

Minutes*

Faculty Consultative Committee
Thursday, January 31, 2013
12:00 – 2:45
262/N209 Mondale Hall

- Present: Sally Gregory Kohlstedt (chair), Avner Ben-Ner, Peter Bitterman, James Cloyd, Chris Cramer, Will Durfee, Nancy Ehlke, Michael Hancher, Alon McCormick, James Pacala, Ned Patterson, Jeff Ratliff-Crain, Rebecca Ropers-Huilman,
- Absent: Linda Bearinger, Brian Buhr, Scott Lanyon, Russell Luepker, Elaine Tyler May, George Sheets, Richard Ziegler
- Guests: Provost Karen Hanson, Vice President Scott Studham
- Other: Deb Cran (Office of the Provost); Brad Cohen, Brittany Lloyd, Susan Strubel (Office of Information Technology)

[In these minutes: (1) committee business; (2) grades; (3) discussion with Provost Hanson; (4) discussion with Vice President and Chief Information Office Studham]

1. Committee Business

Professor Kohlstedt convened the meeting at 12:00 and began by noting that the Committee had a number of nominations/recommendations to consider.

- To the Committee on Committees for chairs of the committees where the chair is an ex officio member of this Committee (the Committee agreed on recommendations).
- For potential Faculty Athletics Representatives (the Committee agreed on names).
- For a replacement for Professor May when she is on leave next year (the Committee will take this up at the February 14 meeting).
- For nominees to the Benefits Advisory Committee (the Committee agreed on nominees).

A bit later Professor Kohlstedt commented on the use of technology during Committee meetings, about which she had communicated by email earlier. She reported that there were conversations that some people use devices in conjunction with the business at hand, which is acceptable, but that other uses (such as catching up on email) are a problem.

Professor Kohlstedt also touched on Open Access and said it would be brought up at a future meeting.

* 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.

2. Grades

Professor McCormick distributed a memo from the Senate Committee on Educational Policy (SCEP) to this Committee outlining SCEP's response to the request that it consider a change in the transcript to provide context for grades. (The memo is between the * * *; item numbers added in these minutes for the sake of clarity of reference.)

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Request from FCC:

Recommendation from SCEP about the FCC-proposed resolution (13 November 2011) to add grade-context information to transcripts

Actions by SCEP:

SCEP discussed the FCC proposal to add information about the context of grades to transcripts in Spring 2012. Professor Brothen reported some of the committee's concerns to FCC verbally after SCEP members consulted colleagues and students. In Summer and Fall 2012, SCEP also consulted with the Registrar to discover what peer universities are doing and to discuss issues related to implementing the transcript proposal. SCEP also consulted with the Office of Institutional Research (OIR) to discuss options related to releasing similar information on the web.

Response:

(1) The FCC proposal to modify University of Minnesota transcripts to include information about the proportion of students in a class who received a grade is *not recommended at this time.*

- While some students could benefit from having their A grades identified as rare, displaying the grade context on the transcript can put many UMN students at a disadvantage when competing with students from other universities for positions and awards. The Registrar indicates that almost no other university will provide such context on their transcripts (Cornell currently, UNC in planning stages).
- Since UMN faculty do not routinely view the transcripts of our own students, this mechanism would not serve to promote faculty awareness and discussion of grading practices.
- Graduate and professional students may derive less value, and suffer more disadvantage, than undergraduates.
- The Registrar indicates that the proposed change would be difficult and expensive, and it falls outside the scope of the current upgrade to our academic records system (PeopleSoft).

If the University chooses to pursue FCC's transcript proposal, this effort might best be negotiated with PeopleSoft in partnership with peer universities (e.g. CIC).

(2) SCEP *does* support the thrust of FCC's idea to provide grade-context information to students.

We believe that there are a several ways that grade context information could be made available immediately and at almost no cost. One way, suggested by the OIR, is to use web-resources to post information at a suitable level of aggregation that enables students to learn grade-context - e.g., listing program averages of undergraduate grades at various levels (1/2/3/4/5xxx), in a manner similar to that available now to UMN faculty in UMReports. OIR already maintains this data; the University would simply need to decide what is the appropriate way to present it for student use. The Registrar indicates that a number of our peer universities already post such information for students at some level of aggregation (though very few at the level of each individual course).

