

Minutes*

Senate Committee on Educational Policy
Friday, February 18, 1994
2:15 - 4:00
Room 626 Campus Club

Present: Kenneth Heller (chair), Craig Bursch, Anita Cholewa, Thomas Clayton, Megan Gunnar, Robert Johnson, Manuel Kaplan, Michael Pawlicki, Carla Phillips, Gayle Graham Yates

Regrets: James Cotter, William Van Essendelft

Absent: Sue Donaldson, Darwin Hendel, Darren Walhof

Guests: Vice President Anne Hopkins

Others: none

[In these minutes: Copyright (briefly); University College; undergraduate education and other initiatives with Vice President Hopkins]

1. Report of the Chair

Professor Heller convened the meeting at 2:20 and began by distributing a copy of the Regents' policy on ROTC. The Board of Regents reviews its policies on a regular cycle; the ROTC policy is now one of the ones being reviewed. Inasmuch as SCEP has responsibilities with respect to ROTC programs, the Committee has been asked to review it. He asked Committee members to review it and to be prepared to discuss it at the next meeting. One Committee member inquired if the policy had done any harm; another suggested that "if it ain't broke. . . ."

* * *

Professor Heller then noted that discussions of copyright had been taking place in the Senate Library Committee. He reported that the libraries have been urged to urge universities to try to persuade publishers to be reasonable and to push for a reasonable class packet policy. By law, now, one cannot have packets of class materials assembled from copyrighted materials (unless copyright permission is obtained for each item in the packet). The libraries can prepare lists of course materials so that students can get them from the reserve desk. This situation, observed one Committee member, seems hopelessly complicated and a waste of time compared to the provision of course packets and universities should do all they can to remedy the situation. It was noted that anything can be in a course packet provided the faculty member prepares far enough ahead that copyright permissions can be obtained--although that permission must be obtained each quarter.

*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 reflect the views of, nor are they binding on, the Senate or Assembly, the Administration, or the Board of Regents.

The process costs everyone money and is counter-productive for all, said one Committee member; universities should seek an automatic permission mechanism for course materials. This process encourages faculty to NOT update their readings if they do not do so ahead of time. The most absurd case, recalled one Committee member, was when a faculty member wished to use part of a manual that that individual had written and for which the University held the copyright--copyright permission still had to be obtained each time the manual was to be used.

One concern is that students, whenever possible, will bypass the process by simply not reading the materials because obtaining them is so complicated and expensive. Nor will putting readings on reserve at the library work for larger classes, pointed out another. Committee members appeared to agree that this was more than just a matter of convenience for faculty members; either students are frustrated trying to obtain materials or do not do so. Another alternative is that faculty members assign more books but then only use parts of each--which is more costly for students. The concern, said one Committee members, "is the impact on what we teach if we are bound by this idiocy."

There appeared to be agreement that Professor Heller should invite representatives of the libraries, the copyright office, and perhaps Copies on Campus, to discuss the issues with the Committee.

* * *

Following brief discussion, the Committee agreed it did not need to have a presentation from the Council on Liberal Education at this time.

2. Discussion of University College

Committee members then took up University College; Professor Heller inquired if there had been any reaction to the discussion with Vice President Allen. One reaction he had been informed of is that the changes in the UC concept were not considered a good idea by some faculty. The original idea of UC would allow more homogeneous classes of students so that teaching could be directed at the needs of students. UC now appears to be a means to address administrative issues of expanding the hours for University classes.

One Committee member repeated observations made earlier: the idea of the earlier plan was more attractive from an educational viewpoint. The plan now is more focused on practical issues but it is not a significant educational accomplishment because it is oriented to student services.

The resources question also arises; UC will cost more, and it will certainly cost departments more. Even if they receive the necessary funds for salaries, the administrative expenses will also increase.

It seems that things would be no different between CEE and UC, concluded one Committee member. Does not the plan now represent the "research university" taking responsibility for CEE? Others thought that sounded about right. From the point of view of the research university, the report calls for one academic standard, to be lodged in the departments. The departments will have responsibility for all courses and academic standards of those courses. The budget, presumably, will follow the responsibility. In principle, that responsibility exists now, but departments take it with various degrees of seriousness because the budget does not follow the responsibility. Departments are reimbursed

less for CEE courses than for day school courses.

