

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

TWIN CITIES CAMPUS ASSEMBLY MINUTES

April 18, 1991

The third meeting of the Twin Cities Assembly for 1990-91 was convened in 25 Law Center on Thursday, April 18, 1991, at 2:30 p.m. Checking or signing the roll as present were 118 voting faculty/academic professional members, 29 voting members of the student body, 2 ex officio, and 11 nonmembers. Shirley Zimmerman, vice chair, presided.

I. MINUTES FOR FEBRUARY 14

Action (2 minutes)

Accepted

II. COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIPS, 1991-92

Information

In the recent election to fill faculty vacancies on the Assembly Steering Committee, Mario Bognanno (Management) and Shirley Zimmerman (Human Ecology) were elected for 3-year terms (1991-94). Continuing members include W. Andrew Collins (Education), Amos Deinard (Medical School), Norman Kerr (Biological Sciences), Thomas Scott (CLA), and Charlotte Striebel (IT).

Accepted

III. ELECTION OF VICE CHAIR FOR 1991-92

Action (5 minutes)

The constitution provides that a vice chair shall be elected by the Twin Cities Campus Assembly at its first meeting in the spring quarter for a term of one year from among its members.

Christine Velure, CLA sophomore, was elected.

**IV. REPORT OF NOMINATING COMMITTEE FOR
COMMITTEE ON COMMITTEES**

Action by Faculty and Academic Professionals (5 minutes)

MOTION:

That the Faculty Assembly approve the following slate of nominees to fill two 1991-94, one 1991-93, and two 1991-92 vacancies on the Assembly Committee on Committees:

FOR 3-YEAR TERM (1991-94)

SUBIR BANERJEE, Professor, Geology & Geophysics, Institute of Technology. Member: University Senate, 1985-88; International Education Committee, 1986-89 (chair 1988-89); Honors Programs Committee, 1983-86 (chair 1985-86).

HAZEL DICKEN-GARCIA, Associate Professor, Journalism & Mass Communication, College of Liberal Arts. Member: University Senate, 1989-90.

MICHAEL STEFFES, Professor, Laboratory Medicine & Pathology, Medical School. Member: University Senate, 1988-90 and 1986-88; University Grievance Committee, 1990-91; Senate Consultative Committee, 1988-90.

GLORIA WILLIAMS, Associate Professor, Design, Housing, and Apparel, College of Human Ecology. Member: University Senate, 1984-87; Student Behavior Committee, 1987-90; Equal Employment Opportunity for Women Committee, 1986-89; Educational Policy Committee, 1982-85; University College Assembly, 1980-84.

FOR TWO YEAR TERM (1991-93)

EDWARD CUSHING, Professor, Ecology, Evolution, and Behavior, College of Biological Sciences. Member: University Senate, 1988-91 and 1980-83; Library Committee, 1988-91; Summer Sessions Committee, 1983-86; Housing Committee, 1980-82.

GERALD SIEGEL, Professor, Communication Disorders, College of Liberal Arts. Member: University Senate, 1990-93.

FOR ONE YEAR TERM (1991-92)

CARL ADAMS, Professor, Information & Decision Sciences, Carlson School of Management. Member: University Senate, 1984-87; Faculty Affairs Committee, 1990-93; Business and Rules Committee, 1988-89; Planning Committee, 1985-88 (chair 1986-87); Finance Committee, 1986-87.

JEAN MONTGOMERY, Associate Professor, Theatre Arts, College of Liberal Arts. Member: University Senate, 1990-93 and 1986-89; Calendar Committee, 1986-89 (chair 1988-89); Summer Sessions Committee, 1987-89.

RONALD PHILLIPS, Professor, Agronomy & Plant Genetics, College of Agriculture. Member: University Senate, 1986-90; Senate Consultative Committee, 1986-90.

MARIAN POUR-EL, Professor, Mathematics, Institute of Technology. Member: University Senate, 1988-89 and 1983-86; Faculty Affairs Committee, 1985-88; Academic Freedom & Responsibility Appeals Committee, 1982-85.

