

Minutes*

Faculty Consultative Committee
Thursday, January 20, 2005
1:15 – 3:00
238A Morrill Hall

Present: Mary Jo Kane (chair pro tem), Gary Balas, Susan Brorson, Jean Bauer, Charles Campbell, Carol Chomsky, Tom Clayton, Gary Davis, Dan Feeney, Emily Hoover, Morris Kleiner, Kathleen Krichbaum, Scott Lanyon, Judith Martin, Fred Morrison, Jeff Ratliff-Crain, John Sullivan

Absent: Marvin Marshak, Martin Sampson

Guests: President Robert Bruininks

Other: Kathryn Stuckert (Office of the Chief of Staff)

[In these minutes: (1) strategic planning; (2) election of FCC chair for 2005-06; (3) Coalition on Intercollegiate Athletics; (4) appointment process for athletic committees; (5) Nominating Committee nominations; (6) Senate vice chair; (7) discussion with President Bruininks]

1. Strategic Planning

Professor Kane convened the meeting at 1:20 and explained that she was serving as chair because Professor Marshak had been called out of town. She then reported that Professor Marshak has suggested that this Committee, independent of the academic strategic planning committee and the administration, identify what elements it believes essential for any plan developed to reach the goal of being one of the top three public research universities in the world. The Committee should assess what the University must do if it is to reach that goal. She added that the Committee must act quickly if it is to have any impact because the President has asked for a report from the strategic planning task forces (academic and administrative) by the middle of March. First, she asked, is this something the Committee wishes to do?

There was general consensus that the Committee should formulate its own list. Professor Feeney agreed but said it should not be a "back door" approach. The Committee should present its views as part of the process. And not at the 11th hour, Professor Kane added. Others on the Committee agreed with both points. This would be another set of eyes on what will happen, Professor Martin said.

Professor Kleiner inquired how far the University was from the goal. What metric will be used to assess whether it achieves this goal? According to a study by the University of Florida, the University of Minnesota is already among the top three public universities in the country. Could not the University just declare victory? It is ranked 33rd in the world, however, Professor Martin observed.

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The Committee agreed that an ad hoc subcommittee of Professors Marshak, Martin, Ratliff-Crain, and Lanyon would develop a report and present it at the meeting in two weeks.

Committee members discussed several facets of strategic planning.

- Are the coordinate campuses developing their own plans (they are) and will they be integrated into the whole (presumably they will).
- From what perspective is the University seeking to be among the top three public research universities? The entire system? The Twin Cities campus?
- The Senate discussion of strategic planning was quite thoughtful; one question asked was what it means to be among the top three. Is this hooking the University to a model of the past? The FCC statement should be linked to the Senate discussion.
- It may be that the goal of being in the top three is inappropriate, but for the Committee to take that position is to challenge the goal and it is not a "friendly" contribution to the strategic planning process. But the goal can be incorporated in the Committee's statement; the "deeper" part of the process must define what the goal means in order to make sense of proposals. Now it is not clear what that goal means. It is possible to think about what the goal means without challenging it; the question is how to articulate it the next level down in the process. Until there are specifics, it will also be easy for critics to say that the University has not achieved the goal; it must be defined clearly.
- This goal is being set at a time this state is dis-investing in higher education and when other states are INVESTING in higher education. In some ways it is a "goofy" goal, given the political and economic situation.
- The subcommittee should identify benchmarks for measuring whether the University has achieved the goal. It should define what THE UNIVERSITY means by being among the top three, not what others might define it as. Leave the goal intact and identify how to attain it.
- The Committee should talk about what the goal means for how faculty do their work and how they teach their students—how they allocate their time and what they do every day. It was said that the strategic planning process is moving toward doing this but without adequate consultation; the discussion should build the plan, not react to it.
- The Provost said at the Senate meeting that more specifics and implementation will not be discussed until the Board of Regents accepts the larger goals. The subcommittee can begin to flesh out details without being an adversary—it will simply start the process a little early. It should flesh out the goals, not the implementation (but, it was said, if one cannot identify how to implement the goals, one does not understand them).

