

Minutes\*

**Faculty Consultative Committee**  
**Thursday, January 30, 2014**  
**1:00 – 3:00**  
**Room 238A Morrill Hall**

Present: Will Durfee (chair), Linda Bearinger, Avner Ben-Ner, James Cloyd, Eva von Dassow, Jigna Desai, Janet Ericksen, Gary Gardner, Maria Gini, Joseph Konstan, Russell Luepker, Karen Mesce, Ned Patterson, Paul Ranelli, Rebecca Ropers-Huilman, David Satin, Chris Uggen

Absent: Alon McCormick, Jean Wyman

Guests: Professor Tabitha Grier-Reed (substituting for Professor Ropers-Huilman beginning February 1); Provost Karen Hanson; Professor Scott Lanyon (Special Committee on Graduate Education), Vice Provost and Dean Sally Gregory Kohlstedt

Other: Deb Cran (Office of the Provost); Ken Savary (Office of the Board of Regents)

[In these minutes: (1) discussion with Provost Hanson; (2) farewells; (3) report of the Special Committee on Graduate Education]

**1. Discussion with Provost Hanson**

Professor Durfee called the meeting to order at 1:00 and welcomed the provost. He reported that he and Professor Uggen had provided her with a too-long list of potential issues to discuss and he suggested she take up the ones of most importance.

Provost Hanson prefaced her remarks by reporting that she had just come from the newly-and-mostly-renovated Northrop Auditorium, which she said will be an exciting building once it is open and functioning. She urged people to think about how they can use it, because there will be many more opportunities for faculty, students, and staff to do so with the reconfigured spaces. Professor Durfee commented that he serves on the committee that is considering academic uses for Northrop, and agreed that with the new spaces there are many more opportunities for academic use. He said that anyone who has ideas about possible uses of the spaces should let him know.

[<http://northrop.umn.edu/about/northrop-revitalization>]

Provost Hanson turned to an update on strategic planning. The Strategic Planning Workgroup has been meeting regularly and its work is starting to jell in new ways and developing vision, values, and a sense of the objectives we want from this. It is a heterogeneous group that has agreed on a number of important goals; it will then move to identifying strategies to achieving them. The working group will also think about what other groups need to be brought into the process—faculty, staff, and students—in order to draw on their knowledge. She and President Kaler have also had conversations with a number of external groups over the last few months, as have other groups, about how the University can be more valuable to the state and better partners; the working group also believes there should be more permeable

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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.

boundaries with the community in order to draw in outside expertise as well as impart University expertise to the community. They are making progress, she concluded.

Professor Uggen said that the external listening sessions have been very interesting. There are many people in Minnesota (outside the University) who are international leaders in their fields who are eager to continue working with the University. The conversations have been about what has been done and what barriers exist—and how more relationships can be forged. They have been exciting talks.

Professor Konstan reported that he had recently hosted a group of alumni engineers and learned that what the University is most proud is not at the top of the list of the alumni or department constituents. He heard nothing about research from them but heard a great deal about the improvement of undergraduate education, advising, and the undergraduate experience. The critiques were mostly very focused on specific curricular issues—e.g., students should have mastered a particular tool or programming language of interest to the alum in hiring starting employees. It is a challenge to communicate with people: how can the University bring scholarship more to the top of mind of people outside the institution?

Provost Hanson said that is also an issue with respect to graduate education, as the report of the Special Committee on Graduate Education makes clear. MnDRIVE has received public support, but even in that context it may not be clear what role graduate students play in research and what the University does to train the next generation of researchers. She said, however, that she did not agree that scholarship was not on people's minds; the University should be proud of its improvements in undergraduate education, and it has also been interesting to see the increased permeability of the boundaries in undergraduate education. Both graduate and undergraduate education here must be tied into the research university role, "making plain how we, as a research university, benefit our community and our various publics."

Professor Durfee asked what the provost envisions for the timing of the strategic planning process. By the end of the academic year? Provost Hanson said she expected that the goals should be well fleshed out by then, and the strategies should be in the process of being sketched out, although implementation will take a little longer.