INFORMATION:

The Twin Cities Campus Assembly bylaws specify that the Assembly shall elect by written ballot at its spring quarter meeting faculty/academic professional members to fill vacancies on the Assembly Committee on Committees from a slate of candidates provided by a special nominating committee. Other candidates may be nominated by petition of 12 members of the Assembly. Petitions to nominate candidates not on the slate must be in the hands of the clerk of the Assembly on the day before the meeting at which the election is to be conducted.

The elected faculty/academic professional member of the committee whose term continues at least through 1991-92 is Geoffrey Maruyama (College of Education).

**WILLARD HARTUP, Chair
EUGENIA DAVIS
GARY NELSESTUEN
ARTHUR NORBERG
MARCIA PANKAKE**

Subir Banerjee and Michael Steffes were elected to 3-year terms; Edward Cushing, to a 2-year term; and Carl Adams and Jean Montgomery, to 1-year terms.

V. TASK FORCE ON LIBERAL EDUCATION

Discussion (45 minutes)

See abstract

VI. OLD BUSINESS

none

VII. NEW BUSINESS

none

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

ABSTRACT

The Assembly was called to order by Vice Chair Shirley Zimmerman, professor of family social science, at 2:30 p.m. in 25 Law Center. Minutes of the last meeting were approved.

Vice Chair election. Warren Ibele, professor of mechanical engineering and chair of the Steering Committee, placed in nomination for next year's vice chair the name of Christine Velure, CLA sophomore and a member of the Twin Cities Steering Committee; she was elected unanimously and rose to acknowledge the applause.

Committee on Committees election. Professor Ibele presented the slate of nominees for filling next year's vacancies on the Committee on Committees. Marcia Pankake, professor in IT libraries and a member of the nominating committee, summarized the duties and composition of the Committee on Committees and explained why the ballot was so long. The slate was approved, ballots were distributed, and the meeting continued.

Task Force on Liberal Education. John Howe, professor of history and chair of the task force, was introduced by Professor Ibele. Joining Professor Howe were three other task force members—Martin Dworkin, professor of microbiology; Paul Magee, dean of biological sciences; and Eugene Borgida, professor of psychology.

Professor Howe reminded the Assembly that the report was still in draft form; he hoped a final report would be ready for action at the May meeting. (A summary statement of recommendations and rationale for each had been sent recently to all members of the Assembly at his request.) The task force had been at its work for over a year, he noted, as it was the first time in 20 years that the faculty and administrators, staff and students had looked at what was meant by a liberal education in general and at the University of Minnesota. He said it was a recurring discussion that had continued in the country for over a century. The content and meaning had changed substantially over that period in response to the structures of knowledge, the social makeup of faculties, the social objectives of students, and the social expectations of higher education. The report, he said, thus participated in an ongoing, long-term, and national debate.

The work, he explained, was guided by a number of operating premises that shaped what it did and put some limits on what was possible to do: 1) that undergraduate education was a fundamental responsibility of the University, with undergraduate liberal education as an important part of it; 2) that the faculty had a responsibility to present to its students a coherent program of liberal education and to lay out its policies, requirements, purposes, and values as clearly as possible to be shared across the Twin Cities campus and with the public at large; 3) that the vision and requirements would challenge students; 4) that the vision would draw on the full range of faculty skills and competencies and on faculty support; 5) that exploration of a liberal education should occupy students throughout their undergraduate years without an arbitrary boundary in the first two years and study in the major in the last years; 6) that undergraduate liberal education must be tied directly with the research mission and character of the University; and 7) that undergraduate liberal education at a public university had a public character, having to do with a sense of service to the state in the preparation of a trained and responsible citizenry.

There were two parameters and constraints: 1) to propose a description appropriate to all students and to all baccalaureate programs and be relevant to other undergraduate, professional programs; and 2) to abide by the understanding that they must be accommodatable within the existing 180 graduation degree credit norm. (The time to degree and graduation, he noted, were already of great concern; tuition costs for students continued to rise; and there were some funding arrangements that the University had with the state that impinged upon such issues.)