It is important to remind faculty that students already have access to much of this data, since the data has been released since 2003 to the company "myedu.com" in response to Freedom of Information Act requests. If the University provides suitably aggregated data from a UMN website (e.g., from within Onestop), students could then choose to furnish a report of UMN grade-context along with their transcript when they apply for positions or awards. Moreover, transcript readers can be assisted in obtaining course grade context by adding to the transcript a link leading to grade-context information that the University deems suitable for public viewing.

(3) Moreover, SCEP supports the idea underlying FCC's proposal, that undergraduate grade-context information should be considered and discussed by faculty.

SCEP's consensus is that grade discussion should be facilitated at the program level (as recommended by SCEP in 1999). SCEP is formulating a recommendation for Vice Provost McMaster, proposing that he ask UMTC undergraduate programs to use specific grade data* from their program to discuss questions about their own grade-context. The questions would ask the program to reflect on its practices in grading (e.g., criterion-referenced or norm-referenced) and on its interpretation and implementation of the University definition of letter grades. We believe that assisting faculty to discuss grading practices at the program level may help reduce grade inflation by leading to more intentional grading practices.

(*SCEP will recommend that OIR provide an easy and interactive interface to help programs to view trends in their grade data - both to systematize the grade data being considered and to make it make it easier for faculty to conduct their discussions.)

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Professor McCormick reviewed the contents of the memo with the Committee. With respect to point (2), he said there are many issues and he would like this Committee to decide if it wishes to pursue any of them (or if it wishes SCEP to do so).

Professor Kohlstedt inquired of Committee members if they wished any action taken or if the Committee should thank SCEP for its report and leave it at that. Professor Hancher said these are matters of interest to more than the University of Minnesota; they are also of interest to other CIC schools, especially if PeopleSoft is a key lever (because PeopleSoft is used by a significant number of the CIC members). Professor McCormick suggested that the CIC might deal with PeopleSoft issues, and then the University would not be the only adopter, although it might still be a leader within the CIC; SCEP included this comment in the memo simply to inform FCC of that possibility, but SCEP is not proposing to do this itself.

Professor Ropers-Huilman said the discussions in higher education seem to be focused more on competencies than on credit hours or grades; this focus on articulating for external publics the percentages of grades awarded seems to be counter to the focus on competencies. The charge to SCEP came from this Committee, Professor McCormick pointed out.

Professor Kohlstedt observed that SCEP and FCC a number of years ago said that more needed to be known about grades, so the practice of providing the grading data tables to the Senate began. It is clear there are differences in grading patterns across colleges and Professor Cramer focused on them last fall; he asked SCEP to take a look at them, which it did over the last year. Does the Committee wish to continue to look at options or is what SCEP has done sufficient?

Professor Ben-Ner asked what the administration is saying. They are observing, Professor Kohlstedt said, but have not taken a stand. Ms. Phenix has commented that it is important for the faculty to explain what they do and why because the world is watching. Professor Kohlstedt said that she was not sure the University of Minnesota should be out in front on proposing dramatic changes but that she was receptive to contrary views if Committee members had them. Professor McCormick added that Vice Provost McMaster has been receptive to the possibility of SCEP's planned memo to him (referred to in point 3 in the memo to FCC) and the suggestion from SCEP that he take that he ask the undergraduate associate deans to work with their programs on these matters.

Professor Pacala took issue with (1) and (3) of SCEP's report and said the issues should be put in front of the Faculty Senate. He said he did not accept the proposition that a transcript change would put University students at a disadvantage; it would offer fellowship directors, those who are hiring people just out of college, and so on, more credible information. On (3), he said that if one talks about competency-based education, the grading should be S/N. That question is worth a healthy debate; they talk about it a great deal in the Medical School, and the faculty being able to police themselves is really important. If one looks at the data, one has to conclude that the faculty have let the standards slip. Professor Pacala agreed with (2).