Professor von Dassow expressed concern about how the University may make humanistic research visible; it is an important element of undergraduate as well as graduate education. It differs fundamentally from the kind of research spotlighted in an initiative like MnDRIVE: for example, Professor Konstan can do something in computer engineering and society benefits, but one does not benefit from humanistic scholarship unless one does some of it. That means it's more difficult to advertise, but it could be more integral to how people experience undergraduate education.

Provost Hanson said the Workgroup has had a lot of discussion around this issue. MnDRIVE was designed to provide a certain kind of infrastructure; a different infrastructure is needed for humanistic research. The Workgroup has been concerned about how to include the importance of humanistic inquiry and creative activity in strategic planning. She noted that the longer statements on the University's role do speak to humanistic education and scholarship; the question is how inquiry in those areas gets articulated in operational objectives. But it has not been ignored, she assured the Committee.

Professor Gardner said that part of strategic planning must be how the University tells its story about scholarship in every field. He related an example from a recent tour by a legislative committee to

indicate the importance of accurately communicating the story of University scholarship and said that it suggests clearly that the University could be doing better in this area. Provost Hanson said the problem will need to be addressed as the University decides more clearly what its story is, but added that this not a topic on which the working group has yet focused since the Workgroup is focusing on what we want the University to be. Professor Gardner said it is important that the University communicate with key stakeholders; he recalled a campaign in the 1990s that included participation by Garrison Keillor but observed that memories are short and legislators are new, so the University needs to repeat the message. Provost Hanson said that that is indeed a continuing effort. She referred to the Accountability Report and other information that's annually shared with legislators, the work of University Relations and Government Relations, and the importance of the University's ongoing attentiveness and responsiveness to legislative questions.

Professor Desai said another way to interpret what Professor Konstan reported is that what people remember is the larger University and their major—the University should make sure that it is represented not as a set of departments or colleges (like the budget model), but as a place with lots of different majors. One hopes that the strategic planning tries to think in these kinds of broader terms and includes the humanities (this is in reference to the point that the MNDRIIVE had no research funding for the humanities at all). The humanities and liberal arts can be transformative for all students, not just those in CLA, and their story is then a story about the University.

The SCGE report changes the framing of graduate education: graduate students are not financial sinkholes, but future teachers, researchers, policy-makers, etc. The University needs to see and frame graduate education in this way. If the Special Committee report is part of strategic planning, how will the University explain to the state how graduate students are central both to the state and to the institution? Will that happen? It will, the provost said, and the Special Committee report will play a role in a number of ways.

Professor Konstan, alluding to Professor Gardner's comments, said that part of the challenge is that no one who does not work inside the University has any idea about how the place runs. Those outside it see it as a cross between a corporation and a socialist entity, but the modern research university is built on entrepreneurial capitalism, where one faculty member or group of faculty members respond to incentives in ways that benefit them, their field, their department, and society. It is difficult to convey to the external world that there is a lot of competition inside the University among smart people to be successful and that it is the role of leadership to dole out incentives and eliminate barriers to success. The complexity of a modern research university is well hidden.

Provost Hanson agreed and added that complexity also produces an internal dynamic that is challenging because developing internal incentives to collaborate can sometimes have unintended consequences and so can be difficult to design.

Professor Ropers-Huilman said she agreed on the need to communicate with stakeholders but pointed out that there are a number of groups and that a single message will not resonate with all stakeholder groups. To rely on one message risks alienating some constituents.

Provost Hanson next provided an update on the discussions about a possible merger of the College of Biological Sciences and the College of Food, Agricultural, and Natural Resources Science. The task force is preparing a report following a number of listening sessions, and she and the president

also had several discussions with external groups. The task force asked for a little extra time, so she does not have the report yet.

Will there be a decision this academic year, Professor Durfee asked? Provost Hanson said the Committee would receive the report after she has read it. It could be more complicated than "a decision," she said. The task force is a first sounding, to obtain views, not to draw up a plan. She and the president have had talks with agricultural and natural resources groups outside the University—and they did not all say the same thing.

