

Minutes*

**Senate Committee on Educational Policy
Wednesday, January 23, 2013
2:00 – 4:00
238A Morrill Hall**

- Present: Leslie Schiff (chair pro tem), Thomas Brothen, Lee-Ann Breuch, Megan Chock, Charlene Ellingson, Janine Grebin, Robert McMaster, Nic McPhee, Thomas Michaels, Kristen Nelson, Elaine Tarone, Eva von Dassow, Susan Wick, William Ziegler
- Absent: Barbara Brandt, John Cwodzinski, Alon McCormick, Henning Schroeder
- Guests: Jane Phillips, Cathrine Wambach (members of subcommittees)
- Other: Suzanne Bardouche (Office of Undergraduate Education); Tina Falkner (Academic Support Resources)

[In these minutes: (1) update on undergraduate initiatives; (2) draft memo on grading; (3) Committee on Committees recommendations; (4) student-release questions subcommittee]

Professor Schiff convened the meeting at 2:00, reported that Professor McCormick was out of town, and welcomed Professor Wambach as a guest to the meeting. She commended Professor Wambach for her seven years on the Committee and said it owed her a debt of gratitude for all the work she had done for it; Committee members gave her a round of applause.

1. Update on Undergraduate Initiatives

Professor Schiff then turned to Vice Provost McMaster to provide an update on initiatives in undergraduate education (primarily on the Twin Cities campus).

Vice Provost McMaster distributed copies of a set of slides and began by discussing the admissions process and enrollment management. He noted a graph with three lines indicating the number of applications, offers, and acceptances for the years 2003-2012. The most striking curve, he said, is the number of applications, which peaked at about 40,000 in 2011. There was a slight downturn in 2012, which was expected, and is related both to demographics (a decreasing number of high-school graduates) and temporary uncertainties for Wisconsin students related to reciprocity arrangements. He expects the total number of applications to increase again but said the curve is not likely to continue in an upward direction. More applications is not entirely positive; it makes the Twin Cities campus more selective but it also means that the University must turn down more students seeking admission. He observed that there are three "markets" for University students: the state of Minnesota, reciprocity states, and the rest of the country and the world.

* 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.

In terms of freshman and transfer enrollments, undergraduate enrollment has been fairly stable since the early 2000s; it rose from about 28,700 to about 30,600 in 2011 and dropped slightly in 2012 to 30,376. Transfer-student enrollment was 2,176 in 2003 and 2,108 in 2012; one anomaly during the period was in 2009, when just over 2,500 transfer students were admitted. The 2009 increase was not intended and the additional students placed stress on the curriculum and scheduling; transfer enrollments are now monitored more carefully.

Professor Michaels asked if the number of transfer students would increase over time. Is the University serving more students who start school elsewhere and then transfer? There is anecdotal evidence that a number of students did so because of the recession and increased tuition rates, Dr. McMaster said, but at the same time the number of freshman applications kept increasing. It is a question that needs delving into more. The campus also admitted about 800 transfer students in spring semester (but admits almost no new freshmen in the spring).

The number of both new high school and advanced-standing international students has increased remarkably, Dr. McMaster reported. There were 37 new high school international students and 65 advanced-standing international students in 2003 (putting the University at the bottom of the Big Ten); in 2013 the numbers were 285 and 353. The goal is 5% new high school international students; the overall undergraduate student body in 2012-13 is now 8.4% when transfer students are included (most of whom come from other U.S. universities). The goal for international students is likely to be revisited.

The number and percentage of freshmen who are students of color has remained fairly stable over the period 2003 to 2012, Dr. McMaster noted; there were 1,077 in 2003 and 1,077 in 2012. The percentage has fluctuated around 20%. The lines on the graph for the number of students of color who were transfers and who were new high school students were converging up until 2010—that year the numbers were almost the same, but are now diverging again (with more new high school students than transfer students).