Committee members debated (1) and voted 8-1-1 in favor of the SCEP recommendation.

On (2), Professor Hancher observed that the prominence of conveying information to students had been important, but the original memo from this Committee also pointed out that the information is for other people as well. That has been lost sight of. Students could choose to provide the information to others, as SCEP notes, Professor Kohlstedt responded. Professor Bitterman pointed out that saying the University should provide the information is very different from saying that the student can gather and provide it. He asked if SCEP believes the grade-context information should be available; it does, Professor McCormick said. Professor Cramer noted that the conversation on this subject around the nation sometimes has the character of "when the data make us look bad, hide it, and if it can help a student, highlight it." Did that tendency find its way into the SCEP conversation? Not at all, Professor McCormick said.

Professor Ratliff-Crain said he supported the SCEP recommendation because how others in a class are being graded is something a student has no control over, nor does a student have any control over how others might view grades. Professor Ben-Ner agreed that putting contextual information on the transcript implicitly blames the student or puts the responsibility for the grades on the students. After establishing whether there has been grade inflation, SCEP should explore the options.

Professor Patterson asked if student views had been considered. Professor McCormick reported that the graduate student members of SCEP had spoken but the undergraduates had not.

Professor Kohlstedt asked if the Committee wished SCEP to continue to explore (2) and come back with recommendations. The Committee indicated that it did.

On (3), SCEP is moving forward and perhaps the issues should be brought to the Faculty Senate, Professor Kohlstedt said. Professor McCormick said that SCEP decided to alert FCC that the memo is being constructed, but currently intends to make the recommendation directly to Vice Provost McMaster,

and his understanding is that Senate rules will then call for SCEP's memo to Vice Provost McMaster to be published in the Faculty Senate docket for information.

Professor Durfee said he was concerned about the nature of the request from Vice Provost McMaster to the programs, and whether it will appear as an edict from central administration to discuss grades; it would be better if the request came from the faculty, not from Vice Provost McMaster; better from the Faculty Senate so that it is faculty talking to faculty. Professor McCormick said it was his understanding that Dr. McMaster would be able to cite the memo from SCEP to point out that SCEP has requested the discussions (and that McMaster also believes such discussions are a good idea).

Professor Cramer said that the exact same request was distributed in 1999 and nothing happened. What will change to ensure that something different will happen? They are recommending that Dr. McMaster ask for responses, Professor McCormick said, and it could be an ongoing process. He noted that the Academy of Distinguished Teachers also participated in crafting the memo.

Who would undertake a CIC initiative, Professor Hancher asked?

3. Discussion with Provost Hanson

Professor Kohlstedt welcomed Provost Hanson to the meeting and began the conversation by relating that members of the Committee had been having discussions with department chairs and heads (as it does annually) and one of the primary foci of those discussions have been graduate education. The topics have included financial issues, who is speaking for graduate education, and who is attending to standards when the colleges are responsible for graduate education. She asked the provost to talk about what she is seeing.

Provost Hanson said she has heard some things and would like to hear more from all concerned parties. She and the Committee discussed issues such as the number of fellowship commitments departments can or are making to prospective graduate students, decisions about quality, workloads, and rules and paperwork. Committee members also discussed the status of funding for graduate student fellowships that was decentralized to the colleges when the changes in the Graduate School were implemented. (The colleges were supposed to put them into fellowships; was there leakage in the system?) The basic problem that the University must address is finding more funding for graduate education, the provost said, and there is some urgency about doing so. There is not enough money to support graduate students and, in particular, for multi-year graduate fellowship support for the most competitive graduate students.

Professor Cramer asked if there were changes to the cost pool charges; if they went up, the deans would have had to pay.

Professor Hancher recalled hearing, at one of the meetings with department chairs and Committee members, that one department is able to make offers to graduate students that are about one-half what competitor institutions can offer. Moreover, the University's offers include employment while the other institutions offer fellowships. At that same meeting, other department chairs nodded their heads in agreement.

