

Minutes*

Senate Committee on Educational Policy
Wednesday, May 15, 1996
1:00 - 3:00
Room 626 Campus Club

Present: Laura Koch (chair), Avram Bar-Cohen, Anita Cholewa, Paul Cleary, Gayle Graham Yates, Darwin Hendel, Robert Leik, Judith Martin, W. Phillips Shively, William Van Essendelft

Regrets: Elayne Donahue, Megan Gunnar, Robert Johnson, Thomas Johnson, Jeffrey Larsen

Absent: Glenn Merkel, Ryan Nilsen, Helen Phin

Guests: Jane Whiteside & Halil Dundar (Academic Affairs); Vice Provost Louise Mirrer

[In these minutes: Critical measures; Twin Cities course and curriculum committee; merger and reorganization; change in liberal education requirements; University College merger]

1. Critical Measures

Professor Koch convened the meeting at 1:10 and noted that the Committee needed to decide today whether or not it would recommend approval of the third-phase critical measures to the Senate.

Dr. Whiteside pointed out that the Committee had not considered the customer service/streamlining measure, which has been renamed student services. She distributed a handout and briefly reviewed the principal elements of the measure (electronic application, financial aid, and registration, access to needed courses, and effective advising and career services). The last items cannot be electronic; if students are to be successful, personal contact is an important part of what the University does. They do not propose to make this a separate measure, but do want it in student satisfaction surveys.

The APAS system is part of advising, Dr. Whiteside said in response to a question; if it is working, it means students can receive effective advising because both the student and advisor will have current information.

One Committee member expressed reservations about a measure on effective career services, because society and University are going to lifelong learning, and it would not be useful to measure first-career opportunities. This would not be the measure, Dr. Whiteside said; it would be the kind of service provided by most colleges, to help students think about their career and help them find positions. It would not be a measurement of a placement service, Dr. Hendel assured the Committee; the idea is to provide students a framework to think about what they will do at graduation and about lifelong learning opportunities. It could perhaps be part of advising.

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The measure should use a different term, said one Committee member, and should not decline if students do not get jobs immediately out of college. Dr. Hendel agreed and said they need to develop more specifics, and implementation questions remain. The intent in bringing it to the Committee was to provide a sense of the measure conceptually and obtain support for it, with the understanding they will return with details.

One Committee member inquired about streamlined processes and electronic services; what would be indicated other than the percent who use electronic options? Dr. Hendel said the ideal is not 100%; the idea is that for students who use electronic means to accomplish things, it would work well for them. It may have nothing to do with the system and more a matter of what they have access to, it was said. It also raises the question of whether applications belong here; students only do it once, and whether they do it electronically depends on what they have at home or school by way of access to the Internet. What is expected, asked another Committee member; a reduction in cost of application? More applications? A different student mix? The intent is to make it easier for prospective students to apply, Dr. Whiteside said. The implication is that 100% use is good, and if it is not, it should not be here as a measure.

As for student services, said another, the measure should be of what is being done for students who are here, not prospective students. One piece that is not here, said another, is the worthy goal of having more information available electronically for advising; the availability of much more information would make better use of people's time. It also cannot be said that if everyone can register electronically, advising would no longer be needed.

Dr. Hendel commented that students fill out a questionnaire about career goals and majors and so on when they take the ACT; that information could be made available to advisors, with some work, and most is quite relevant. It would permit better discussions with the student. That information is not in the measure; providing it would make advising more effective.

Dr. Whiteside then reported that they had redrafted the reputational measure; reputation has been moved out of the measure. There is a narrative outlining the problems with reputational measures and explaining that much of the information is captured in other measures. Individual colleges, however, can use reputational measures as they wish. She said they would appreciate knowing if the Committee was comfortable with the measures, and if not, to let them know.

Professor Koch thanked Dr. Whiteside for joining the meeting.

2. Twin Cities Undergraduate Course and Curriculum Committee (TCUCCC)

Professor Koch then reported that the TCUCCC had not been acted on at the last Twin Cities Campus Assembly meeting because there had been an insufficient number of people present, but that concerns had been expressed. She distributed a redrafted proposal, and said she tried to take out the provisions that gave people the sense the TCUCCC would replicate the work of college committees and would be some kind of powerful oversight body.

The TCUCCC would not review all courses proposed for the semester, but would issue guidelines and a form for college committees to follow and would ask the committees to consider if the courses are

meeting the semester standards. The TCUCCC would only take up courses in any detail when there appears to be duplication; it would NOT routinely review courses that have gone through curriculum committees.

In response to a series of questions, Professor Koch explained that it was her notion that there are already a number of areas where it is believed there is overlap (such as statistics, writing, biology). The TCUCCC could review courses in those areas that are proposed for semesters (and would consult with college and faculty before making any recommendation to the deans and provost). After the conversion, however, it would consider disputes.