There are at present 26 degrees that can be obtained through CEE, recalled one Committee member. Essentially all are offered through regular departments. It has also been said that a number of students are full time because they take day school courses part-time and supplement them with CEE courses. Students are taking CEE courses toward research university degree programs--and those courses are populated by a heterogeneous population of students. Are the standards the same? That is correct, said another, and the proposed UC will not do anything about that problem of having different types of students in a class. Are there really students with very different educational needs? The report says not; it treats them all the same. If the courses are all the same, it was then asked, why cannot one obtain a research university degree through CEE? That is what happens now; all of them are University of Minnesota degrees, it was pointed out. Then if there is no differentiation, and if the 26 degrees that can be obtained through CEE are only a small portion of the total number of degrees the University offers, the report is really about a 7-day-a-week, 24-hour-a-day university.

One Committee member argued that CEE students ARE different educationally. Many of them enroll for THAT COURSE only. One has the impression that often they take courses without advising or the attachment to a program. They do not have less ability and not less well prepared. Most, however, are not earning a degree--they are INTERESTED in a course or sequence of courses. Students who apply for admission to a program and attend on a part-time basis are ostensibly subject to a set of academic standards and advised systematically. The latter group is very different from occasional students.

How would this possible difference in students affect the educational process, inquired another Committee member? Would they be taught differently? They don't bring the same knowledge to the course, it was said--and that may be a matter of prerequisites. Some colleges are quite casual about prerequisites in CEE, which may be a problem.

In the new scheme of things, said one Committee member, it would be up to the departments to enforce prerequisites. CEE has not done so because it does not have the means. That problem would be eliminated were there a single registration system for all students. The plan still does not address the problem of tailoring courses to fit the needs of different types of students. Are there academically different students, it was asked? Committee members suggested that CEE students are somewhat different--in many cases stronger--in background and wisdom than day school students, but that they have the same expectations in their courses.

It was said that day students in CEE are in many cases students who were unable to get into the day session course offering. What the report has indicated, observed another Committee member, is that the University must be open more hours.

3. Discussion with Vice President Hopkins

Vice President Hopkins joined the meeting at this point; Professor Heller welcomed her and told her the Committee would probably wish to review the teaching evaluation process later in the year. She related to the Committee what had occurred thus far and promised to provide a copy of the materials that have been distributed by Measurement Services.

- A letter will go shortly to chairs and heads to remind them that units must have in place a process for peer review beginning next fall; most, she surmised, do not have one.
- Her office has not checked to learn if units have used the teaching evaluation form; that seemed inappropriate. Data on use will be prepared, and if entire units are not following the policy, action will be taken.
- The teaching evaluation policy has had an impact on promotion and tenure; the information being provided is much better.
- The exemption of courses with more than two faculty members may not have been a good idea.
- The one question on the survey that appears to be most-disliked is the one asking if the faculty member knows the material; perhaps it should be reconsidered. That is up to the Committee, she said.

Overall, she concluded, the process is working fairly well. Most of the complaints about it came early in the year; she has heard little recently. The Measurement Services Center staff, she said, have done an outstanding job.

Discussion turned to evaluation of TAs and adjunct faculty. Dr. Hopkins observed that CEE requires evaluation of all courses; she said she did not know if they were using the same forms. CEE's policy does not address the question of evaluating adjunct faculty and TAs in the day school. There appeared to be consensus that the Senate policy should include them and the issue will be joined when the Committee reviews the policy in Spring Quarter, at which time SCEP could propose to amend the Senate policy.

It would also be appropriate, said one Committee member, to look at the mechanisms for hiring adjunct faculty, especially if their role will become more important in University College. In the colleges that report to her, Dr. Hopkins reported, they are the same standards and practices for hiring adjunct faculty as for other faculty. The issue with University College is how to get departments invested in the process, how to make them see it as important. Now, agreed a Committee member, it seems that very little attention is paid to the quality of adjunct faculty and there are no reviews comparable to the annual and promotion and tenure reviews for regular faculty. In one unit, it was reported, adjunct faculty for Summer Session are not carefully screened--whoever applies is hired--and there is no evaluation at the end of the term.