Professor Ropers-Huilman said it appears there is a lack of empirical information and that the discussions are based on perceptions. She said she would like to have empirical data on how funds for graduate education and fellowships are distributed; was there as much damage done with the changes as some say, or did the changes allow more equity and allow some programs to do more?

Provost Hanson agreed that the data should be produced. She also observed that several people have raised questions about quality and where the money is being invested. There will not be very much new funding so the institution will need to make choices. When the Graduate School recruitment funds were decentralized and returned to the colleges, some colleges may have adopted a more egalitarian award system and may not have given as many fellowships to the programs that had been winners in the central competition. The deans should know what makes their schools strong, though, and presumably understand that they will sometimes have to make hard choices.

Professor Bitterman said it would be useful to know what offers from peer institutions look like so the University could identify what it needs to offer, what the premium programs need. Provost Hanson agreed. The CIC administrators sometimes exchange information at the end of a fiscal year, and many department chairs also have an awareness of what their peer institutions offer for graduate student support. Professor Bitterman commented that Ford knows what Chevrolet sells its cars for, and vice-versa.

Professor Durfee suggested that when the data are compiled, the provost encourage the deans to have a discussion with the faculty. If the college receives a block grant, how should it be used? Those have been University-level discussions so far but they should start at the college. Provost Hanson agreed and said that some are being held in the colleges. She asked if Committee members had heard whether there were such discussions and whether they were robust. Professor Cramer said there had been department by department decanal presentations of budget details in his college, Science and Engineering.

Professor Ehlke said that she is in a program that did well and has a great reputation, and the perception is that it has been hit hard. She agreed it would help to have data because her department now receives almost no fellowships.

Professor Kohlstedt said that the chairs and the Committee talked only about fellowships: The funding is static and the amount of money required for each has increased because of tuition and inflation, so there are fewer of them. They did not talk about block grants and other funds for individual students (e.g., for professional travel)—the question is larger than fellowships. It was said that money was saved as a result of changes to the Graduate School; if administrative costs were saved, that is fine, but if what was saved was money that previously went to graduate students, that is not fine. She said she would like the Committee to have a report.

Provost Hanson said that the Graduate School budget savings were from reduced administrative costs, although she is aware that there is a question about increased administrative costs in the colleges. The claim has been that no funding for graduate students was cut, and while she has no reason to doubt that, she promised to double check and get back to the Committee. (Note: following this meeting, Provost Hanson confirmed that the \$1M in FY12 Graduate School budget savings were entirely from eliminated positions and reduced expenses; funding for graduate student support was not cut.)

Professor Cloyd asked about the status of discussions about Ph.D. programs that produce graduates when there is no market for them. That conversation should be occurring in the colleges, between the college administration and their departments, because they know, or should know, whether their Ph.D.s are being placed, the provost responded. Are there incentives for them to have those conversations, Professor Cloyd asked? Many, Provost Hanson said; it is part of what it means to manage a college. Professor Cramer agreed that there are too many Ph.D.s, a fact documented in a number of studies—but typically an institution says it has outstanding programs and it is other schools that should reduce their number of Ph.D. degrees granted. Professor Hancher agreed and said a large number of lower-tier schools have flooded the market with Ph.D.s.

Does that mean it is necessary to kill programs, Professor Pacala asked? Provost Hanson suggested that the colleges must decide how to allocate limited funds and to consider which of its programs are successfully placing Ph.D. recipients in jobs.