On the matter of program reviews and accreditation, and faculty workload related thereto, the provost noted that people are working hard on accreditation in advance of the 2015-16 review of the Twin Cities campus, and their focus is assessment. That would have to be a focus in any case, given events nationally (that is, the tensions between the federal government and the regional accrediting agencies about assessment), so there is no way the University would get around assessment as an important element of accreditation. All of the colleges are working on plans related to accreditation, Provost Hanson said, and she is pleased with their ongoing efforts, their progress, and how thoughtful they are being.

In terms of program reviews, the provost said she would like the institution to be more thoughtful and disciplined in planning for them. Awhile ago she asked the Graduate School and the Office of Undergraduate Education to work with the colleges to develop a process to look at graduate and undergraduate education, research, and what is going on in a department, in order to have more holistic reviews. There has been substantial progress on developing a process. One expectation is that the work that goes into accreditation reviews should be folded into program reviews, so these aren't doubly onerous processes.

Professor Durfee said the University is entering a period when there will be substantial program reviews that will have a significant impact on the faculty. He said the faculty needs to interject its views presently, before the process is implemented.

Professor Ropers-Huilman said she assumed the primary involvement of the faculty in the process will be through the college. Provost Hanson said that is correct. There will be external reviewers and the provost's office will collaborate on the reviews, but she would like each college to be in charge of articulating a review that is appropriate for its mission. But the process will look at the full range of activities of a department.

Professor von Dassow said that if accreditation requires assessment, it is necessary that the methods of assessment be meaningful, but the current campus-wide Student Learning Outcomes cannot be used meaningfully to assess what students learn. They are vacuous, vague, general, and elide the content of what faculty teach. The verb "learn" must have an object, and none of these SLOs specifies any. Thus the attainment of such SLOs cannot be assessed, while what is actually taught is not the object of assessment. Yet faculty must claim that their courses meet these SLOs, by attaching more and more verbiage to their syllabi, and now departments must do the like for their curricula. Using SLOs that are eviscerated of the content of education as a tool of assessment not only fails to specify what students are expected to learn, it requires faculty to misrepresent what they do.

Provost Hanson urged faculty to talk to their college leadership if they are troubled by the SLOs and what is being taken to departments to implement. Each college is adopting SLOs specific to its

programs; she said she thought CLA [Professor von Dassow's college] was working with each department on what makes sense for their discipline. The SLOs are not a blanket specification for every course but are what is to be happening in each program. Professor von Dassow said that is not how the faculty are experiencing the SLOs.

This discussion links to how the curriculum operates, Professor Desai said. Of course faculty members want their students to learn, she said, but if one wants to see what students have learned overall, that will not be determined through the SLOs. The faculty use grades to assess learning. They constantly assess how and what students are learning by reading their drafts and revisions, grading their presentations, and discussing class materials with them. If the idea is assess more holistically, one might use portfolios, but that approach would take time to develop. The faculty have been told, however, that with accreditation coming, the SLOs must be used.

Provost Hanson said that this is a different phase, not just campus-wide SLOs. Colleges are seeing if students learn certain concepts and deciding how to measure the learning. That decision is left to the faculty to specify. SLOs are specific to outcomes identified by the unit. Professor von Dassow said that if that were the case, people would not be complaining about the SLOs, but that is not the way they are working.

Professor Durfee thanked the provost for joining the meeting.

## **2. Farewells**

Professor Durfee noted that this would be Professor Satin's last meeting, inasmuch as he was filling in for Professor Pacala while the latter was on leave; Professor Pacala will return to the Committee at the next meeting. He thanked Professor Satin for substituting. Committee members gave Professor Satin a round of applause.

Professor Satin said he wished to thank the Committee as well. He said he had not known what to expect when he agreed to serve and that he was very impressed by the work of the Committee and how useful it is. He said the Committee does excellent work—and that before he'd been asked to serve, he had no idea it existed or what it did.