It was suggested that the TCUCCC could screen courses if the information were available electronically, perhaps by keyword searches. Any form that is developed for semester courses should ASK for keywords, it was said. There was agreement that departments needed additional information from the Change to Semesters Committee, not SCEP, but that they also needed to have the form (for use across the University) in hand as soon as possible. The TCUCCC should prepare the form, Professor Koch said, and said she would raise with Dr. Zetterberg the issue of having all course proposals prepared electronically.

It was also agreed that the TCUCCC would REVIEW majors, not approve them, in order to have an overall view of academic programs on the Twin Cities campus. The attention to detail, said one Committee member, should be left to the colleges.

It was also suggested that majors and programs should meet the expectation that students could finish a degree in four years if they attend full time. There are Big Ten institutions, it was noted, that say if a student cannot complete a program in four years, going on a full-time basis, the student can finish at the university's expense. The timelines for degrees should be established by the programs and should also be incorporated in the college guidelines. Another Committee member said that if a college does not meet the guidelines, then the TCUCCC should intervene.

Committee members then reviewed the proposed membership of the TCUCCC, and concluded it would be helpful to have decanal representation.

3. Merger and Reorganization

Professor Koch reported that she had received recently the proposed Education/Human Ecology merger plan from Professors Weinberg and Hogan, but said the Committee did not have enough information to bring any statement to the Senate. One Committee member said the Committee should say it does not have enough information to be confident about any position it would take.

Without seeing the proposal, it is difficult for the Committee to determine if there are educational policy implications. All the Committee can do is speculate, although the conversations with the deans suggested there were educational policy implications. The biggest problem could be that if a department is an orphan, students in the program could have their educational programs damaged.

What the Committee should say is that if the reorganization/merger process should be reviewed by the governance system, the process is moving too fast for review--and that statement remains true for the

governance system regardless of whether the Regents want a presentation before the governance system is ready to act.

There appeared to be general agreement that the Committee wished to consider the educational policy implications of the merger of the two colleges and that the process needed to be slowed down.

4. Change in Liberal Education Requirements

It was noted that if the (Assembly) Committee wished to see a change in the liberal education requirements approved by the Twin Cities Campus Assembly, it needed to act at this meeting in order to meet the May 30 docket deadline.

Provost Shively recalled that he and Vice Provost Mirrer had presented the Undergraduate Initiative II at the previous meeting; they are now refining the costs and trying to account for tuition generated. There is concern, Dr. Mirrer reported, about the lost income to departments from study abroad under RCM; this could be a disincentive to departments to encourage study abroad. One institution they know of actively discourages study abroad for precisely that reason, and the University MUST set up a mechanism so that does not occur here.

Professor Koch said there is a need for a resolution to take to the Assembly Steering Committee and the Assembly.

How wide has the consultation been on this, asked one Committee member? If a proposal goes from the Provost to ACEP to the Assembly, the Committee needs to be confident it will not be a bombshell that causes a great deal of commotion. If it would avoid problems, it would be better to bring it to the Assembly for information now and for action next year. Dr. Shively said there had been quite wide consultation.

The only novel part of the UGII is the proposed expanding worlds requirement; it requires money so needs to be included in the biennial request. This requirement would be phased in, and not implemented without the infrastructure support needed. They do not suggest imposing a requirement that students cannot meet. As for the possibility of RCM affecting it, he said that the ways to meet the requirements would be through courses, the tuition from which would go to the departments offering them. Some experimentation might be required, and he agreed that the potential problem of lost income from study abroad would have to be addressed.

This proposal is not inconsistent with any directions in which the University is currently moving, said one Committee member; the only concern is about practicality. Dr. Mirrer pointed out that the study abroad portion dovetails with the globalization of the University.

After short discussion, the Committee agreed unanimously to endorse the proposal in principle but reserved the right to review implementation.

Professor Koch thanked Dr. Mirrer for joining the meeting.

5. University College Merger

Professor Koch welcomed Dr. David Grossman to the meeting and noted that the Committee had talked about the merger of the existing University College with the emerging CEE/University College; SCEP must take action at this meeting, she noted, if a recommendation is to be placed before the Senate on May 30. Because the existing University College was created by the Senate, it must vote to approve any changes. She also reported that the concerns expressed by the Senate Consultative Committee were not as worrisome as had been thought by some.

After brief consideration, it was unanimously voted to approve the merger proposal.

Professor Koch then said the Committee would take up at its next meeting the proposed revision of the policy on classes and schedules that Dr. Cholewa had prepared, and then adjourned the meeting at 3:15.

-- Gary Engstrand

University of Minnesota