Programs have incentives to continue their existence, and college leaders have only weak incentives to make hard decisions, Professor Ben-Ner said. They also cannot and would not compare their own programs' eminence or value to the University with that of programs in other units, and they are very unlikely to volunteer to go out of existence. So although the local units are best situated to make hiring and firing decisions based on expertise, decisions that require broad comparisons across programs located both within and across colleges are best made by a central authority. Provost Hanson asked the group to consider what central incentives might be and whether those aren't equally available at the college level. Presumably both central and collegiate-level administrators are equally concerned about fostering excellence in graduate education, and, as noted, the real and detailed expertise about the quality and the comparative stature and status of the programs is more likely to be at the college level than at the level of one central authority looking at widely different disciplines and fields. Professor Ben-Ner said that all departments want TAs, graduate students, and so on, there is no incentive to reduce the numbers, and there is a lot of rationalizing that "we are the best." One cannot distinguish between the claims so there is need for a dispassionate but well-informed authority. He agreed that decentralization is based on expertise but maintained that local incentives are wrong for decisions to cut back programs. If the expertise is in the college, if they know which departments are strong and which are not, that is an appropriate locus for these decisions, Provost Hanson responded. Of course no unit is likely to volunteer to have its funding taken and the program dissolved—but that is what another level of review, in the college leadership, is positioned to do—and should be motivated to do if it's necessary to maintain the overall strength of the college.

Professor Cramer said that he had heard the provost say that colleges should decide on the basis of quality; if one program is the best, others may have to be cut to support it. Professor Cloyd observed that there appears to be little incentive for collegiate administrators to cut graduate programs. Provost Hanson responded by saying that it's in colleges' best interest to support outstanding programs and reduce or eliminate support for lower quality programs. Professor Cloyd commented that identifying excellence can often be challenging, as noted by a previous University president, who observed that there are as many as 20 universities in the top 5. A similar situation exists for graduate programs in a specific discipline.

Given the challenges of collegiate units cutting programs on their own, Professors Cloyd and Ben-Ner contended that programmatic changes require a collaboration between central administration and colleges in order to make changes in graduate programs.

Professor Ben-Ner repeated his point that the current structure does not carry the right incentives for people in colleges to make program-elimination decisions. Provost Hanson asked why the insistence that there are no incentives. Deans are regularly evaluated, and this is a crucial aspect of decanal management. Professor Ben-Ner said that if a college were a profit/loss center that has a dean whose financial incentives are tied to the financial results then this could work. But an academic unit such as a college cannot be run on a profit/loss basis because it has much more complex objectives, so either alternative incentives must be proffered to the dean to make the right program-elimination decisions from the perspective of the entire University, or the decisions must be moved up to the central level. What are a dean's incentives? The dean may be looking for a better job elsewhere or expects to return to his or her department; neither objective provides good guidance for program elimination, even for the most dedicated and civic- (University-) minded person. Who is in a position to put pressure on the dean to make the right cut back decisions? The college executive committee is likely to be, for the purpose at hand, excessively oriented towards preservation of departmental programs. Hence higher levels of the University must take responsibility for program cutting. This must be made on the basis of a lot of detailed comparative data, consultation with experts from within and outside the University, and with the understanding that the pain associated with program cutting is greater than the gain from commensurate program expansion.

Provost Hanson said she believes there must indeed be partnerships and that the incentives are not really different at the collegiate or the central level. Both levels are expected to be aiming to promote excellence, and both are held accountable if administrative decisions do not help move the institution in that positive direction. The deans are closer to the disciplines and programs and therefore have the expertise to best design a process to determine college investments, driven by quality. She said she will look for institutional resources to help foster quality in the colleges, and with respect to graduate education, she does not want to re-centralize all the decisions on graduate funding.

There is the question of the job market for graduates versus the need for TAs in a program, Professor McCormick said. That is a recurrent and widespread issue, the provost observed.

Professor Ropers-Huilman said she would be reluctant to see decisions re-centralized because quality is measured so differently across programs. Central standards would be highly problematic. She said she would like to see the colleges and administration be partners. She also noted that the University went through a strategic-planning process several years ago that identified the high-quality programs.

Provost Hanson said there is a meta-decision the central administration must be involved in: The University must increase support for graduate education and the central administration, in partnership with the colleges, must decide how to do so, and, broadly, how increased support should be deployed

Professor Kohlstedt thanked the provost for joining the meeting.

