discussed the improvement of the award; it had shown the same resistance to a lifetime award that SCEP members had earlier expressed but Senate Finance wanted some kind of firm recommendation from SCEP before it acted.

Professor Clark also reported that he had talked with Associate Vice President Steve Roszell about the possibility of the University Foundation providing funds to enhance the award along the lines that had been discussed by SCEP. Roszell, he said, had been enthusiastic about the idea and had proposed that an endowment be created to fund the awards; he thought it might be possible to establish and fund such an endowment within a year or so.

The Committee decided to reaffirm its previous position on the structure and amount of the award: For three years, with a stipend of \$5000, one-half of which would go directly to the winner of the award

and the other half of which would be available to the individual through his or her department for the further enhancement of undergraduate education at the University. The Committee also decided that there should be ten such awards, initially, but that as and if additional funds could be raised for an endowment, the number could be increased. One concern was that the work required of those who must identify the winners could become overwhelming; it was suggested that the appointment of a separate committee, analogous to the Regents Professor Selection Committee, might be necessary.

The Committee adjourned at 4:50.

--Gary Engstrand

University of Minnesota