Professor Durfee also noted that this would be the last meeting of the academic year for Professor Ropers-Huilman, who has a Fulbright for six months. He thanked her for serving as vice chair for the first part of the year and thanked Professor Grier-Reed for agreeing to fill in during Professor Ropers-Huilman's leave. Professor Uggen was earlier elected vice chair to replace Professor Ropers-Huilman for the remainder of the 2013-14 academic year.

## **3. Report of the Special Committee on Graduate Education (SCGE)**

Professor Durfee welcomed Professor Lanyon to the meeting to discuss the report of the Special Committee on Graduate Education (SCGE), which Professor Lanyon chaired [and which can be found at [http://www.academic.umn.edu/provost/graduate/2013\\_Special\\_Committee\\_on\\_GraduateEducation-Final\\_Report.pdf](http://www.academic.umn.edu/provost/graduate/2013_Special_Committee_on_GraduateEducation-Final_Report.pdf)]. He noted that the SCGE had been jointly charged by the provost and this Committee and said there were two remarkable things about it. One, it was composed of 36 faculty, staff, and students who had jumped at the opportunity to address issues in graduate education, and it was an exceptionally talented group, and two, it finished by December, after only about 3 months of work. The

SCGE did a remarkable job of capturing the state of graduate education at the University and making recommendations to improve it.

Professor Lanyon commented on the SCGE timeline: the group moved as quickly as it did because a number of its members were concerned with the perception that when a matter is referred to faculty governance, it slows down. He said he did not believe that to be true generally, but they wanted to be responsive and quick. He also observed that much of the consultation actually occurred before the SCGE was appointed because there were discussions at a number of senate committee meetings last year as well as the survey conducted by the Graduate School last spring, so the SCGE had a base from which to set off and get things done.

Professor Lanyon touched on the high points of the report.

-- They arranged the recommendations under the administrative officer the SCGE believed responsible for implementing them. The Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate Education has a very long list. He suggested the Committee regularly ask those responsible for implementation what they have done. There have been 12 reports on graduate education at the University in the last decade; they would like this one to amount to something in terms of effects.

-- It was clear, while they were doing their work, that the strategic planning process was starting and the SCGE assumed that its report would be the strategic planning document for graduate education. He asked the Committee to make sure that happens.

-- One topic for the Committee last year was how to define graduate and professional education. His intention was that the SCGE might come up with more precise definitions, but they then realized that changing the definitions had implications for who administers the programs as well as for cost pools, so the SCGE has said nothing about definitions because anything it said might end up costing resources for graduate education. To change the boundaries of graduate and professional education changes the way the money flows. They didn't want to inadvertently damage graduate education—but the definitions need to be developed. The provost had hoped for recommendations from the SCGE regarding these definitions but the committee felt that these could only be changed if there were first an assurance that graduate education would not be harmed financially.

Professor Gardner asked whether, when the SCGE talked with senior administrators, they acknowledged that the budget model is destructive to a number of the University's missions. That acknowledgement has come and gone, Professor Lanyon said. Sometimes the answer is "yes" but other times the answer is that "it is just a tool." It has become routine for faculty members to say that something is the fault of the budget model, and he fears that the administration is becoming tired of hearing these complaints. The SCGE could not, with its report, stop the budget model, although the budget model and its implementation clearly has serious implications for graduate education.

Professor Durfee pointed out that both the president and the provost have said they are open to tweaks in the budget model. First, however, people have to figure out what is actually happening. Professor Lanyon rejoined that first the institution must figure out what it holds dear and then develop a budget model to support that which it holds dear.

Professor Gardner said that some senior administrators maintain the budget model is neutral. It is not. But they make decisions and use the budget model as the reason.