4. Discussion with Vice President Studham

Professor Kohlstedt welcomed Vice President Studham, Chief Information Office (Office of Information Technology, or OIT) and noted that the Committee had provided him with five questions in advance of the meeting. Those questions were:

- (1) How can one most efficiently train faculty members or provide incentives for them to take advantage of IT-centric resources for instruction? That includes both "traditional (on-campus)" courses and distance education. What is your view of the OIT Faculty Fellows project? Do you think that's a model for helping faculty more generally incorporate technology appropriately and effectively into their teaching or do you suggest an alternative model to do that?
- (2) Given your interest in some centralization and the need for to maintain some decentralization, how can OIT evaluate the effectiveness of both? Are there any new ideas about how to integrate better the various IT systems?
- (3) What can be done (as suggested in a recent front page story on the UMN web page) to take full advantage of our association with Google?
- (4) What are the challenges associated with protected data of one kind or another? What progress has been made / will be made with needs of individual faculty members be served better while balancing needs for economies of respect to permitting private/protected data to be super-easily accessed from anywhere so that faculty will stop keeping grades on their personal devices?
- (5) It is our understanding that a total overhaul of the U's search software is in the offing, something we would all welcome. Can you tell us anything about progress on that front?

Vice President Studham took up the questions in order.

With respect to question (1), Mr. Studham said there are two parts. Where are the training opportunities? There are different types ("What buttons do I push to load Moodle?" versus "What technology should I use in my courses?"), and the latter is consultation about what to use in instruction. OIT offers both types, he said. Questions of the first type can be found on the web, at <http://www.oit.umn.edu/training/>. In terms of consultation when one is not sure what to use, there is a parallel website, <http://www.oit.umn.edu/consultation-services/index2.htm>.

There are many places at the University that offer training and support for faculty who want to use technology in their courses, Mr. Studham observed, including the libraries, OIT, and the Center for Teaching and Learning. There is a group of people working on presenting a more centralized and coordinated effort; that has not happened yet, it is still being discussed, and he will bring it to the Senate Committee on Information Technologies next month.

Vice President Studham asked if any of the Committee members had used either the technical training or the consulting service. Both Professors Cramer and Kohlstedt reported that they had; Professor Cramer commended his experience and Professor Kohlstedt suggested that OIT inquire about the timing and frequency of training short courses (some may be offered too seldom or at times that make it difficult for faculty or staff to attend them). Mr. Cohen reported that OIT is gathering data and will offer more on-demand and online education or allow someone to receive consultation so that they do not have to spend half a day in a class.

Professor Hancher spoke about Google Drive and the extent to which faculty members do not know what it is. Is there a way to get information about who is using it/not using it? Probably people aren't using it because they don't know about it. Mr. Studham said they can identify who is using it; he

commented that they offer so many services that the idea of mapping who is using each technology would be a significant undertaking. Google Drive is just surfacing, he said, and it would help OIT to have information about what the most useful applications are. Professor Ben-Ner said that Google Drive is one and there are others that are becoming useful.

Mr. Studham pointed out that in Google, the default for every option is "on" for all University users; one must rationalize turning something off. So every service is available to faculty, staff, and students. Google is always upgrading its services, so the University always seems to be one step behind.

Professor Durfee applauded the proposal for one-stop shopping. He suggested taking things up a level and addressing the question of what the rationale is for separate technical tools for education versus more traditional tools. It would be helpful to have a one-stop site for teaching. Mr. Studham said they are working to better coordinate and align OIT, the libraries, and the Center for Teaching and Learning services. Mr. Cohen said that the use of hybrid and blended learning are central on the campus so coordinating their support is critical; they seek to work as a team to provide what an instructor needs for a class.

Mr. Studham turned to the OIT Faculty Fellows program. It targets a small number of faculty members who take a deep dive into technology, he observed, and it has had considerable success over the ten years it has existed. It will continue to evolve, and will likely be more focused on programs and less on individual instructors. He asked what the Committee thought about that possibility.