Dr. Hopkins concurred and said it is unclear how to get at the issue. If a department takes the adjunct faculty designation seriously, it will conduct evaluations and reviews parallel to day school procedures. Some units do so. This is a crucial issue for UC and the next phase of planning will have to identify mechanisms. The Committee might think about enticements and mechanisms so that departments take the responsibilities seriously.

Attention then turned to undergraduate education; Dr. Hopkins reported on a number of matters.

-- There is in the \$16.5 million supplemental legislative request a significant amount for the computing infrastructure (not just for undergraduate education), including funds to connect faculty to the Internet, to wire classrooms, for classroom instructional equipment, and for such things as cleaning equipment so the janitorial staff can clean up. This last issue, Dr. Hopkins related, is probably the one she has heard from more faculty about than any other. Also an issue are low-tech supplies for classrooms, such as chalk; the University cannot have a lot of high-tech classrooms when some classrooms don't even have low-tech items such as chalk.

-- Funds from both the legislative request and the Strategic Investment Pool (SIP) may be used to finish the registration system. It will be computerized so students can self-register, without lines; it is being tested now and it is hoped it will be up next Winter Quarter.

Two related registration issues arise (telephone registration and merger with the CEE registration system). There is uncertainty about which will occur first, but both will be done. Telephone registration will be very user-friendly and relatively easy to accomplish once the system is in place. Her view is that telephone registration system should follow the merger of day and CEE registration so that it is available to everyone; if it precedes the merger, students enrolling in both units will register by telephone for day school and manually for CEE.

There are policy questions that need to be resolved, such as with respect to student fees. Some students take a small number of day courses and more CEE courses to avoid the student fee. In addition, CEE charges by the college offering the course while the day school charges by the college of enrollment.

-- The most useful technological system will be APAS; when it is done, students can obtain their record, see where they are, check on their progress to a degree, learn what they still need, and what alternatives are. The problem is transfer credits; some will have to be entered by hand. There must also be a way to enter exceptions granted to students so that the system does not flag it every time the student checks the record. The University, Dr. Hopkins reported, has worked on this very carefully over four years and is getting the glitches out; other institutions installed it quickly, ala the University's approach to CUFS. The system, with very short lag, will pick up entries on the transcript.

Computerized registration, Dr. Hopkins affirmed, will permit a student to select from alternative courses if the desired one is already full. This will also permit departments to monitor enrollment and to add sections if all become full. The schedule, she pointed out, is now on Gopher; one can call it up and look at the information for every section and every class. The registration system will have weaknesses; a student can change courses constantly until enrolled in the ones wanted, and it will not record requests--so one cannot accurately monitor the nature of demand. But if departments monitor enrollment they can respond--a course will not suddenly have 50 students in it, but rather demand will build and a course will close, at which time a department can act.

It is not clear how course overrides will be handled, but Dr. Hopkins said she assumes they

will be, somehow. Holds will bar a student from registering, but that is already true.

There are no plans to optimize registration rather than function on a first-come, first-served basis (i.e., let the computer take all student registrations and optimize the choice for the entire group). Dr. Hopkins said that systems can be arranged to attend especially to a group, such as freshmen. That has been a problem; orientation ends two weeks before classes, so many freshmen enroll too late to get the classes they want. Students enrolling early, it was said, often don't care about which section they take, but their choices then block later students from taking sections they DO care about. The system also does not permit allowances for work schedules, so that students could block out times and be given priority for classes during that period.

