

AHC FACULTY CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

February 15, 2013
Minutes of the Meeting

[In these minutes: Tobacco-Free Campus, Interdisciplinary Graduate Education from a Research Perspective, Spring Forum, Agenda Items for March 6 Meeting with Dr. Friedman]

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

Present: Ned Patterson, (chair), Colin Campbell, John Connett, Les Drewes, Cynthia Gross, Kathleen Krichbaum, Sandra Myers

Absent: Robert Kratzke

Guest: Vice Dean for Research (Medical School) and Associate Vice President for Research (Academic Health Center) Tucker W. LeBien, and Assistant Dean for Graduate Education (Medical School) Yoji Shimizu

Others attending: Barbara Elliott

I). Professor Patterson called the meeting to order and welcomed those present.

II). Members spent the first few minutes talking about the recent announcement that Dr. Friedman, vice president for health sciences and dean of the Medical School, was stepping down at the end of the 2013 calendar year.

Professor Patterson stated that in light of this announcement, the committee should discuss what role, if any, it wants to have in the search for a replacement for Dr. Friedman. He noted that the committee will talk more about this after its discussion with Dr. Tucker LeBien and Dr. Yoji Shimizu.

III). Professor Patterson asked members what they would like to do with the tobacco-free campus information that Mr. Schlapper and Mr. Golden from Boynton Health Service shared at the committee's last meeting. Renee Dempsey, Senate staff, distributed a copy of a tobacco-free campus resolution that the Social Concerns Committee drafted as well as a copy of a letter the Benefits Advisory Committee (BAC) sent to President Kaler in support of a tobacco-free campus.

Professor Campbell stated that while he overall supports the idea of a tobacco-free campus, his only concern stems from a recent visit to Hartford, Connecticut where he observed people standing in the street to smoke because the Hartford Hospital was tobacco-free. Professor Campbell stated that based on the information provided by Mr.

Schlapper and Mr. Golden, however, this would not be a problem at the University because it owns the streets on campus.

After a brief discussion, members agreed they supported the idea of a tobacco-free campus. Professor Myers stated that, in her opinion, if the University were to go tobacco-free it would be a marvelous statement about how the University feels about health. Professor Gross stated that she was impressed with the tobacco-free presentation and believes the guests had a compelling rationale for why the University should go tobacco-free. She suggested that the AHC FCC write a letter, similar to the letter written by the BAC, requesting President Kaler make the University tobacco-free, and to copy Dr. Friedman and the AHC collegiate chairs on the letter. Members unanimously voted to approve sending the letter.

IV). Professor Patterson introduced the next agenda item, a discussion on interdisciplinary graduate education from a research perspective. On a side note, he added that graduate education was also a topic of conversation at yesterday's FCC meeting. The FCC plans to look into the graduate education issue in more depth.

Professor Drewes commented that research activities are really an outgrowth of active research programs. He added that he is interested in hearing how today's guests view their role in fostering and enabling faculty research and education. Employment of graduate students continues to be an issue. Is the University training and educating people who can get employed once they graduate? Professor Gross noted that Professor Drewes' question is a valid one. She added that faculty oftentimes do not hire graduate students because it is cheaper to hire technicians or even post docs. Increasingly, long-term grants are getting harder and harder to come by making it difficult to guarantee four years of support.

Professor Patterson welcomed Vice Dean for Research (Medical School) and Associate Vice President for Research (Academic Health Center) Tucker W. LeBien, and Assistant Dean for Graduate Education (Medical School) Yoji Shimizu to the meeting, and called for a round of introductions.

To put the discussion into context, Professor Patterson began by providing some background information. Dr. LeBien started by thanking members for the invitation to discuss the issue of graduate education with them. He stated that as he thinks about graduate education in terms of how it is organized, supported, and bought into by various colleges, two things come to mind:

1. Is the AHC configuring its graduate programs to give students the best possible education so they can embark on fulfilling careers? This aspect of graduate education needs to be constantly re-evaluated as disciplines change, etc.
2. From a laboratory driven graduate program perspective, the AHC is a graduate student driven research culture. Generally speaking, the most robust research being conducted in the AHC has a graduate student on the front-end of that research. The core drivers of science in the biomedical research area are graduate students.

Having said this, faculty are dependent on top-notch students as the driver of their programs, and ultimately their careers.

Professor Drewes asked Dr. LeBien and Dr. Shimizu their opinions about the graduate education role linked to faculty research. The AHC has a lot of programs, and this leads to the question of whether the University is training and educating too many graduate students. Professor Drewes asked Dr. LeBien and Dr. Shimizu what role they play, if any, in fostering research graduate programs that are part of the faculty research activity.