Professor Konstan offered three points. One, he said he would like to have seen a simple statement that Ph.D. education is a good that is worth subsidizing across the University. Two, in the discussion of the relative cost of hiring a graduate student and a postdoc, he would like to see a clearer goal. He thinks the goal should be that hiring two 50% graduate RAs should cost no more than a 100% postdoc, but the statement could be interpreted as comparing a single 50% RA with a 100% postdoc—and sadly there are cases where even a 50% graduate student is now more expensive given the tuition/fringe model. Three, in terms of the recommendation to be sure students are informed of the fees to which they will be subject, he would prefer to get rid of the fees altogether and roll them into tuition, which would make them more evidently covered by assistantships, fellowships, etc. The current fee structure is dumb. He also noted that there appears to be no recommendation following the SCGE observation about health insurance costs for graduate students. (Professor Lanyon agreed that there was none.)

Professor Konstan went on to say that in reading the report, he sensed that there were two competing wings in the report and the tension between them was not resolved. One was of the view that local control is good, enrollment should be decentralized, etc. The other was of the view that quality is what matters and that there should be a strong central oversight of graduate education, including allocation of funds across colleges based on quality (and, for example, sending TAs across colleges). There are two visions that the report did not address head on, but the University must pick one.

Professor Lanyon concurred that there were two competing views. There are different styles in graduate and professional education, which is why there is a need for definitions, because they need to be disentangled. That is the next step and he would like to see it taken—but only if it can be done without harming graduate education.

Professor von Dassow noted the statement in the report that currently "funding is strictly apportioned and silo-ed to particular units" with the result "that colleges become increasingly risk-averse as they have limited flexibility with funding" (p. 13). To address this problem the SCGE suggests "a pooled funding, 'community' model." This suggestion leads to the question of integration among programs and how to promote interdisciplinary study (addressed elsewhere in the report). She pointed out that with the restructuring of the Graduate School, the requirement that Ph.D. students take courses in an outside field was eliminated, a change that caused immediate dis-integration among programs and shrinkage of small ones. It would seem cost-neutral to reinstate that requirement, which would re-link programs without necessitating any special support for interdisciplinary study.

Professor Lanyon said that Professor von Dassow's comments are related to Professor Konstan's point about the difference between central values for graduate education versus having everything controlled solely at the local level. The requirement of a supporting field was a casualty of sole local control. This would be a great faculty conversation, focused on what the faculty actually cares about in terms of University-wide standards. He said he did not know if there were any central discussions taking place about this question.

There are not, Vice Provost Kohlstedt said. The Graduate Education Council touches on the topic as does the Graduate School's strategic plan. She noted that it is taking time to work out coordination with the colleges to identify what works well with decentralization and where the Graduate School may be able to help and cited a recent example of trying to create a risk pool for the recruitment fellowships.

Professor Ranelli asked about the system versus the Twin Cities, noting that he is in Pharmacy on the Duluth campus, a program that is considered part of the Twin Cities campus. The Duluth campus has graduate education, he noted, and he is also a part of graduate education on the Twin Cities campus. Professor Lanyon said that the topics the SCGE talked about were not specific to the Twin Cities campus (or even to the University of Minnesota, for that matter). Higher education is dealing with definitions in post-baccalaureate education and how to support that education. The SCGE believes there is an opportunity for the University to get ahead of the game in the way it handles graduate education—and the approaches are not specific to the Twin Cities campus. He warned that the solutions will not be cheap and there will need to be a change in the budget model—or a change in how the budget model is used in order to support graduate education as a common good. Professor Lanyon suggested to Professor Ranelli that if he identified aspects of graduate education that are unique to Duluth, he should point them out to this Committee.

Professor Konstan returned to the financial issue, one he said must be made explicit: if the University moves to large central subsidies for some substantial part of graduate education, that means it must move away from the model of letting each unit set its own capacity for quality based on the ability to pay. It would not be possible to set up a system that provides central subsidies for graduate students based on counts without perverse incentives. If there is a popular undergraduate major in, for example, bottle label design, but that program does lousy research or has poor graduate outcomes, someone must say that the department cannot have many TA slots until it has quality in its graduate program that justifies enrolling and funding more graduate students to serve as TAs. That also means awarding TAs in those bottle label design courses to qualified students in stronger programs, which is the way to sustain stronger graduate programs that may not correspond to large undergraduate enrollment. That would be a huge step for the University because of the budget model and how it works. He said he believed, however, that it may be the right model, but it would take bold action from the president, provost, and deans.

