Minutes*

Senate Committee on Educational Policy
Wednesday, March 27, 2013
2:00 – 4:00
238A Morrill Hall

Present: Alon McCormick (chair), Karla Hemesath (for Barbara Brandt), Thomas Brothen,
                 Lee-Ann Breuch, Megan Chock, Charlene Ellingson, Janine Grebin, Robert
                 McMaster, Thomas Michaels, Kristen Nelson, Leslie Schiff, Elaine Tarone, Eva von
                 Dassow, Susan Wick

Absent: Nic McPhee, Henning Schroeder, William Ziegler

Guests: Professor Patricia Schaber (chair, Classroom Advisory Subcommittee); Susan
                 VanVoorhis (Academic Support Resources)

Other: none

[In these minutes: (1) report from the Classroom Advisory Subcommittee; (2) ad hoc Subcommittee
on e-education; (3) grading issues; (4) graduate student learning outcomes/intellectual principles]

        Professor McCormick convened the meeting at 2:00 and began by congratulating Professor
Wick on receiving the Morse-Alumni Award for Contributions to Undergraduate Education and
Professor Schiff on becoming Associate Dean for Curriculum in Vice Provost and Dean McMaster's
office at the end of the semester.

1.   Report from the Classroom Advisory Subcommittee (CAS)

        Professor McCormick now welcomed Professor Schaber to the meeting to provide a report
from the Classroom Advisory Subcommittee (CAS).

        Professor Schaber reviewed the work of CAS this year and said that in addition to
understanding classroom management and discussing flexible classroom spaces, the Subcommittee
will look at classroom management at other institutions, specifically in regard to the division of
general purpose classrooms versus departmental classroom and cost pools that support them. In terms
of flexible classrooms, the Subcommittee considered where the walls of a classroom are and how they
can extend and expand beyond the physical classroom location, which led them to examine designated
study spaces, which are sometimes used as part of classes. After discussing renovated study spaces,
and learning that study spaces are not designated for additional cleaning by facilities management
beyond the floor, the Subcommittee concluded it wished to see study spaces included in the Office for
Classroom Management cost pool, and adopted a statement, which follows (between the * * *):

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* 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.

STATEMENT ON FUNDING FOR STUDENT STUDY SPACE

Introduction:
Trends in higher education point to increased demand from faculty for active learning classroom or flexible classroom space. The costs associated with renovation of traditional classroom space to active learning classrooms can be prohibitive. One low cost option for students to work in small groups during class sessions is to break out into adjoining areas. These informal spaces include what is designated as *student study space*. At present, the committee reported a perceived increase in the use of hallways, lounges, and other spaces for student small group projects. Over the past five years, there has been increased use of student study space prior to or between classes yet, at present, there is no life cycle funding to maintain, replace, or update the technology, fixtures or furnishings.

Background:
General purpose classrooms are discretely funded in the General Purpose Classroom Cost Pool, separate from student services or other cost pool requirements. The Office of Classroom Management (OCM) manages $21.1 million of classroom furniture, fixtures, and equipment and $8.3 million of classroom technology in the 360,000 square feet of general purpose classrooms.

In addition to classroom responsibilities, OCM was assigned the management and maintenance of over 34,000 square feet of student study space. These study spaces represent an additional $1 million in OCM-managed assets.

In FY13, the Office of Classroom Management (OCM) received a $2 million internal loan for classroom upgrades in Keller 3-230, Borlaug 335 & 365, and Vincent 16. The loan also provided onetime funding for improvement of study space in Willey and Wilson Library. While this is welcome news in the short term for dealing with current maintenance and lifecycle replacement priorities, this loan will generate an annual payment obligation.

The University of Minnesota invested in its formal and informal learning spaces, but without recurring maintenance and renewal, at some point the technology, fixtures and furnishings will be inaccessible due to failure. As a case in point, February 2013: students reported a broken table in a Nolte Center study space. The table pieces were removed from the space; however, OCM does not have recurring funding for repair or replacement. Individual requests are made to the Vice Provost and Provost offices for funding to replace items like the study space table.