They watch closely the ACT scores and high-school rank of enrolled freshmen, Dr. McMaster said, and seek to increase the metrics of the freshman class. Over the 2003-2012 period, the average ACT score increased from 24.8 to 27.7, its highest point ever; the high-school rank increased from 79.9 to 85.5 in 2011 and then declined slightly in 2012 to 84.8. At this point, however, about 35% of high schools are no longer reporting high-school rank, mostly the large suburban high schools; that creates difficulties for the admissions process. Dr. McMaster said the University does accept the SAT in lieu of the ACT.

Dr. McMaster next noted a graph indicating the percentage of enrolled freshmen by ACT category (over 28, 24-27, and 0-26). The percentage of students in the highest category increased from just under 30% to just over 50% from 2003 to 2012; the percentage in the 24-27 category remained stable at about 40%, and the number in the 0-23 category plummeted from over 30% to under 10%. There is a correlation between (1) student success and graduation and (2) high-school rank and ACT score, Dr. McMaster observed, and the campus has been able to increase the graduation rate because of the increase in the average ACT scores and high-school rank of incoming freshmen. This phenomenon has been occurring at most major research universities. Professor Wambach pointed out that the correlation between ACT score and graduate is about .48; Dr. McMaster said he only made the observation that they are correlated.

Dr. McMaster reviewed briefly the retention and graduation rates for the Crookston and Duluth campuses and noted that the Morris campus has reached a 57.4% four-year graduation rate, slightly short of its goal of 60%--but the rate is increasing over time. The first-year retention rate at Morris, at over 91%, exceeds the goal of 90%. There are no statistics for four-year graduation at the Rochester campus because it is too new but the retention rates from 2009 to 2011 have steadily increased from 68% to over 85%.

The first-year retention rate on the Twin Cities campus has increased from 78.6% in 1992 to 91% in 2012, which Dr. McMaster labeled "great news." The four-year graduation rate has increased from 15.2% in 1992 to 58.1% in 2008, which is also just short of the goal of 60%. Likewise, the five-year graduation rate in 2008 (72.1%) is slightly shy of the 75% goal and the six-year graduation rate of 72.3% is below the 80% goal. The six-year rate is critical, Dr. McMaster said, because it is the figure used by many national ranking systems and many of the University's peers are at 80%.

Professor Michaels inquired if a different strategy is required for the six-year graduation rate. The University has worked hard to increase the four-year rate. Dr. McMaster said that is a puzzle; the four-year graduation rate has increased significantly but the five- and six-year rates have lagged. They will increase but are not doing so as fast as they should and the campus appears to be losing some students it should be retaining.

Professor Schiff inquired if the graduation rate number applies only to new high school students. It does, Dr. McMaster—a student must begin and finish at a campus in order to count. They can, however, find out the graduation rate of transfer students. He noted as well that if a student enters CLA and graduates from CBS, the student does count—for CLA's graduation rate.

Professor Michaels asked if there is any "ultimate" graduation rate, even for students who graduate after more than six years. Dr. McMaster said he would prefer to leave that statistic alone until the campus reaches the goal of an 80% six-year graduation rate. His question, Professor Michaels said, is what number of students eventually obtains a degree. After six years a student is out of the data used for these purposes, Dr. McMaster said; the University has programs to encourage students to return to complete their degrees, but if they do so, they still do not count in graduation rates. Professor Michaels commented that it would be great if the campus can achieve the 80% goal.

Dr. McMaster next reviewed a bar graph comparing the Twin Cities campus four-year graduation rate (58%) with peer institutions (now including Maryland and Rutgers) but cautioned that the data for Minnesota were for 2012 but 2011 for the other institutions. Minnesota stands about in the middle: the same as Indiana, higher than Wisconsin (56%), Rutgers (55%), Michigan State (54%), Texas (51%), Iowa, Purdue, and Nebraska, but lower than Michigan (76%), Berkeley (72%), UCLA (69%), Florida, Illinois, Penn State, Maryland, Washington (62%), and Ohio State (59%). He said that he keeps a particular eye on Washington, which is very similar to Minnesota; Washington's rate was lower than Minnesota's but it has done a tremendous job of increasing the graduation rate.