Professor Cramer said he liked the idea. OIT will get more bang for the buck when it harvests the energies of an entire program. Professor McCormick said it makes a difference if one can talk to someone down the hall in addition to a central service. Professor Ropers-Huilman asked if the two initiatives are not complementary; one of the Faculty Fellows in her department has applied for the centralized funding to transform the whole undergraduate program. That initiative would likely not have happened without the Faculty Fellowship program. That was the hope for the program, Mr. Studham responded—to plant seeds—and said he said he remains interested in the program.

Vice President Studham turned to question (2): Given your interest in some centralization and the need for to maintain some decentralization, how can OIT evaluate the effectiveness of both? Are there any new ideas about how to integrate better the various IT systems? He said he has a strong emotional response to the dialogue about centralization versus decentralization, which tends to be an "us versus them" discussion and a fight over turf. He said he does not support centralization—but information technology always centralizes (it did with telephones and has done so with most of the network). There are always components that move from the edge to the center: One does something, then a number do it, and then it becomes centralized. Units had local desktop support when it was unique enough in each department; there is nothing unique about it any longer with iPads, smart phones, etc. There were 73 helpdesks on the campus when Vice President Studham arrived, which there should not be; he has initiated a consolidation effort.

On the other hand, Mr. Studham said, academic technology, academic design, and research technology must live at the edge, in departments. Centralization/not is a false dichotomy, he said; technology is almost always centralized as departmental innovations become widespread. (Professor Cramer mentioned clickers, about which there is also nothing unique any more.)

Professor Durfee said, apropos of moving to centralize, in terms of University finances, it becomes a cost pool or, at the college level, it pays. Is this an issue with the recommendations? Very much so, Mr. Studham said. They are only centralizing the non-academic help desks. This will result in an increase in the information-technology cost pool but will lead to a decrease in some of the other cost pools (shifting costs), so it should be a wash. Once they establish a critical mass in the non-academic helpdesk, they plan to start offering it to the colleges; they hope the colleges will start using it so that they can divest the funds in their own helpdesk and use the savings elsewhere in the college.

In terms of better integrating the various IT systems, Mr. Studham said, the Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) project is intended to better coordinate the financial, student, and human resources systems. It is a huge project, much bigger than the recent Enterprise Financial System (EFS) upgrade. Starting now, and for the next 9 months, faculty and staff can tell the ERP staff what they need from the system [they can email esup@umn.edu]. They are determined that what happened with EFS will not happen with the ERP upgrade; they are encouraging support people to take time to advise them on the project.

Professor Kohlstedt reported that Committee members had heard that EFS went forward without consultation after they had decided what they wanted. Mr. Studham said that in the construction business, once a design is in place, one doesn't change it when construction is underway. If there are a lot of changes in process, the cost could balloon far beyond \$80 million. Professor Kohlstedt told him that if they see big problems, they may nonetheless have to make changes. Mr. Studham agreed but said that they are managing to a schedule and must be done by 2014; the time for participating in decisions is the next 9 months.

Professor Durfee commented about best practices in product development. Often, new University services under development gather customer feedback by sending out a mass email inviting stakeholders to attend a session. Best practices have shown that method is doomed to fail and OIT will never get good feedback that way. Rather than put out a call and wait, the Enterprise development group should visit stakeholders in their workplace for one-on-one interviews to understand their needs.

Is there any precedent or hope for collaboration with the CIC, Professor McCormick asked? There is, Mr. Studham said; there are a number of areas where the University collaborates with the other CIC schools. The University's Google negotiations were based on what Michigan did. Where that does not occur is with the enterprise systems because it is unique--there is a massive effort to get the colleges to collaborate, but not with the CIC schools. The University is in the middle in terms of e-learning.

In terms of question (3), what can be done (as suggested in a recent front page story on the UMN web page) to take full advantage of our association with Google, Mr. Studham said OIT would explore who is using Google Drive. He said he needed the advice of the Committee on creating faculty learning opportunities.

Professor Bitterman said that if he could look at a heat map, and see that two-thirds of his colleagues in a department are using something, he would go find out how to use it.

Beyond what has already been discussed, what else, Mr. Studham asked?