Professor Uggen said, apropos of the institution telling its story about graduate education, external audiences can be confused about it because they see the flow of research dollars into the University and do not realize that flow would stop without graduate education. The faculty cannot do their work without strong graduate education—and the University needs to tell that story. He said he was persuaded by Professor Konstan that graduate education is worth subsidizing, but graduate education is subsidizing much of what the faculty do as well—a point that can be lost when talking to those outside the University.

Professor Lanyon said he thought many inside the University would understand Professor Uggen's point. It is easy to count up the dollars to determine the cost of graduate education, but it is difficult to quantify how much support for good undergraduate education, research, and the faculty comes from graduate students. They are not in the numbers.

Professor Gardner said that one of the jobs of the faculty is to train future faculty members for the world. That is why the faculty are here rather than at a research institute or a museum. That must be kept in mind. There must be a message from the top about why we are faculty members at a research university. Professor Lanyon agreed. What is also in the SCGE report, although subtle, is that training faculty members is only part of the job; the University also trains people in policy, for government, business and industry, and so on. But it is not clear that all graduate programs appreciate that point; some may believe they are only training future faculty members. There are programs that are turning out Ph.D. students in fields for whom there are not enough academic positions, but they are still only training them



to be faculty members. There is a disconnect in those cases, Professor Lanyon said; in general however, he does not believe the University is turning out too many Ph.D.s—but it is if one believes that graduate students are only being trained to go into higher education.

Professor Gini maintained that quality should be the prime criterion, and it is easy to talk about, but how is the desire for quality to be implemented? How is it measured? Presumably not by adding new student learning outcomes. Professor Lanyon said that the SCGE suggestion is for central control of the development and maintenance of high standards, with local control over what they mean in the discipline. He added, clarifying that he was not speaking for the SCGE, that most faculty members can tell which departments nationally in their discipline are best; what is more complicated is defining the metrics that distinguish these excellent programs. One way to measure is whether applicants are coming to the University's department or going instead to one of the best departments. If the University insists that the Graduate School identify leading departments, it can then ask University departments where they stand in relation to those leading departments.

Professor Gini observed that in some cases, to do this a discipline will have to be subdivided, because the leading departments in one part of a field won't be the same ones as in another part of the field. This can be complicated and she would not like to see a big bureaucracy created to measure quality. Professor Lanyon agreed but said there would be an advantage if all of the faculty in a department talked about the best in the field, even if they cannot measure that quality, and how their department competes with those leading departments.

Professor Grier-Reed said that "quality" is a value-laden term. People want to use it to make objective decisions, but there can be problems with the values that lie behind it.

Professor Ropers-Huilman told Professor Lanyon that not everyone resonates with the idea of competition, and that she hopes that the University will not use that metaphor to guide its practices. Sometimes it doesn't make sense to measure the particular academic configurations here against those at other institutions. For example, she and Professor Grier-Reed are not in the same department at Minnesota—but they would be at other institutions. Finally, people often lose strong graduate students not because of program quality here but because other institutions offer more support. Or it may be San Francisco versus Minnesota, Professor Satin observed. While not everyone resonates with the idea of competition, Professor Lanyon agreed, the fact is that prospective graduate students are applying to multiple institutions and eventually choose just one. He said he believes that if graduate programs at the University of Minnesota are consistently losing their top prospects to a subset of programs nationally, then it is worth knowing 1) which programs those are and 2) the set of factors that lead students to choose those other programs.

Professor Durfee commented that universities have been grappling with the question of quality for a long time—because they must allocate funding. Did the SCGE discuss how to move ahead on that issue? There must be something on which to base decisions. How can the decision-making process move ahead and who should be at the table? Professor Lanyon said the SCGE suggested what should be considered. Fundamentally, a central office must pay attention to quality and evaluate whether programs are doing a good job in achieving and maintaining it. It is complicated, but leaving each program to do its own thing will not advance graduate education at the University.