Turning to the recommendations, Professor Howe said that a number of them would seem familiar because they built on the traditional notions of a liberal education. First, he cited the discussion of the diversified core curriculum (II.C), which included exposure to broad fields of knowledge—physical and biological sciences, social sciences, and arts and humanities. He explained that some categories had been redefined from the present distribution scheme, and a math category had been added. Also, the diversified core called for courses specifically developed to address the various educational objectives of the core curriculum in an attempt to ensure that the courses would offer a balanced, coherent, and purposeful approach to the breadth objectives of a liberal education. Another section (II.G) dealt with fundamental skills and competencies for strengthening basic academic skills, such as writing skills, where the existing composition and rhetoric base was built on, but responsibility for strengthening writing skills was distributed more broadly throughout the faculty through the concept of writing-intensive courses. Third, the report called for a senior project (II.D) to be offered by all departments and programs, which he described as being of special importance in a major research university. Fourth, the report discussed attitudes and qualities of mind that were characteristic of a liberally educated person (II.A), a section that provided a context for the recommendations. He then asked for questions from the floor.

Roland Delattre, professor of American studies, commended the report, then inquired whether the task force might have meant public ethics instead of citizen ethics for one category, pointing out that people enter the world more as consumers than as citizens. He also asked whether attention had been given to the place of religion as a human activity in the category of humanities and the arts. He said it was a subject less well understood and yet there were resources at the University for study in that area. With regard to the first query, Professor Howe referred to the distinction between the two definitions as an extension of the boundaries of liberal education that would be dealt with later. As to the place of religion, he said, it should be included within the broad context of the humanities. He said it was expected that in each field-of-knowledge category courses would be developed out of a variety of disciplines and that a number of them would have an interdisciplinary character. He thought the location of a particular course of religious studies would depend upon the character of the course. He reminded the Assembly that the task force did not intend that there should be a rigid application of the categories.

Thomas Shier, professor of medicinal chemistry, commended the task force for the vast amount of consulting they had done throughout the faculties. His concern was for important social considerations that were not taken into account in setting up the curriculum, and he held that many of the proposed changes were the opposite of what was needed. He suggested that scientific literacy was a serious problem throughout the country and yet the report called for a reduction in math and science from five to four courses. Other concerns were computer literacy and language competency, which were not addressed. He deplored the reduction in writing courses. Although it appeared that writing-intensive courses would try to fill that need, he said, students still needed courses from those who were committed to writing. His last concern was the increase in the number of humanities and fine arts courses. He said that a common body of knowledge about western civilization was very important; however, the existing system did not recognize that fact. For example, engineering and pharmacy students could fill the humanities requirement with ballroom dancing. He recommended a "lowest common denominator" approach, with everyone required to take one or two courses in western civilization and humanities.

As to scientific and mathematical literacy, Dean Magee responded that one of the difficult things about comparing the new requirements with the old was that the old were in four general categories, one of which was a great "lumping" category which included language, logic, math, and study of argument. Two courses could be taken to fulfill the requirement and neither had to be math. The task force tried to address that problem, he said, by setting up a mathematics category. It was hoped that the kinds of courses that would be proposed (and he emphasized that all courses within the diversified core would be developed precisely for being a part of that core) would in fact make students mathematically literate. Also, he said, it was hoped that students would be coming in with better math background. With regard to the physical and biological sciences category, he maintained it was stronger, in that stu-

dents would be asked to take two courses with lab instead of one. Adding more, the task force decided, was probably not practical, given the 180-credits-for-graduation constraint. He maintained, in reference to acquiring writing skills, that students got more out of writing about a subject in a course where writing was a significant part of the course than they did in a course structured strictly around learning to write.

Professor Dworkin observed that the task force had been approached by groups who felt that a particular area was not being properly represented, which he said reminded him of the story involving Mozart's first performance of "The Abduction of the Seraglio." The Emperor told Mozart that the opera was fine but there were too many notes; Mozart asked him which notes he would like to have removed. The task force recognized that it was working with a limited "curriculum currency," he said, and he maintained that the problem of illiteracy could be more effectively dealt with by having better courses than by having more courses.