Professor Hancher noted that Google+ had recently surpassed Twitter as the second-largest social medium after Facebook and that it is available to everyone at the University. The "Google Communities" feature is amenable to use in classes; he said that there is also a Google Course Builder utility, with which he is not familiar; it might be an alternative to Moodle. Google wants to do everything for the University and there are layers of opportunities. "We are all de facto subscribers," he observed. Mr. Studham pointed out that some services are still not available in the Academic Health Center (because of HIPPA) but progress is being made.

Mr. Studham asked if would be possible to do a heat map with Google Plus and Google Communities. Professor Bitterman said that OIT could at least set a goal for usage, similar to fund-raising goals. Professor Durfee suggested adding the Google Sites app to heat maps. Professor McCormick said there is a need for videoconferencing capabilities, both for academic purposes and for other University work.

Mr. Studham said he needed clarification on question (4), what are the challenges associated with protected data of one kind or another? What progress has been made or will be made with better serving the needs of individual faculty members while balancing needs for economies of respect to permitting private/protected data to be super-easily accessed from anywhere so that faculty will stop keeping grades on their personal devices? Grades, for example, Professor Kohlstedt said; faculty members may not be protecting them, not following the rules because they do not know how to do so. How can help happen?

Mr. Studham said the rules are complicated and keep changing. For today, much is related to an individual's comfort level with technology. People who are not comfortable with it should make sure their laptops are encrypted and only use University devices. People who are comfortable with technology can put their grades in Google, which meets federal privacy requirements (FERPA), and then they can get access from their laptop or their kid's iPad, etc. Use a secure device if uncomfortable; secure the data if comfortable.

Professor Durfee suggested making sure the FAQ is up to date so that faculty members can learn about keeping grades. The last edict required people to put their laptops in a locker with a lock; now they can put information on Google Docs—that is a sea change. That is because of the University's relationship with Google, Mr. Studham said, and the changes have been reviewed and approved by the General Counsel, OIT, and others.

Mr. Studham turned to question (5), it is our understanding that a total overhaul of the U's search software is in the offing, something we would all welcome. Can you tell us anything about progress on that front? The University is not changing software and is using Google's search appliance, which is an industry-standard search engine—but the University is not using it well and they do not have the people in OIT who know how to configure it to make it work better. They are training people do so, however, and they still need to work with University Relations and departments. Google does its rankings by the number of people who click on a site, and because there is not a large enough population at the University to do those rankings naturally, there is need for human intervention, something the staff have to be trained for.

Professor McCormick inquired if there is a reason that Duluth websites pop up first. Or Crookston, Professor Hancher added. He said he often simply goes to plain Google to do a search, applying a umn.edu domain filter, and gets better results. So does he, Mr. Studham said. They will train

people to work on the problem and try to make it better—but he said he was making no guarantees. Professor Kohlstedt said that the University's system is balkier than that at some of its peer institutions; it is puzzling why it is so bad.

Mr. Studham now asked Committee members what the number one thing they would change in information technology if they could.

- Moodle is too clunky and not even as good as the previous system, WebVista. Drag-and-drop capability is still needed.
- Change the first response, when one calls for help, to something other than "oh, you have a Mac."
- The videoconferencing/ITV facilities.
- Access to 24/7 help.
- Provide support for home computers even if they are not University devices; if one has a virus that one is trying to stop from spreading, it is not helpful to be told that the helplines will not assist if it is not a University computer.
- Provide users the administrative privileges to add programs; it is very difficult to manage a computer without that ability.
- Be able to type in a question at the portal and have it return useful information rather than having a page full of 95 links that makes it too imposing to go hunting.
- Change EGMS so every PI wants to use it.
- Provide better wireless in classrooms and offices.

Mr. Studham said that OIT would offer 24/7 service, for Macs as well as PCs, whether University-owned or not.

Professor Kohlstedt thanked Mr. Studham for joining the Committee and adjourned the meeting at 2:45.

-- Gary Engstrand

University of Minnesota