

Minutes\*

**Faculty Consultative Committee**  
**Thursday, February 27, 2014**  
**1:00 – 3:00**  
**Room 238A Morrill Hall**

Present: Will Durfee (chair), Linda Bearinger, Avner Ben-Ner, James Cloyd, Eva von Dassow, Janet Ericksen, Gary Gardner, Tabitha Grier-Reed, Joseph Konstan, Russell Luepker, Alon McCormick, Karen Mesce, Ned Patterson, Chris Uggen, Jean Wyman

Absent: Jigna Desai, Maria Gini, James Pacala, Paul Ranelli

Guests: Provost Karen Hanson; Associate Vice Provost Suzanne Bardouche; President Eric Kaler

Other: Deb Cran (Chief of Staff, Office of the Provost), Joe Shultz (Deputy Chief of Staff, Office of the Provost); Amy Phenix (Chief of Staff, Office of the President)

[In these minutes: (1) discussion with Provost Hanson; (2) revised educational policies; (3) discussion with President Kaler]

**1. Discussion with Provost Hanson**

Professor Durfee convened the meeting at 1:00 and welcomed Provost Hanson.

Provost Hanson began by reporting on the status of the recommendations of the ad hoc committee on college constitutions. She described the report as extraordinarily useful and said that her office was on schedule in terms of the steps it had been agreed would be taken: her office is preparing a template for the colleges, she will talk with the Twin Cities deans about it in March and jointly agree on a plan, and reiterated the agreement she had with the Committee that they would try to have constitutional revisions completed by the end of the calendar year. As the constitutions are approved, they will be posted in the University Policy Library.

Professor von Dassow suggested that the provost's office also ask that the colleges post a link to the constitutions on their website.

Provost Hanson said she had just come from a meeting with the Twin Cities deans, at which the report of the Special Committee on Graduate Education had been discussed. She said it had been a good discussion, she expressed thanks for the work of the Special Committee, and said it had laid the groundwork for additional progress.

Professor Bearinger inquired what aspects of the report drew the most attention or reaction. Not all the deans were present, Provost Hanson said, but there appeared to be general agreement that there is need to elevate the discourse around graduate education publicly—and the University of Minnesota is not alone in perceiving that graduate education is misunderstood. There was also discussion about research

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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.

and how it is related to graduate education, as well as how graduate education must produce the next cohort of the professoriate. They discussed ideas about enlisting the support of the public and garnering legislative and industry support about how to place graduate education more on the psychological map as well as ways to connect with other universities that have the same problem. They also talked about getting greater clarification and finality on the classification of degrees and which fall under the aegis of the Graduate School—and to get away from decisions about graduate education that are made because of cost-pool charges.

The provost turned to salary equity committees. Vice Provost Carney has been working on them and she will be glad to meet with the Committee, Provost Hanson reported. The scatterplots have gone to the colleges and their review of them is well under way. Dr. Carney has asked the deans to report to the provost by the end of the fiscal year on actions taken to ensure salary equity. There are a few exceptions: the School of Nursing analysis is in process and it will receive the data soon; Veterinary Medicine, Dentistry, and the Medical School remain a challenge because of the complexity of their salary structures.

Professor Konstan said there could be, at a minimum, two causes for salary inequity. One, someone is not recognized because of the nature of their work, which the salary equity study can rectify. Two, there are critical points in the faculty career where someone did not receive the right salary; does the provost's office have a plan to handle those pivotal points and try to ensure that mistakes are not repeated?

Provost Hanson said she is asking the deans to consider those issues. She said it is surprising the variety of ways that salaries are set in the different colleges. There may be a need for continuing oversight, but identifying the factors that come into play may allow colleges to be more explicit about criteria and avoid problems in the future. There may still be issues that creep in that arise with retention cases and setting initial salaries.

Professor Gardner said that retention offers are important; is the provost's office collecting data by gender and race on who receives retention offers? In recent years, when there have been almost no merit salary increases, retention offers have become more important. There needs to be a mechanism to allow people to advance on merit if they do not want to go into the market to obtain a retention offer.

Provost Hanson said she has asked deans for information and responses. Do they know if the offers are received primarily by men or do women also receive them, Professor Gardner asked? Provost Hanson said that she will request the data by college in terms of rank and gender.

Provost Hanson next commented on accreditation and assessment. While it is fine to look at student projects, as has been suggested as one means of assessing student learning, the accreditation team cannot go to every class so there must be an institutional response about student learning outcomes.