Professor Schiff asked if Dr. McMaster had looked at what Washington had done to increase its graduation rate. He said that there is a group of Big Ten undergraduate deans that talk about the issues. There are no surprises: the strategies relate to admissions, advising, and the curriculum.

Professor McPhee reported that at one point there was a concern on the Morris campus that participation in a study-abroad program would hinder graduation, but what they found was that students who participated in those programs graduated at a *higher* rate than other students. Is that also true on the Twin Cities campus? It is, Dr. McMaster said, and also true for students who participate in UROP. Professor Tarone commented that the University's study-abroad program is known nationally for its integration of the curriculum into the program.

Dr. McMaster reviewed the first-year retention rates by undergraduate-admitting colleges by year 2005-2011; all of them have made good progress (although the Carlson School retention rate was already so high that it couldn't improve much). Ms. Ellingson asked if there is a pattern; Dr. McMaster said that most students who will drop out do so after the first year—if the University can retain them into the second year, there is a very good chance they will graduate.

Dr. McMaster also reviewed the four-year graduation rate by undergraduate-admitting college and year; all of them have improved and the College of Education and Human Development has in particular made significant improvement.

The retention and graduation rate (third year and fourth year) for transfer students on the Twin Cities campus have also increased noticeably since 2000, Dr. McMaster reported. There was a slight dip in the third-year graduation rate, but that is the same year there was a larger-than-usual number of transfer admissions, and some of those students struggled.

The first-year retention rate for Access to Success (ATS) students (many of whom would formerly have been in General College) has increased markedly and is now almost at the same level as non-ATS students. In 2011, the retention rate was 88.1% for ATS students versus 89.3% for non-ATS students—and in CLA, the ATS retention rate was higher than that for non-ATS students.

The first-year retention rate for students of color has, beginning in 2009, been very close to that of other students, about 1 percentage point different. Both rates are increasing, Dr. McMaster said, and the gap is closing.

The number of undergraduate degrees granted, 2007 to 2012, increased from 6,617 to 7,617; Dr. McMaster said he doubted that the number would continue to increase. Part of the increase is due to the increased graduation rate. Professor Brothen suggested looking at the number of degrees granted by the number of years the student took to obtain it.

The number of University Honors Program (UHP) students admitted has been relatively stable, fluctuating around 575 each fall (which is the goal). The number of National Merit Scholars increased from 79 in 2008 to 166 in 2011, and then dropped to 144 in 2012. Nonetheless, Dr. McMaster reported, that number is the best in the Big Ten except for Northwestern. The average composite ACT score of fall 2012 UHP students was 32, the average high-school rank was 97.2, 18.9% were students of color, 53% were women, and 58.9% were from Minnesota. Dr. McMaster reviewed examples of new interdisciplinary honors courses and the class profile by college. In the College of Science and Engineering, the UHP students had an average composite ACT score of 33.9 and average high-school rank of 97.2; those numbers for the College of Biological Sciences were 33.3 and 98.1. Those two were the highest but the other colleges were not very much below them.

Dr. McMaster compared the data on UHP students with data for students at other top U.S. universities. The University is bringing in about 600 remarkably talented students with whom it is competing against Princeton, Harvard, MIT, Carleton, and so on. The University Honors Program has about 2,400 students total; most students enter UHP as freshmen, but some students come into UHP later or enter as transfer students.

Dr. McMaster provided an overview of CAPE (the Center for Academic Planning and Exploration), created to help undecided students find a path through the University. It has, he said, been a remarkable success; it is very intense and very "high touch." It served 2,377 students in 2011-12, a dramatic increase over the number served the year before. He surmised the campus could substantially increase the size of the program and still be unable to meet the demand.

