

Minutes*

Faculty Consultative Committee
Thursday, January 23, 2014
1:45 – 3:00
Room 238A Morrill Hall

Present: Will Durfee (chair), Avner Ben-Ner, James Cloyd, Eva von Dassow, Jigna Desai, Gary Gardner, Maria Gini, Joseph Konstan, Russell Luepker, Alon McCormick, Paul Ranelli, Rebecca Ropers-Huilman, David Satin, Chris Uggen, Jean Wyman

Absent: Linda Bearinger, Janet Ericksen, Karen Mesce, Ned Patterson

Guests: Professor Tabitha Grier-Reed (replacing Professor Ropers-Huilman beginning February 1); Vice President Katrice Albert, Associate Vice Provost Louis Mendoza, Assistant Vice Provost Doneka Scott (Office of Equity and Diversity); President Eric Kaler

Other: Chief of Staff Amy Phenix (Office of the President)

[In these minutes: (1) Office of Equity and Diversity collaboration with colleges and deans; (2) discussion with President Kaler; (3) syllabus policy]

1. Office of Equity and Diversity (OED) Collaboration with Colleges and Deans

Professor Durfee convened the meeting at 1:45 and welcomed Drs. Albert, Mendoza, and Scott to discuss plans by the Office of Equity and Diversity (OED) to work with colleges and deans on achieving their equity and diversity goals. He thanked them for bringing the plans to the Committee for reaction.

Vice President Albert recalled that when she met with the Committee last fall, she had mentioned that her office planned to launch a program to work with the deans on equity and diversity goals. The goal is to work at local levels, to empower the deans; one of the experts in the field, William Harvey, maintains that deans must be empowered as their own chief diversity officer rather than be handed down a plan from on high. She and the leadership in her office have been brainstorming about how best to work with the deans and have to ask the Committee's advice.

Associate Vice Provost Mendoza said that the last meetings with the deans were about 3 years ago, when they let the deans know who they are (in OED) and that they can bring resources to the colleges to help them meet their needs. They want to align OED resources in a way that allows them to best do their work and to help the colleges. Dr. Mendoza referred to a handout depicting the strategic arenas and the advocacy and leadership capacity of OED (including the various offices within OED). They are looking at how to have an engaged, sustained relationship with the colleges and have tried to get people in the right places within OED to help ensure that can happen. At present they are working with the Twin Cities deans but they envision working with the whole system now that they have someone in the office (Assistant Vice Provost Scott) who can spearhead these efforts.

* 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.

Dr. Scott explained the consultative model that OED has in mind for working with the colleges, which includes four phases (exploration, planning, action, and integration). The first is expected to take 2-3 months ("discovery and dream"), the second to take 6-12 months ("design"), the third to be ongoing, and integration will take a look 1-2-3 years after implementation. She noted what activities would be involved with each phase, starting with meetings with the deans and college self-assessments, and her work with the college on the partnership model with OED that will work for that college. She noted that these phases are not necessarily linear and may be worked through simultaneously, and emphasized that these are partnerships, each college will be different, and they want to learn how they can be helpful.

Professor Cloyd asked if the strategic planning process will address diversity (it will); what will that consist of? Dr. Scott said the plans will be based on college goals (e.g., recruiting faculty members from under-represented groups, metrics around goals, how best to achieve the goals). They can help colleges pinpoint issues and ways in which colleges can work to achieve their goals.

Professor Luepker asked what metrics would be used to measure success. That varies with the college, Dr. Scott replied, and the measures probably lie on a continuum. If there is unhappiness with a metric, there should be a college discussion. Do they want an increase in numbers of people in some category? An increase in percentage? She repeated the point that the approach OED is taking is not top-down, that they will look at the information from the college and help it develop realistic metrics for advancing its work.

Professor Durfee asked what motivation, beyond intrinsic, there is for a college to include diversity in its strategic planning. Is diversity part of the compact process and are the colleges accountable to the provost for diversity matters? Dr. Scott said that last year was the first year that colleges were required to have a diversity statement, which was requested as part of the process this year. Dr. Albert added that Provost Hanson supports the OED efforts and that they are working in partnership with the provost's office.

Professor Satin asked how they would connect with staff in the colleges working on diversity; all of the language they have used is about the dean. Dr. Scott said colleges vary a lot; their effort is a partnership with the committee, the person, the dean, whoever is appropriate. The initial conversation is with the dean; after that they determine how to work together as a group. Those conversations are occurring now. Dr. Mendoza said that the deans determine who to bring to meetings and that Dr. Scott brings along staff working on diversity from across campus so that they can help learn from each other. Moreover, Dr. Scott said, it can be difficult to find the appropriate people in the college to help build an infrastructure and link staff together; there are also varied resources available in the colleges.