Recommendation:
The Classroom Advisory Subcommittee (CAS) supports the Office of Classroom Management planning for lifecycle maintenance and renewal in its study spaces. CAS recommends including student study space into the General Purpose Classroom Cost Pool funding in order to provide a quality standard for learning environment facilities, technology and support that is appropriate for a major, nationally ranked university. CAS further recommends no further cuts to the classroom cost pool funds to maintain the basic-level of maintenance and renewal of classroom and study space infrastructure.

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The Subcommittee also recommends the implementation of a web-based classroom-scheduling system that can generate reports, allow comparisons with other institutions, provide data on usage and preferred times and blocks of time, Professor Schaber said. Their prediction is that with increased e-learning, teaching and learning could vary more from the traditional schedule of classes.

Committee members expressed support for the statement and for bringing it to the University Senate for action because the faculty encourage students to do work outside the classroom—and they need space to do so—and because many may not know how the system works and this could help educate the members of the Senate. There was also support for expanding the classrooms cost pool to include designated study spaces. The Committee also expressed concern that if the number of general-purpose classrooms is expanded and study space is added to the responsibilities of the Office of Classroom Management, and the budget of the office continues to shrink, the quality of classrooms and study spaces can only decline.

Professor Schaber affirmed that for hybrid courses, both study spaces and classrooms are used for instructional activities; scheduling study spaces is not permitted but classes may use them. Professor Breuch pointed out that hybrid classes must designate in One Stop if they are going to use designated study space. Ms. VanVoorhis observed that study spaces are not in the schedule to book, and while classes would not be kicked out of study spaces if using them for structured activities, they will also not kick out other students who are using the spaces.

The Committee voted unanimously to endorse the CAS statement and to forward it to the Faculty Consultative Committee. Professor McCormick thanked Professor Schaber for the report and recommendation.

2.   ad hoc Subcommittee on e-education

Professor Michaels provided a list of questions the e-education subcommittee has prepared in advance of the provost's visit with the Committee on May 8.

1. What is the University's strategy for exploring and adopting new teaching and learning strategies and techniques?
   a)   eLearning was recently promoted through an RFP process. Will the university continue with this "let's explore and see what works" approach, or will it champion and support particular strategies as it did with active learning? Are additional eLearning or innovative teaching RFPs planned?
   b)   Do we have any ambitions to position ourselves as something special when it comes to eLearning, or are we going to just try to stay with the pack of other peer universities?

2. What is the University strategy for entering the MOOC realm?
   a)   Do we enter this realm at the "front end" as "venture capitalists" and use them as "loss leaders" to get more "customers" later?
   b)   Do we enter at the "back end" as a utilizer of the universe of MOOC content and even "package" them for credit (e.g., give exams to verify them as worthy of credit)?

2. How should we view MOOCs?

a)   As learning experiences for faculty that will ultimately improve their instruction?
b)   As new courses that, like any other courses, require the same curricular approval policy?
c)   As "movies"(that require high production values) or as a class? (How comfortable should we be at recording our classes much as they now are and broadcasting them to the world?)

3. What are the best ways to motivate faculty to take on the MOOC production role?
a)   Through additional eLearning grant opportunities in the future.
b)   Through a cut of the "profits" (e.g., the ITunes model of 99 cents from many)?

4. In addition to providing incentives for innovation, can we reduce disincentives to innovation that may be affecting faculty activities through, for instance, student evaluations and tenure, promotion and merit considerations?

Professor Michaels said the subcommittee sought the Committee's feedback.

Ms. Grebin raised what Professor Brothen said are important questions about whether MOOCs should carry credit or if one can take a test after a MOOC to earn credit. For introductory courses, with thousands of students, offering a test could be difficult, but some MOOCs are quite narrowly-focused. Vice Provost McMaster pointed out that under current University policy, one must be a matriculated University student in order to be able to request an exam for credit, at $50 per credit—and a department can decline to offer such an exam. He reported that the provost has asked him to look at the policy because there may be a significant number of students who take MOOCs, claim to have learned, and want to take an exam for credit. A bigger question is if colleges lose tuition revenue because students take a MOOC and an exam for credit rather than enrolling in classes, Professor Brothen commented. Colleges may say "no" to exams for credit in the face of tuition losses.