Dr. Shimizu acknowledged Professor Drewes' comment about the national discussion that is taking place around graduate PhD education, particularly in the biomedical science arena, and whether the AHC is in fact training too many graduate students. He cited an NIH report that looked at this very issue:

acd.od.nih.gov/biomedical_research_wgreport.pdf, which was co-chaired by Dr. Shirley Tilghman, president, Princeton University, and Dr. Sally Rockey, NIH deputy director for extramural research. Dr. Tilghman, noted Dr. Shimizu, personally believes that too many graduate students are being trained, and has stated this publically. The NIH has begun to consider possible changes in terms of how they support graduate education to address concerns that have been voiced. Dr. Shimizu stated that in his position as assistant dean of graduate education in the Medical School he works with the directors of graduate studies for the various graduate programs in the Medical School. The directors meet regularly to discuss these kinds of issues and try to balance the needs of the faculty for graduate students, and the overall bigger picture of looking at the best interests of students.

Dr. LeBien added that while he does not have specific responsibility for graduate education, graduate training, and structuring of graduate programs, a number of the grant decisions made out of his office are often either targeted at graduate students who work in the labs or are indirectly supporting an opportunity for graduate students in their career development. When the Graduate School reformation began, there was a period of uncertainty, and, as a result, the Medical School took matters into its own hands, and appointed Dr. Shimizu to his position so he could oversee the graduate programs embedded in the Medical School. In Dr. LeBien's opinion, with the reformation of the Graduate School, colleges need take on a more active role in managing their graduate programs.

Professor Drewes asked Dr. LeBien and Dr. Shimizu to speak to the cost of having a graduate student. Some people, noted Professor Drewes, view graduate education as an outgrowth of faculty research activity. The cost of having a graduate student is very high. What can be done to enhance or maintain the graduate education component of faculty research? Dr. Shimizu stated that he frequently hears comments about the cost of graduate education being prohibitive, especially compared to hiring a post doc, for example. The costs associated with graduate education are University costs and are also market-based, e.g., needing to be competitive with other institutions. This concern has repeatedly been voiced to senior administration associated with graduate education. Some AHC programs are taking a creative approach and trying to reduce their costs. For

example, once a graduate student completes his/her thesis credits, tuition costs for supporting that student goes down dramatically. Up until the Graduate School reformation, thesis credits could only be taken at certain periods, but that has changed so graduate students can now have their students complete their thesis credits earlier in their graduate training. The cost of graduate education continues to be an issue, and it inhibits faculty from being willing to train graduate students. Ideally, it would be great to have stronger institutional support for graduate students during the early phases of their training. In addition, training grants also help to positively impact the cost associated with training graduate students. It is unclear at this point, however, whether this will be enough to overcome the cost issues.

Dr. LeBien noted that in select circumstances, the AHC has agreed to offset the tuition gap that reflects the difference between the NIH training grant amount and what the University charges. This is extremely important because Federal funds cannot be used to make up this difference, only non-sponsored dollars. A lot of faculty do not have non-sponsored dollars to make up this difference. Particularly troubling related to the cost of graduate education, stated Dr. LeBien, is that some graduate programs will support students for the first 12 months they are in the program, for example, e.g., covering students when they are taking a majority of their courses, but there are other programs that cut off support early to try to reduce the amount of time they have to pay for a particular student and put that burden on the faculty. In Dr. LeBien's opinion, this is an unfortunate use of NIH dollars. In the Medical School, discussions are taking place on how to stabilize support for students for the first 12 months they are in a program.

Regarding the question of whether too many graduate students are being trained, reported Dr. LeBien, the unemployment rate of students who graduate is almost zero. While this does not necessarily mean that graduates get their next ideal training experience, there must be sufficient demand for trainees in the biological sciences given they are finding jobs. Professor Gross stated that with all the baby boomers who are retiring or about to retire, how can the biomedical research enterprise thrive without training more graduate students. Dr. Shimizu stated that he does not recall the question of demographics being raised in the NIH report he previously cited. However, anecdotally, the sense within academia is that retirement is happening later and later for senior faculty members. The NIH report concluded that there are not as many graduate students entering into academia as in the past, and recommended the NIH recognize this and provide incentives for University's whose graduate students are choosing non-academic career paths. The primary message of the report, stated Dr. Shimizu, is that graduate programs in the biomedical sciences are not doing enough training of students to prepare them for non-academic career paths once they complete their PhD program.

Professor Campbell noted that he disagrees that higher education is training too many graduate students. The private sector has grown tremendously while academia has not. Professor Gross commented about renewal of training grants. Dr. Shimizu stated that this is a big issue. The T32 training grants are evaluated on the basis of the trainees who go into academic careers. It is important to recognize that there are students who are interested in careers other than the traditional academic career path. NIH should consider

telling their T32 study section reviewers to think more broadly about what is an actual success in terms of a career outcome for a PhD student supported by an NIH training grant. Dr. LeBien stated that NIH is looking into this.

Professor Connett suggested that if the reality is that an increasing number of graduates are going into industry as opposed to academia that higher education should look to industry for support in addition to NIH training grants. Professor Gross stated that in her opinion she believes more students would consider a career in academia if their mentors did not have such a hard time getting funding.