Dr. Scott observed, with respect to data, that sometimes the college and the Office of Institutional Research may not have the same data—there are, unfortunately, often several sets of data that do not match.

Professor Gini said she would like to see things get done. They want to hire minority faculty in her department and did so last year. Often, however, minority faculty members simply do not exist, do not apply for positions at Minnesota, or the department cannot find them. Minority faculty members are in high demand and go to top places. What are departments to do? Vice President Albert said the University has to do its part with the pipeline issue and do more in the way of recruiting minority graduate students. Departments may want to recruit top students to apply to be postdocs and assistant

professors. She said that Dr. Scott will work with departments on recruiting and how to recruit top-flight minority faculty members.

Professor Wyman applauded the collaboration with the schools and said that in her experience, there is great need for shared resources and strategies for bringing schools together, especially related to major conferences. Dr. Scott said that there are pockets in the Academic Health Center where that has occurred, but people don't know about it. If they can bring units together, they can share efforts in the best interest of the University. Professor Wyman agreed that best practices need to be shared. Dr. Mendoza said that they have been, and he noted that there is a new national database of postdocs that can be of help.

Professor Ropers-Huilman said that going to the deans is really important and she strongly endorsed doing so. What she worries about is that they are preaching to the choir; what also needs attention is campus climate and the climate within each unit, and they need to evaluate not just numbers but also the experiences of faculty, staff, and students. She also said, apropos of communication, that she has the booklet Dr. Mendoza mentioned (Best Practices in Recruiting and Retaining Underrepresented U.S. Minority Faculty at the U of M, which can be found at the following link: <https://diversity.umn.edu/idea/sites/diversity.umn.edu.idea/files/Newest%20Verion%20of%20Supplement.pdf>) but has never heard about it since she received it. There is a need to enhance communication across units and not just for the choir. Dr. Scott said that it is really the college's job to make people understand that diversity is everyone's work. The initial phase of exploration is not meant to be 5 people in a room, it is intended to seek input and buy-in across the college, not just from the dean and a few people in the dean's office.

They can ask about climate in the meetings with the deans, Dr. Albert said, and not just about the number of students and faculty. She agreed to inquire about what environment diverse faculty and students encounter in a college. Dr. Scott reported that at least 4 deans have already talked about climate, so this is a matter that is on their radar screens.

Professor Gardner said that people on the outside will not know what colleges are like at the University; he said that college climate is not the issue, it is University climate. How will people know that the University is a place that is supportive? It is not just the college and department; the question is how the University makes a statement.

Professor Desai said she has been told that units should "build" the faculty they want to hire. She noted the summer program for the sciences and suggested it could be expanded to include the humanities. Dr. Albert said that the Minority Summer Research Opportunity Program (M-SROP) is managed through the Office for Diversity in Graduate Education (ODGE) and they have asked for additional funds for it. She said she was a product of such a program and knows its value as an introduction to graduate education. Professor Desai mentioned the Keeping Our Faculty of Color Conference on hiring faculty of color and said the University should require all unit heads to attend it.

Professor Durfee thanked Drs. Albert, Mendoza, and Scott for joining the Committee and said it would like a follow-up as the process moves ahead. He also said the Committee would be glad to help them make connections.

2. Discussion with President Kaler

Professor Durfee welcomed the president to the meeting and asked him to touch on a number of topics. The president did so.

-- The president and Committee members discussed the capital request.

-- The president reported on his visit to Washington, D.C., and President Obama's meeting on access to higher education. He said that First Lady Michelle Obama gave an impressive talk and that she explicitly commended a University of Minnesota program that educates students about financial literacy. President Obama spoke about the need to enhance access for low-income students, which is one of his passions, President Kaler said. The University received excellent national news coverage from the meeting. At the same gathering, several public research university presidents said that while the institutions must control costs, the states must also continue to fund public higher education at an appropriate level. President Obama understands that point, as does Secretary of Education Arne Duncan, and one suggestion made was that if a public institution receives federal funds, the state must maintain a certain level of support, an approach adopted when federal stimulus funds were provided.

Professor Ropers-Huilman said she was glad the University was represented at the meeting and asked what would be put into practice to retain students. Is this a new program or a repackaging of what the University is already doing? President Kaler said it is new; while it is an enhancement of what the University is already doing (making an option summer bridge program mandatory, meetings with advisers, and so on), it brings more intentionality to the efforts.