The President's Emerging Scholars (PES) program will replace the Access to Success program, Dr. McMaster said, and will support students for four years in all freshman-admitting colleges. ATS was largely a first-year program, and included only CLA, CEHD, and CFANS. Students in the PES program will receive a \$1000 scholarship the first year and, if they stay on track, a \$1000 scholarship the fourth year. The program aims to increase retention and timely graduation by providing peer mentoring, professional advising, engagement opportunities, and financial support, and is committed to preparing students for careers or advanced study. Students are selected for PES during the admissions process; they are students who have the potential for success on the campus, who would benefit from participation, and selection is based on academic preparation and interests. Dr. McMaster and Committee discussed the link between the curriculum and the PES program.

Participation in freshman seminars continues to be solid and students who participate in them have both a higher first-year retention rate and four-year graduation rate. This isn't a correlation, Dr. McMaster observed, because students who participate are self-selected. The seminars are a great transformational experience and he would like to see the number of participants increase, but the resources for increasing it are not available.

Of the 149 majors on the Twin Cities campus, 135 require 120 credits and 14 require between 122 and 132 credits. Three of the latter are Dental Hygiene, Dental Therapy, Music Education; the remaining 11 are engineering majors. Dr. McMaster said that one of Ms. Bardouche's projects has been to work with departments to reduce the number of credits required for a degree to 120; since 2008, eight programs have done so. It will not be possible to get all majors down to 120 credits, Dr. McMaster commented, and he is satisfied with the situation as it stands.

The Campus Curriculum Committee has been meeting this year; it is charged to mediate curricular conflicts between colleges and to review all newly-established courses (keeping in mind possible duplication, overlap, and the appropriate disciplinary connections). Until the committee was established, there was no central campus mechanism to review possible overlap and duplication.

Professor von Dassow asked how the committee is appointed. Dr. McMaster said he asks the deans to identify faculty members; most colleges have two representatives but the smaller colleges only have one.

He said he expected that an extremely high percentage of the new courses will be approved without trouble. How will the committee members know about overlap or duplication, Professor von

Dassow inquired? That is a lot to oversee. Dr. McMaster agreed and said the committee establishes subcommittees by area and proposed courses go to the appropriate subcommittee. He said he relies on the expertise of the subcommittee and smart faculty members. They will conduct an inquiry if they have questions or concerns.

Professor Wambach said that the curriculum committee will look carefully at consultation and how it occurred. She added that departments are more likely to pay attention to issues of overlap and duplication now that the committee is in place. Professor Brothen asked what the committee is doing now; Dr. McMaster said it is setting up processes and meeting schedules. He pointed out that the committee is *advisory* to the provost.

Professor von Dassow asked why the curriculum committee's deliberations are "confidential." In order to encourage candid discussion and full consideration of the issues, Dr. McMaster replied. The reasons for the denial of approval of a course will be provided but there will not be verbatim minutes.

Dr. McMaster next explained that he had included information on educational policies and recent changes when he made his presentation to the Board of Regents in December, 2012. The changes he noted were these:

- Credit and Grade Point Requirements for an Undergraduate Degree (June 2012): Clarifies that D grades will not count to satisfy a course requirement for an academic minor.
- Declaring and Pursuing an Undergraduate Major (June 2012): Specifically states that an adviser hold may be placed on a student record if the student is not satisfactorily progressing toward a degree.
- High School Preparation Requirements for Undergraduates (December 2011): Expands the math requirement from 3 to 4 years of math for students seeking admission for fall 2015 and thereafter.

Dr. McMaster said he also informed the Board about the role of this Committee in the development and review of educational policies.

The number of service-learning courses has increased from 2007-08 to 2011-12 (2,590 to 3,385), Dr. McMaster reported, but resource constraints suggest further increases of any magnitude are unlikely.