Professor Ben-Ner recalled that the provost had spoken earlier in the meeting about the process for evaluating all academic programs at the University and about subsidizing this process. It would make

sense to offer criteria to be used to assess graduate education that are linked to faculty quality and undergraduate education quality. The University needs to stop doing piecemeal attempts based on inconsistent criteria, or else it will end up talking about the process forever. The process must be centralized and evaluation should be the next step.

Professor Durfee asked Vice Provost Kohlstedt for a brief update on the academic program review process being developed. They are getting very close to a proposed process, Dr. Kohlstedt said, and they will have a draft on the web so that departments can see what it will entail. There will be several components to a review: graduate education, undergraduate education, faculty quality, and other program elements, so there will be a holistic overview and perhaps attention to specific elements of interest, such as centers engaged with a department. They have been evaluating what data the Graduate School and the Office of Undergraduate Education will be able to provide to departments as part of the process. Professor Durfee observed that there are already program reviews taking place in some colleges; are they disconnected from the new process? Those underway are not being guided by the emerging guidelines, so far as she knows, Dr. Kohlstedt said. Another question is how to align the new reviews with existing reviews (e.g., ABET), given that some of the fundamental metrics and components overlap but that collegiate and university interests may require additional attention. The reviews are likely to be about every ten years for individual departments.

Professor Ben-Ner suggested disassociating accreditation from program evaluation and the Student Learning Outcomes exercise that all programs go through to satisfy someone. There should be a concerted effort to get at quality; he agreed with Professor Gini that there may be several sub-groups within a department that make it hard to evaluate the entire department by a single criterion. But such challenges should not prevent evaluation. There must be a plan to evaluate programs and he said he believes people have common sense about what quality is and want to reward it and subsidize it when necessary; that cannot be done except through wholesale evaluation of all programs at the university. Evaluation is of course hard, but faculty members do it all the time, sometimes days on end, grading, refereeing, evaluating for promotion, often concerning hard-to-evaluate situations. The process should involve program self-evaluation as one but not the sole component, and it should of course allow for differences in the weights of different activities such as graduate versus undergraduate education undertaken in different parts of the university.

There is a tension, Dr. Kohlstedt said: how to evaluate departments with differential elements that include undergraduate and graduate programs, centers, etc.—how is quality captured? With regard to graduate education they have a set of quality metrics that is always subject to review (e.g., how does the program compare with its peers, does a program meet its own stated goals, etc.). Professor Ben-Ner maintained the University should adopt common standards, apply them and then allow arguments about exceptions.

Professor Bearinger commented that of all the different ideas expressed about measuring programs, every one of them is used to assess NIH training grant proposals—curriculum, faculty quality, research productivity, students/graduate productivity (in terms of positions held and publications, time to degree, and so on. There is no need to re-invent them because there are well-established measures of quality in graduate programs. One must keep in mind that, unlike corporations, universities are in the business of creating three products: the education of students, research and new knowledge, and scholarly faculty who are leaders in the fields.

Professor Satin said that if one talks about measuring quality, in his experience with metrics developed in medicine, the question is always "with respect to what outcome?" (e.g., life expectancy or morbidity). What is the goal of the metric? The next question is what pragmatic measures already define quality on this issue—de facto ways programs are already judged in the world. If the proposed metric and the pragmatic outcome that de facto defines quality already map "one-to-one and onto" (match exactly), then the decision is easy. So there could already be de facto measures in the world being used for departments and programs. He said that as a philosophical pragmatist, he believes the truth is what is out there: if that is how programs are being judged, that is how they are being judged, and he noted the standards that Professor Bearinger had mentioned as examples. The University or a college can argue about whether existing constructs for how the world currently judges a particular program is appropriate or good, but the default has to be the way the world really judges something as it is today.