As to the language requirement query, Kim Munholland, professor of history and task force member, said that if students entering the University had two years of language they could be expected to be prepared to begin what would be the beginning quarter of the second year of the University's language requirement. However, with the resources available it would be impossible to implement at present. The longer report did indicate that there should be a move in that direction, he said, with the idea of sending a signal to the K through 12 system to begin the study of language earlier. Professor Howe reminded the Assembly that last fall the task force had invited the faculty to comment on the components of a liberal education, one of which was second language competence. On the Twin Cities campus that had had the least support as a necessary element of liberal education of any of the areas in the survey.

Professor Howe then called attention to the ways that the University seeks to extend the definitions of a liberal education—that liberally educated students graduating at the University at the current time needed to have an enhanced international perspective, and awareness of the international connections of the world today. Second, the task force thought that such students should have at least some exposure to cultural and social diversity. Third, they should be encouraged to reflect on their own educational values and their sense of relationship to the civic polity and the sense of responsibility for participation. Fourth, the task force was encouraged to be concerned about environmental education, which represented another set of issues, cutting across many fields of knowledge. Finally, the task force called for new student colloquia addressed to new high school graduates and to transfer students coming to the University. The purpose would be to position those students more solidly when they entered to think carefully about their educational goals and to familiarize them with the academic culture and climate and expectations of the University, and to think carefully about the liberal education agenda—all in the hope that students would buy into the programs and would come to regard liberal education programs as more than a set of requirements.

Peter Reed, professor of English, complimented the task force on the scope of its report and hoped it would not be picked to pieces by those with single issue concerns. However, he was concerned that the teaching of writing in writing-intensive courses might easily be eroded. He cited the current 3-level composition course specifically aligned with a major or groups of majors so there was a relationship to content. He then asked whether any investigation had taken place to reveal inadequacy in the present courses at the 1 and 3 level, and whether there had been any study of the success of writing-intensive courses at other institutions. Professor Howe said the task force, which was divided in its opinions, had spent a lot of time on the matter. The writing area had been apart of their efforts to reduce the line between lower and upper division work in the major. He said that any college that found the 3-level courses for their students useful could continue to utilize them, but it was hoped that faculty resources that might be freed up from the composition program could be redistributed, providing trained composition people to work with departments to make certain writing requirements were met. Professor Dworkin added that the survey had revealed that writing was a major concern of the faculty.

Robert Jacobson, student, called attention to the section on international perspectives and cultural diversity, which encouraged faculty and students to deal with issues of race and gender. However, sexual orientation was missing, he said, and the Senate's recent resolu-

tion against discrimination and support of the equal opportunity policy meant that the University should teach all the groups with regard to sexual orientation. He hoped it was an oversight and, if not, he said he felt very sad for his University.

Deon Stuthman, professor of agronomy and plant genetics, was supportive of the report; it appeared that there would be less distribution of facts in the future and a little more skill and idea development. With regard to advising, he urged considerable attention in the face of ineffectual volunteer advising. "You get what you pay for," he said, adding that faculty advising was rarely recognized. With respect to Mr. Jacobson's comments, he said it was important for an individuals to understand and ultimately respect all people who were different from themselves. He suggested that a large number of problems, locally and globally, would not have occurred if everyone did a better job in that area. On diversified core courses, he suggested that those courses could be taught by "master" teachers—those who had been identified especially for their teaching, and that such a designation could become a part of the reward system. On senior projects, he said he had heard complaints on the lack of attention of understanding things like charts and graphs. He suggested that such training should take place long before the student got to the University. Senior projects, he said, would certainly help them develop that skill further. He observed that for some people the basis of comparison for the document could be perfection. However, he suggested that, if it were clear that improvements would result, then the University should get on with it. Finally, for those in opposition to the effort he urged that they analyze carefully the reasons for their opposition, to criticize constructively, and to make sure that their motivation was not anti-change.

The discussion time having elapsed, Professor Howe urged that further comments be conveyed to task force members. The Assembly applauded the task force members, and the meeting was adjourned at 3:45 p.m.

MARILEE WARD
Abstractor