Dr. McMaster provided data on the federal cost of attendance (COA) for a Minnesota resident undergraduate student on the Twin Cities campus, living on campus:

	<u>2007-08</u>	<u>2008-09</u>	<u>2009-10</u>	<u>2010-11</u>	<u>2011-12</u>	<u>2012-13</u>
MN Resident Tuition and Fees	\$9,661	\$10,754	\$11,417	\$12,203	\$13,060	\$13,524
Room and Board	\$7,062	\$7,280	\$7,392	\$7,576	\$7,728	\$8,000

Books, Supplies, Transportation, Personal, Misc.	\$3,527	\$3,110	\$3,243	\$3,279	\$3,194	\$3,194
Federal Cost of Attendance	\$20,250	\$21,144	\$22,052	\$23,058	\$23,982	\$24,718

The COA is used to determine the amount of financial aid a student can receive, including scholarships, grants, loans, and work-study. He pointed out that the University has strong need-based aid programs, financial literacy programs, is seeking to control tuition increases, and is improving graduation rates.

Dr. McMaster provided a handout related to income categories and rates of attendance at the Twin Cities campus (between the * * *). He reminded the committee that at the September 5, 2012 SCEP meeting, he had presented data for a ten-year period of time, 2001 to 2011, regarding family income categories for Twin Cities undergraduate students. That data raised many questions about how the distribution of students among family income groups may have shifted during that decade. Over the past few months, he has worked with the Office of Institutional Research (OIR) and others to respond to those questions and to further analyze and better define the financial aid data we are tracking. The data now available to us is more complete and more accurate than the data we were working from in September. In addition, he noted that to compare income categories from 2001 with 2011, an adjustment must be made for inflation. The second chart on the handout provides the more inclusive data, adjusted for inflation, and provides a more direct comparison from 2001 to 2011.

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During the September 5, 2012 SCEP meeting, we presented the following data regarding changes in family income categories over a ten-year period. That data represented only **degree-seeking, undergraduate students who received aid** on the TC campus for the respective Aid Years (Fall, Spring, Summer).

Family Income	2001	%	2011	%	10 Year Change
\$0 - 30,000	4,198	24%	5,806	20%	-4%
\$30,001 - \$48,000	2,392	14%	2,309	8%	-6%
\$48,001 - \$75,000	3,701	21%	3,585	12%	-9%
\$75,001 - \$110,000	3,180	18%	4,627	16%	-2%
\$110,001 +	1,491	9%	6,609	23%	14%
Unknown	2,464	14%	6,332	21%	7%
Total		17,426		29,268	

Because these data were not adjusted for inflation, and did not include all students, further analysis was requested. Additional analysis included **all, degree-seeking, undergraduate students** on the TC campus (instead of just those receiving aid). Furthermore, the second analysis **adjusted the family**

income for each student for inflation using the Bureau of Labor Statistics, annual consumer price index (CPI). All income data below is listed in 2011 dollars.

Family Income	2001	%	2011	%	10-Year Change
\$0 - 30,000	3,555	12%	5,771	18%	6%
\$30,001 - \$48,000	1,890	6%	2,309	7%	1%
\$48,001 - \$75,000	3,021	10%	3,608	11%	1%
\$75,001 - \$110,000	3,968	14%	4,674	14%	1%
\$110,001 +	4,056	14%	6,791	21%	7%
Unknown	12,754	44%	9,145	28%	-15%
Total		29,244		32,298	

*** These two charts are not comparable because the raw numbers have changed**

Noteworthy

After adjusting for inflation, the *percentage* of students in each income group remains generally flat. The largest percentage gains are in the bottom category (\$0-\$30,000) and the top (\$110,000 +). This demonstrates a similar distribution among economic groups despite increases in the overall class size.

Over the past decade, there has been a sizeable drop in the number of students for whom income is unknown. Put another way, there has been a considerable increase in the number of families filing the FAFSA to apply for financial aid. Although the precise reasons for this are unknown, we speculate that this change occurred through a combination of the following:

- Increasing college costs
- Greater publicity about financial aid programs
- Changes to financial aid programs (such as U Promise expanding to include middle-income students; expansion of eligibility for Pell)
- The U of M being included in the college choice sets of students interested in private colleges and universities
- Increased percentage of international students enrolled (who are ineligible for most forms of financial aid)

Definitions

Income is the combined total wages of both parents and the student if the student is listed as a dependent. If the student is listed as independent, then only his/her income is included.