Professor von Dassow related that she had been told that there will be no course release for preparing and teaching a MOOC and that no MOOC can be an existing University course. In other words, faculty must volunteer a large block of their time for all of the preparation and filming of the course. She said that colleges must offer a course release if they expect faculty members to develop a MOOC. She also suggested that the answer to question 2(b) is "yes," these should be University courses that go through the same curricular approval process.

Professor Brothen expressed doubt that a dean would want to give a course release to develop a free course for which students can take an exam for $150. "What economic sense does that make?" Professor von Dassow said that it may be a student could take a MOOC and a University course simultaneously, with the MOOC part of the University course. But if a MOOC cannot be an existing course, and must be new, it will not be available to University students because it will not carry credit. Why offer innovative courses for free online but not to University students?

Professor McCormick suggested these are questions for the subcommittee to consider further.

3.   Grading Issues

The Committee reviewed the materials to be forwarded to the Faculty Consultative Committee the following day. FCC's focus in their discussion will be on who should have access to grades, Professor McCormick related: students, transcript readers, and the general public. Or should the records be completely open? Committee members made, or reiterated, several points and questions.

--   Many of the data are already available through Myedu or Koofers.

--   What are people afraid of if the data are released?

--   What is the problem, if there are no personal data released? (Data for classes with fewer than ~10 students would not be released.)

--   Would it be possible to obtain data on the number of hits on a website once the data were available, to see what the demand really is?

--   The availability of the data is likely not known to many faculty members.

--   From whom should the Committee get information about faculty concerns about releasing the data?

--   How much will this benefit students? Some tools might be more useful for students, such as the history in their program or comparisons with the University; others might be more useful for faculty, such as a searchable database (There are tools in the works, Dr. McMaster confirmed).

--   There are different purposes for viewing grade distributions so there could be different data arrangements. Faculty might want data sets different from what students want.

The Faculty Consultative Committee, once it has received the information, must decide what use of it should be made.

4.   Graduate Student Learning Outcomes/Intellectual Principles

Vice Provost and Dean Schroeder brought to the Committee revised intellectual principles for Ph.D./Ed.D., and Master's research education. They received comments from across the institution and have revised the principles in light of those comments. The revised principles read as follows:

Six Intellectual Principles of Ph.D./Ed.D./Master's Research Education

The six intellectual principles below are not listed in any specific order, except for the first one that has high priority for all research programs. The remaining five principles vary in importance from program to program, and it is left to each program to weigh the relative importance of these principles. Similarly, the bullet points following each principle below are not intended to be prescriptive, definitional or encyclopedic; these are examples to stimulate discussion about program-specific student learning outcomes. Each program will need to decide for each principle how and whether it applies to the program, and develop examples that illustrate outcomes specific to the program. For instance, the ability to teach in a formal educational setting (see example under Communication) is likely important in many graduate

programs, but may not be an outcome that is assessed in some Master's programs where students' are not planning to pursue a career in academia.

1. Scholarly Formation
-- Acquisition of knowledge of core competences and demonstration of self-directed learning, life-long learning skills, and integrative learning
-- Creation of basic or applied knowledge through original research or synthesis that advances the field; demonstration of advanced research skills; dedication to the search of truth; ability to make connections among disciplinary fields; ability to ask fundamental questions and/or solve applied problems
-- Sense of responsibility for stewardship in conserving the key ideas of the field while being ready to challenge existing thinking, transmit knowledge to others, and advance the field

2. Communication
-- Advanced written and oral communication skills
-- Ability to teach in a formal educational setting
-- Ability to communicate to broad audiences such as educators, policy boards, expert panels, language and culture groups, etc.
-- Effective communication in teams

3. Leadership and Collaborative Skills
-- Skills in team-approaches to problem solving
-- Development of integrative skills to improve collaboration and problem solving across disciplines when working in cross-disciplinary teams
-- Ability to share knowledge in learning communities where social networking allows for participatory research/knowledge creation/knowledge sharing
-- Ability to apply intercultural knowledge in team-building