Professor Elliott stated that she has heard that the University of Minnesota has both a very high number of graduate students as well as graduate programs compared to peer institutions. Is the University thinking about conducting an assessment of the programs it offers? Dr. Shimizu stated that over the past few years there have been discussions about using metrics to assess program quality and allocate financial resources based on those metrics. These discussions have been problematic because no agreement can be reached about what metrics (e.g., time to degree, retention rate, career outcomes) should be used. While there is an interest in assessing quality and accomplishments, the metrics for conducting such an assessment are still being debated.

Professor Drewes asked whether all tenure-track faculty should have the opportunity to have graduate students and participate in a graduate program. In Dr. LeBien's opinion, all tenure-track faculty should have this opportunity. Professor Drewes stated that he would like to continue this discussion off-line as it relates to Duluth Medicine and Pharmacy faculty because most do not currently have this opportunity. Currently, there are no PhD programs in Duluth, except those that are considered All-University programs. Professor Gross stated that of the four College of Pharmacy graduate programs, two are well-integrated with Duluth - Social Administrative Pharmacy and Experimental and Clinical Pharmacology. Pharmaceutics and Med Chem do not regularly ITV, which poses a barrier. Dr. LeBien sees the problem as a numerical imbalance of students. In Duluth, a student would have to be willing to spend his/her time away from the core group of graduate students, which is a huge issue for many students. Dr. LeBien stated that he would be happy to continue this discussion off-line with Professor Drewes.

Professor Campbell asked Dr. LeBien whether he has had any conversations with President Kaler about graduate students being supported off of RO1 grants, and, as a result, trying to get a larger percentage of graduate students. Is political influence being exerted on the NIH to get graduate students off RO1 grants and getting them on T32 training grants? There will be winners and losers if this redistribution occurs. Dr. Shimizu stated that while the NIH workforce report recommended this shift, the NIH concluded it would not happen, at least at this time. Doing so would have huge logistical and political implications for how graduate students are funded. It is unclear whether this idea will continue to be discussed or not within the NIH. Professor Campbell strongly encouraged this issue be brought to President Kaler's attention.

Professor Patterson stated that the FCC is meeting with Dean Henning Schroeder (Graduate School) on Thursday, February 21. He encouraged members who have graduate education questions to email him with those questions.

Professor Patterson thanked Dr. LeBien and Dr. Shimizu for a lively discussion and taking time out of their busy schedules to meet with the committee.

V). Moving on, the committee talked about the AHC FCC Spring Faculty Forum that is scheduled for March 4, 2013. In response to a question about the number of RSVPs that have been received so far, Ms. Dempsey responded that 28 have been received. Ideas suggested for increasing attendance included:

- Send a reminder, and put RSVP now in the subject line.
- Post flyers across the AHC (members were asked to take flyers and post them in public areas in each of the AHC schools).
- Talk/email fellow colleagues encouraging them to attend the forum.
- Send (Ned Patterson) a personal invite to the directors of each of the AHC Centers and Institutes.

Professor Patterson reported that he, Professor Elliot, Professor Gross and Professor Kratzke will meet next Friday, February 22 to thematically categorize and organize the questions that will be given to President Kaler prior to the event to help him prepare.

Ms. Dempsey reported having already sent the invitation to the AHC collegiate chairs and the FCC as well. Professor Patterson reminded Ms. Dempsey to also send the invitation to the directors of the AHC Centers and Institutes. He suggested getting their names from Dr. Friedman's office.

Professor Krichbaum stated that in her opinion the RSVP rate will not accurately reflect who will actually show up. She stated that she thinks more people will show up than who actually RSVPed.

Professor Campbell stated that he believes that it is incumbent on all AHC FCC members to reach out personally to as many of their colleagues as possible and invite them to attend. In his opinion, mass emails do not work and are often deleted by faculty. Personal invitations are much more effective.

VI). The committee took a few minutes to debrief from its February 6 meeting with Dr. Friedman and to talk about topics for their next meeting with him on March 6. The committee decided they would like to ask Dr. Friedman for his thoughts and advise on what the AHC faculty should be aware of and/or mindful of in light of the AHC leadership transition given his decision to step down at the end of the calendar year. A second agenda item, noted Professor Patterson, will be to get Dr. Friedman's feedback on the forum.

Professor Patterson asked for members' thoughts on whether the AHC FCC should request a seat on the search committee for the vice president of health sciences and dean

of the Medical School. Professor Campbell stated that he believes it is absolutely essential that the AHC FCC be represented on the search committee.

Professor Krichbaum raised the issue of transparency when it comes to the committee that conducts the decanal reviews, e.g., names of the faculty serving on the committee. She suggested this item be an agenda item for an upcoming AHC FCC meeting.

VII). Hearing no further business, Professor Patterson adjourned the meeting.

Renee Dempsey
University Senate