- Asked if there ever would be a way to enter grades directly on computer, Dr. Hopkins said there is; the problem is with security. She suggested the Committee talk with Sam Lewis about the issue and urged that the registration and APAS systems be completed first.
- Dr. Hopkins reported she has prepared a request for SIP funds for a residential college, something upon which a CLA/IT planning committee has been working. The literature on student success says that two-way relationships are important--student to student and student to faculty, so the attempt will be made to create a residence-hall-based group of about 200 students. This will be an experiment and will not cost a great deal; if it goes well, one will also be offered in St. Paul; if these work out, more could be developed in the future. One of the central questions of U2000 is how to enrich the educational experience; this is one attempt. The University cannot do everything for every student--that mentality must be abandoned. It is too expensive and defeats everything at the outset. And not all students will want a residential experience. The deans and some faculty in both CLA and IT are interested, and it will be designed so that students can be recruited to it in Fall, 1995. The cost to the student will be zero except for usual costs of tuition, fees, room and board, etc. Students in the program will have to agree in advance to take a common set of core courses; that is part of signing on to the community. There will also be an advising component and a faculty component.
- Later, Dr. Hopkins said, consideration will be given to how the honors experiences can be enhanced.
- The quality of applications to the University is slightly up. The goal of 80% of students coming from the top 25% of their high school class is optimistic but will come. Excluding General College (800 freshmen each year), 69% are already in the top 25% of their class; IT already meets that standard. Achieving the goal will take time. (Quality of applicants at Morris skyrocketed in a short period because the campus got good publicity--no one had heard of it before. Everyone has heard of the Twin Cities campus.)

A question for the Committee, Dr. Hopkins said, in thinking about improving the student experience, is to identify what is not being done, or not being done well, that would make a significant change. There are many choices, and the University will not stop what is being done, but what is most important to do next? Choices for this year were circumscribed because decisions needed to be made

quickly, but between now and the year 2000 a lot will be tried; what should they be?

Dr. Hopkins affirmed, in response to a question, that the issues of user-friendliness are separate from the goals of improving undergraduate education; user-friendliness applies to all activities of the University.

Few had an opportunity to participate development of the supplemental legislative request of \$16.5 million, Dr. Hopkins related, because it came up very fast and there was very little time to respond. The administration tried to identify those needs that had been identified previously and are consistent with U2000. It is to be hoped that priorities begin to emerge through the requests to the SIP; by the middle of March, there will be a lot of proposals on the table that can be reviewed.

Discussion turned to the issue of the proximity of classrooms assigned for a course to the physical home of the department. One Committee member said it is not uncommon for students in one field to NEVER take a course in the building in which the department is housed. Cannot Room Scheduling keep classes together? Should there be a policy on keeping classes together? It is helpful for students to interact and to be in their department. Because classes are scattered all over the campus, cohesion is impossible, faculty cannot stop and chat, and TA-taught sections cannot be monitored. Dr. Hopkins said that Room Scheduling tries to be helpful; sometimes the size of the class is an issue and in other cases it may be simply because no one has ever asked. Some departments do not care. The driving pattern in scheduling classrooms, Dr. Hopkins observed, is habit.

Asked if classroom considerations are a factor in construction, Dr. Hopkins said that they are now part of the capital construction process. But the demand for classrooms, it was said, should not have to wait on remodeling or new construction. If a college sees a high demand, it should call for remodeling or new construction of a classroom building to meet the need. The problem, Dr. Hopkins responded, is not a shortage of classrooms; it is an unwillingness to use existing classrooms more effectively by scheduling classes later in the day. She emphasized again that departments can ask; Room Scheduling tries to accommodate the requests.

Part of this, she added, is a culture that has not paid enough attention to undergraduate education. Faculty and departments should be able to say they need "X" for undergraduate education--and it should be provided. Now class scheduling is driven more by where and when the faculty want to teach the course--that isn't wrong, but if the University wants it driven by collegiate and student-student interactions, it must so decide.

What is the SCEP role, asked one Committee member? That's part of the question, Dr. Hopkins said, of what is most important. One issue is cultural support for effective teaching. One can doubt if a SCEP policy on classrooms would make much of a difference. There are areas where SCEP action will have an impact; teaching evaluation is one. The Committee, she said, will have to decide what it wants to accomplish and how to do so. One recent change, she told the Committee, is that colleges previously did not review schedules; now, no class may be cancelled without approval of the dean.

It was suggested that it would be helpful for SCEP if it could be provided by Vice President Hopkins a list of items being considered, rather than having to devise a list of its own out of whole cloth. It could then help to develop a set of coherent priorities.

Professor Heller thanked Dr. Hopkins for joining the meeting and adjourned it at 4:00.

-- Gary Engstrand

University of Minnesota