2. Election of Chair for 2005-06

The Committee elected Professor Chomsky chair for 2005-06.

3. Coalition on Intercollegiate Athletics

Professor Kane next reported that she and Dr. Engstrand had attended the meeting of the Coalition on Intercollegiate Athletics earlier in the month. The Coalition is a group of about 45 faculty senates from Division IA schools across the country seeking reforms in college sports. At the meeting, the members debated, amended, and then voted to send to institutions an academic integrity document that included best practices, some proposed NCAA bylaw amendments, and some long-term goals. The specific areas the document dealt with were athletic scholarships, scheduling of events, competitive seasons, and the role of faculty in admissions and reviewing academic performance of athletes, among other things.

Professor Kane said it had been an interesting meeting and that it is important that senior faculty and faculty senates have a voice in sports reform. She said she was not sure what the lasting impact of the Coalition's work would be, but the faculty must have a voice.

Professor Hoover said she did not believe that faculty had much of a role in admissions. How does it work, she asked? Committee members did not know. Professor Martin suggested it was appropriate for the Committee on Educational Policy (which Professor Hoover chairs) to look into admissions.

One problem with the document is that it uses a one-size-fits-all approach, Professor Kane said. The vast majority of athletes do just fine; the problems tend to be special admits and a small group of athletes in the men's revenue-generating sports.

4. Appointment Process for the Athletic Committees

Professor Kane reported that a question has been raised about how the Advisory Committee on Athletics and the Faculty Academic Oversight Committee for Intercollegiate Athletics are appointed. At present this Committee appoints the members of FAOCIA and nominates the faculty members to the ACA (who are appointed by the President). Should the responsibility for appointments and nominations be delegated to the Committee on Committees? She asked for the views of the former chairs of this Committee, Professors Feeney and Martin.

Professor Martin said that the job is not "fun" but that it is not onerous. This Committee takes steps to ensure there is appropriate balance on the two athletic committees. Professor Feeney said the existing process is akin to the separation of church and state; this Committee should keep its hand in the appointments to be sure appropriate individuals are appointed.

The Committee agreed without further ado that it wished to make no change in the appointment process for the two committees.

5. Nomination of Nominating Committee Members

Professor Kane next noted that this Committee (the Twin Cities subset) is responsible for identifying candidates to fill vacant positions on the Nominating Committee (the body that identifies candidate for the Committee on Committees and the Faculty Consultative Committee). Professor Martin

noted that those whose terms expire are all eligible for reappointment and suggested asking all three to continue.

Professor Campbell, one of the three eligible for reappointment, declined to be reappointed. The Committee agreed to identify candidates to replace him and other retiring members who may not be reappointed. It was also agreed that those selected for appointment should be individuals who are known by, and know, large numbers of faculty in order that they can cast the net more broadly when identifying nominees for FCC and the Committee on Committees.

Committee members were asked to send names of potential nominees to Professor Marshak.

6. Senate Vice Chair

Professor Kane reported that this Committee traditionally nominates one individual to serve as vice chair of the Senate (the Senate must elect the individual). She nominated Professor Martin, who then left the meeting temporarily.

Professor Balas asked about the perception among some faculty that participation at this level of the governance system appears to be confined to a small group. Professor Lanyon said it is desirable for others to be brought into the governance system but at this level the individual nominated should be someone well-versed with governance and the issues.

The Committee voted unanimously to nominate Professor Martin to serve as vice chair for 2005-06 and also to serve out the remainder of Professor Wells's term for 2004-05.

7. Discussion of the Governor's State of the State Address and Discussion with President Bruininks

Prior to the President's arrival, Committee members spent time discussing the Governor's State of the State address, and in particular the recommendation for a new university in Rochester and to divert funding from institutions to students. The discussion of these issues continued for about half an hour after the President joined the meeting.

The President also reviewed the status of the strategic planning process. He noted that Provost Sullivan would speak on the subject at greater length with the Committee next week.

Professor Kane thanked the President for joining the meeting and adjourned it at 3:10.

-- Gary Engstrand