4. Global Context
-- Ability to conduct and apply research on global issues
-- Ability to pursue scholarship amid fundamental changes in how society interacts, creates, and shares knowledge in a global society that transcends cultures and political boundaries
-- Acquisition of multilingual and multicultural competencies to articulate shared knowledge

5. Professional Responsibility
-- Awareness of civic responsibilities and a broad outlook on societal implications of research
-- Ability to conduct research in an ethical and responsible manner, with commitment and integrity
-- Development of a professional perspective and scholarly identity, habits of mind consistent with a professionally identity

6. Personal and Professional Management Skills
-- Ability to persist in achieving long-term goals

> --   Ability to manage projects with uncertain outcomes
> --   Ability to be flexible and adaptable in approaching complex and uncertain problems
> --   Being self-motivated and autonomous
> --   Ability to achieve results with minimum supervision

Dean Schroeder reported that they heard consistently that the principles should not be rank-ordered, but also heard that "scholarly formation" should be #1 on the list and the others follow it. He said they hope to obtain all the feedback they can and said there are four pilot programs to also provide feedback. They are also developing a survey to go to a large number of faculty and graduate students. If the Committee approves the principles in principle, they can return later with additional feedback.

Dean Schroeder also relayed a sentiment from one person on the Council of Graduate Students: Graduate students should come into graduate school with the elements of #6.

Committee members offered a number of comments.

--   #6 is not limited to graduate education so is different from the other principles. So what is different about Ph.D. and Master's degrees about expectations? It may be to the experience of the process of creating new knowledge. (Dean Schroeder said #6 speaks to an important educational and growth process graduate students go through; the bullets speak to the research experience.)

--   The few comments that came in were not taken into account at all. No revisions were made but editorial changes resulting from discussion at the previous SCEP meeting were.

--   It is possible to make #6 measureable, but not the others.

--   Some of the principles are marketing and leave out what many students in the arts and humanities do; the principles are all about the production of knowledge.

--   These may require more bureaucratic work for departments.

Dean Schroeder said he understood the fear that this is another accountability frenzy and one goes through the forms and checks boxes. Everyone on the subcommittee wants to avoid making this an exercise in checking boxes on forms and going through hoops.

--   Dean Schroeder and colleagues should reach out to faculty members in the arts and humanities and ask for bullet points that reflect what they do. (It was noted that there is a footnote in the document that excludes some of the "creative arts" from the focus on the scholarly component of a program. This draft plus the pilot programs are a starting point for research degrees; it can be expanded to creative degrees later. It also does not now include professional degrees. The footnote should be moved up into the text and the title of the document revised.)

--   There is some handholding in the first departments to adopt the principles so that they don't write a telephone book to implement and assess them. The principles are to help evaluate where a program is and not all are quantifiable.

--   It would help to provide context. Why are these principles being adopted? What is their purpose? That would help departments think about them. (The timeline includes the accreditation of the Twin Cities campus in 2015, Dean Schroeder reported, but is also for the purpose of evaluating the job markets and career trajectory changes for Ph.D.s, and for evaluating the curriculum to see what makes sense and what could be left out. These are adapted from a number of Canadian, European, and North American universities; Dean Schroeder said that when he was on an external review team, he was told that students do look at such principles when considering where to apply and they help to clarify what it means to have a Ph.D. from the University of Minnesota. They could help attract students from around the world.)

--   Nothing in the principles should be new. There should be a way to organize the information (without writing a telephone book) that makes it clear this is what is already going on.

--   One underlying concern is that the principles could take the accountability out of the hands of students, where it should reside; there is the sense that "we produce" rather than "if you do this, then. . . ."

--   The principles ask programs to think about what they are teaching students; what do they want students to learn by the end of the program? The principles require the faculty be clear themselves and to their students. Students can be informed what it is anticipated they will learn and where they will devote their efforts; not to do that encourages silos and the learning of facts, writing a dissertation, and being done.

--   Programs should be encouraged to set out examples for each of the six principles.

        The Committee voted 11-0 to support in principle the direction being taken; one Committee member abstained.

        Professor McCormick thanked the subcommittee members for their work thus far and adjourned the meeting at 4:00.

                                                -- Gary Engstrand

University of Minnesota