Professor Durfee said that if there were magically developed a definition of quality, should all resources go just to the programs that come out on top under that definition of quality? Or should the institution identify programs that it must have and make sure they too are supported? How is the institution to think about programs that should be discontinued? What principles should be used? Professor Lanyon said the SCGE did not get that far. There is some disconnect between the four subcommittee reports and the final report, but the focus should be on the final report. There is general agreement among SCGE members that if a program is identified as high quality, it should be kept that way, but all programs should be allowed to have aspirational goals and the institution should track whether they are making progress in reaching them. That would not be a matter for local control.

Dr. Kohlstedt said, apropos of quality metrics, that she is meeting with every dean and program. Every college has programs about which the review committee had questions and deans are encouraged to consider whether there are issues to be addressed or whether what seem to be issues or anomalies have explanations that are very reasonable.

What came out of the SCGE discussions, Professor Lanyon said, is that the University must, at some level, start making decisions in the best interests of students. If there is a small program that is clearly excellent, but that has only 3 graduate students, is it in the best interests of those 3 students to be in such a small program? He said he would like to see those kinds of questions asked.

Professor Ranelli made the point is that if one is discussing programs of high quality, he would be concerned if a program must reach a certain number of students in order to be considered high quality. If it has a small number of students, it might be forced to move or merge. In other words, will a metric allow a high quality program with few students? Professor Lanyon said he was only asking whether students are benefitting or if the program should merge with another so there is a larger cohort. He would like the question to be asked.

Professor von Dassow said, with respect to the recommendations in the report about program closing and small programs, that there is a tendency to treat programs as if they stand alone. That is not the nature of intellectual endeavor; every program or discipline exists in relation to others. Recognizing their links with each other avoids the fallacy that they are isolated, and avoids closure. One should look at how programs are served by each other and integration among programs should be emphasized. She asked if such a statement could be added to the report. (On Professor von Dassow's last point, Professor Lanyon said the report has gone to the provost and this Committee and the SCGE considers its work done. There is no reason, however, the Committee could not add its own recommendations, such as

Professor von Dassow's or Professor Konstan's points about centralization versus decentralization, and it should keep the recommendations in front of the administration.)

Professor Grier-Reed said she would like to hear from Vice Provost Kohlstedt about metrics, whether they should be standardized or local, and if there would be room for faculty to be empowered to reach goals, not all of which are internal because there are external goals as well. One question is how the goals are connected to funding models—and are they intended to be? Dr. Kohlstedt said that most funding (TAs and perhaps other funds) originates at the college level but that at the university level there are block grant monies related to quality metrics. Under the decentralized model, however, the actual distribution of those funds is through the colleges. Much of the other graduate student funding is closely tied to individual student accomplishments through fellowships and other awards. In answer to the question of size, in one conversation with a dean, the argument was made that a relatively small program will fill an important gap in the interstices between two larger departments and thus seemed quite justified for the time being. The quality-review metrics process was actually quite inspiring in many cases because the University has a large number of high-quality programs as reflected in the narrative statements from departments about their programs; so its mid-level category was deemed "successful" because the programs were strong and improving. The provost has expressed an interest in reading these narrative reports as well so that they may have an indirect effect in the compact process.

Professor Lanyon repeated his point that the University needs to brag about graduate education because the public and legislature know little about it. The negative side of it, Professor Ranelli pointed out, is that people sometimes complain that their student had a graduate student for a teacher rather than a faculty member.

Professor Cloyd noted that the charge to the SCGE had come from the provost and this Committee; the report now comes back to it? (It does.) May the Committee recommend adjustments before it accepts the report? Professor Durfee said it will not ask the SCGE to revise its report but this Committee could recommend an addendum.

Professor Cloyd asked who has the authority to close graduate programs. Dr. Kohlstedt said the authority rests with the Board of Regents, on recommendations that would come through the Graduate School and provost. She added that a program would never be closed quickly, given that there might be currently-enrolled students. What if a college wants to close a program, Professor Cloyd inquired. Dr. Kohlstedt said there is a policy and set of procedures to be followed.

Professor Durfee thanked Professor Lanyon for joining the meeting, and adjourned it at 2:55.

-- Gary Engstrand