Students receiving aid includes all degree-seeking, undergraduate students enrolled on the TC campus who received grant aid, scholarships, tuition waivers, or sponsored loans (We have no information on private loans or outside/private scholarships paid directly to students.).

CPI is calculated from data at <ftp://ftp.bls.gov/pub/special.requests/cpi/cpi.ai.txt>

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Committee members discussed the data; a number of questions were posed: What are the implications for recruiting and admissions? How does the University show its commitment to well-qualified low-income students? Are low-income students risk-averse? And if so, do they choose less expensive schools? Professor Wambach referred Committee members to the work of Tom Mortenson, who has studied these topics.

Professor Schiff thanked Dr. McMaster for his report.

2. Draft Memo on Grading

Committee members reviewed a draft memo from the Committee to Vice Provost McMaster asking that he take a number of steps with respect to grading and grade inflation/compression, including confirming the role of faculty oversight of courses, grading, and the curriculum, clarifying the role of collegiate and department administrators in the oversight of grading, protecting the quality of undergraduate education and the students' educational experience by encouraging new instructor training, and requiring undergraduate programs to review questions about the units' grading practices as part of departmental/unit reviews. Six questions were included with the last point; Dr. Falkner suggested during the discussion that the questions be changed from yes/no to open-ended inquiries; Professor Wambach concurred.

Professor McPhee asked if the Committee would be expecting reports or discussions or if that is left open. Professor Wambach said that was left open; these just seemed to be reasonable expectations. Dr. McMaster commended the recommendations; he recalled that the provost has asked him and Vice Provost Schroeder to develop a new process for program review; the memo from this Committee could be included as guidelines in the reviews. One Committee member wondered if they should not be something stronger than guidelines; Dr. McMaster responded that if they are included as part of program reviews, units will not be able to not include a response.

Professor von Dassow urged that in trying to reach all those in a department who give grades, the guidelines should include language telling instructors they can be rigorous and do not need to "give out A's like candy." The guidelines should allay instructors' worries that if they apply grades honestly they may not get tenure or may not be reappointed. Professor Wambach said they had tried to achieve that goal in subtle language and that it is tricky to think about grades across disciplines. Dr. McMaster suggested that an additional paragraph that notes the Senate-adopted definitions of what grades mean could be a useful reminder.

3. Committee on Committees Recommendations

Professor Schiff drew the attention of Committee members to the recommendations about this Committee from the Committee on Committees (which has as part of its charge the review of the performance and membership of other senate committees). She noted three items: that the Committee be more "proactive" and less "reactive," something the provost had suggested; that it set priorities in dealing with agenda items, that it involve Committee members more in setting agendas (which it has done, she noted), the mix of members (it is at maximum functional size and makes effective use of

subcommittees, she said), that Academic Support Resources be given ex officio membership, and that on some items of educational policy, this is not the only committee dealing with them.

In terms of being "proactive," Professor von Dassow suggested Committee members might communicate with faculty in their departments and college to find out what is on their minds, because many faculty members have no idea what committees do. The Committee could also solicit suggestions from faculty members and students.

Professor Brothen observed that "the MOOC train is leaving the station" and that there is a consortium of universities that allow free MOOC coursework to count toward a degree. MOOCs will engender a number of educational policy discussions, Professor Schiff predicted.

4. Student-Release Questions Subcommittee

Ms. Phillips rejoined the Committee long enough to request an additional member to join a meeting on student-release questions. The University has taken some steps to encourage instructors to release the information but the rate remains low. They learned that an opt-out system would not be permissible, but if the wording of the questions can be changed, it may be that the information can be released without an opt-out system. One of the students on the Student Senate Consultative Committee will bring the proposals to that body and will ask if it wishes any continued involvement by members of this Committee.

Professor Schiff said she would speak with Professor McCormick about the matter and adjourned the meeting at 4:00.

-- Gary Engstrand

University of Minnesota