Professor Ropers-Huilman expressed concern about mandating activities for low-income students but not others. The president said there can be opt-out provisions, but he pointed out that many of these students are from families that have limited experience with higher education. There is a certain amount of in loco parentis in the program, he agreed, but said he believes that is acceptable. Professor Grier-Reed urged that the president keep in mind the award-winning TRIO programs [<http://www.cehd.umn.edu/trio/default.html>]; about 80% of the students in them are from low-income backgrounds and the programs have a very high retention rate. The president agreed but noted that proposals at the White House conference had to be new.

Professor von Dassow inquired for whom the summer bridge program, for example, would be mandatory. Currently, the one-week Summer Seminar (bridge program) encourages all of the President's Emerging Scholars (PES) to attend. The president said the intersection of Pell-eligibility and first-generation would be the primary factors that determine who now will be required to participate in the Summer Seminar, criteria he said most people would consider reasonable and most often used with such programs. He reiterated the point that there would be an appeal process. If students have family, work, or other summer obligations that would make it difficult to attend the Summer Seminar (bridge program), then they can petition out. Since this requirement goes into effect for summer 2015, there is time to iron out the details and the PES committee is now working on criteria.

Professor Ranelli inquired if there had been any discussion of higher education finances in general, and the point made in a recent article that if all the money put into loans and grants were directed to tuition, tuition could be eliminated. President Kaler said that the heterogeneity of the presidents at the meeting meant certain conversations did not occur. A very small number of high-achieving, low-income students go to highly selective institutions, for example.

-- The president discussed the measures being taken to improve campus safety and said he believed the University is doing the right thing. The approach is aggressive and means a redirection of some resources; it helps that the City of Minneapolis is also now more engaged with the problems. There will be listening sessions going forward as the plans are implemented.

Professor Durfee asked if the president hears talk in the community about safety and the start of light-rail trains running through the campus. The president said he has, but the result will likely be a wash, because while someone with malevolent intentions might come to campus on a train, it is unlikely they would be able to use the trains for an escape because they will be well-lit with many video monitors.

Professor Satin said the larger physical safety issue is the risk of people being hit by a train. The president agreed and said the University was unsuccessful in seeking several additional safety measures.

Professor von Dassow commented, apropos of building security and locking doors after regular business hours, that there used to be custodial staff in buildings at night, people who knew the building occupants and vice-versa. With budget cuts, there are no more evening custodial staff. But their presence provided significantly more safety because they know what was going on in buildings. Closing buildings could make things worse if, for example, someone needs to run into a building to be safe—people won't be able to get in if doors are locked. Key card access could reduce security as well as add another layer of expense. President Kaler said that the savings from changes in custodial staff were substantial and that decision won't be reversed; he also said that safety experts say that closing buildings increases safety—and the University currently has a very high level of public access with long "open" hours.

Professor Ranelli pointed out that there are buildings where text messages cannot be received or sent so that people may not receive messages about public safety. The president agreed that is a fair concern and said that it is on the list of problems to be addressed.

-- In response to a question from Professor Desai, President Kaler said the University does not yet have a response to President Obama's call for improved institutional responses to sexual violence on campus. He said he believes the University has good programs in place.

-- In terms of what he expects to accomplish by the end of the academic year, the president said that the fruition of the strategic planning process will be key. He would like the effort to move into the broader academic community by the end of the year. The impact of safety concerns on recruitment of a strong incoming freshman class may not be trivial. By the end of the fiscal year he wants to see success in the capital request, start on preparation of the 2015-17 biennial request, and continued focus on undergraduate and graduate tuition and student debt.

-- With respect to the budget process, the president commented, in response to a question, that the administration will be reviewing how colleges use their resources, and in particular how the MnDRIVE funds are spent.

-- Professor Cloyd asked for an update on the response to the Faculty Senate request for review of procedures governing human subjects in research. President Kaler said there will be a meeting the next day and he is likely to create an arm's length relationship with a consultant to review the University's

practices and policies. Professor von Dassow asked what kind of companies do such work; the president assured the Committee that there are a number of consulting firms that do so.

Following a brief discussion of other issues that might arise during the legislative session, Professor Durfee thanked the president for joining the Committee.

3. Syllabus Policy

Professor Durfee explained that in February, 2009, the Faculty Senate discussed (but did not act on) proposed revisions to educational policies, including the policy governing what is required on syllabi (in particular, what policy language or references must be included). When the policy came up for a vote in April, 2009, the list of required policy statements/references inadvertently omitted disabilities, so the formally-approved policy did not include it. He asked the Committee to vote on behalf of the Faculty Senate to amend the policy (correcting what was a clerical error) to add a requirement for a statement on disabilities on syllabi.

The Committee voted unanimously in favor of the amendment. Professor Durfee said that the action will be reported at the next Faculty Senate meeting, as required by the bylaws. He adjourned the meeting at 3:00.

-- Gary Engstrand

University of Minnesota