Professor von Dassow said she wished to correct one misapprehension that may have arisen as a result of the discussion at the last meeting: she did not intend to question the legitimacy of the Faculty Senate decision to approve the Student Learning Outcomes, she only intended to point out the limited character of the endorsement and the limited information available to the Faculty Senate when it voted. There was extensive discussion in this Committee and the Senate Committee on Educational Policy, but most faculty senators did not participate in those discussions, so one must distinguish between information available to the committees and to the Faculty Senate.

Professor von Dassow said that at no point has any faculty governance body designed the assessment process being used. The Faculty Senate was told it could revisit the learning outcomes at any time; there are now seven years of data and information and it is high time they be revisited and examined for their implications for teaching. One issue that needs discussion is the relationship of governance to curricular issues. She also said that the Higher Learning Commission website addressing assessment of learning contains a lot of high-minded language but it does not seem to preclude the use of all the assessment that faculty members already do with students and it should not be necessary to impose an additional assessment structure.

Provost Hanson said, apropos of the Student Learning Outcomes, she takes the point that they may not been thought of in connection with accreditation when the Faculty Senate adopted them. But the accreditation requirements exist, and she knows from her work with the Council for Accreditation for Higher Education that grades are absolutely not usable as the sole outcome measurement. (She noted that diploma mills give good grades but students may not be learning anything). Accreditors want a third-party demonstration that students are learning. While the Student Learning Outcomes may not have been intended for accreditation, it is the view of her office that they looked like a "light touch" measure, rather than asking colleges and departments to all go out and look for different assessment mechanisms. Because the data from the learning outcomes are already being collected, that seemed an easier approach. If a unit believes there is a better way to document student learning for the assessment required by the accreditation process, it can opt out of using the Student Learning Outcomes if it has an alternative mechanism.

Professor Uggen said that his department talked about assessment and appreciated Associate Dean Windsor's approach, and in their case the Student Learning Outcomes map well to Sociology. He said he did not mean to diminish the problems that may be facing other academic units, but one concern is what the replacement would be. The learning outcomes are an organic process. In his department, there was more dissatisfaction with issues around liberal education courses and requirements; they were more favorable to the learning outcomes.

Part of the challenge with all of this, Professor Konstan said, is trying to implement the learning outcomes at the level of the course--when that is not the right level to assess to determine whether a student is becoming educated. Consider a goal such as "Understand the role of creativity, innovation, discovery, and expression across disciplines"—in many cases a *course* is the wrong way to achieve this goal. Instead the understanding comes from a set or series of courses, each of which may cover one discipline. "We don't have an identified way to assess the learning outcome across the aggregate experience, and since we don't know how to do that, we instead operate and assess as the level where we have the most control—individual courses." In his field, Computer Science, they get a pretty good sense of how they are meeting educational goals for Computer Science students because the courses are progressive. If many students have trouble with prerequisite material in a later course, they explore what went wrong in the earlier one. If the University or Faculty Senate decides to revisit the Student Learning Outcomes, he suggested it bring in expertise on how to evaluate student learning holistically rather than with tags and labels on courses.

Professor McCormick said that he has learned a great deal about assessment from his professional society and his training there to serve as a program evaluator. In his field, they evaluate the whole curriculum and discount the evaluation of particular courses, rather focusing on how they contribute to the

overall curriculum. They ask if a program has a continuous improvement and assessment process—if it does not, the program will have to deal with that for accreditation.

Professor Durfee said that the engineering accrediting agency, ABET, shifted into a new mode, using student learning outcomes, about 15 years ago. The faculty were outraged at the time but now the learning outcomes are part of the fabric of what they do, and reviewing the learning outcomes is the only time the faculty in the department step back and look at the curriculum as a whole. It is not a perfect system, and there was agony in getting to it, but it now works well.

Provost Hanson commented that continuous improvement is now an informal requirement of all accrediting bodies. The point about holistic assessment is well taken—and it is clearly a lot of work. The faculty must identify what outcomes they want and the faculty must take control of the curriculum. She said that while she has not gone through the process of filing for a new course, the ECAS process does not look difficult. She repeated the point that use of the Student Learning Outcomes is a light touch but agreed that many programs are not like engineering and adaptable to ABET-like standards.

Professor Patterson agreed that some units will have more problems with assessment than others. In the case of Veterinary Medicine, they must have course outcomes but they also look across the entire curriculum. Provost Hanson said that course outcomes occur in the accreditation of professional programs, but she did not agree that some programs have trouble with assessment.

Professor Ben-Ner said there seems to be a consensus about what higher education does. It is a matrix of knowledge of specific content and skills (such as cognitive psychology and calculus), which are taught in specific courses, and general skills (such communication and social interaction) that are woven throughout the curriculum and other experiences associated with academic study. We know how to evaluate the specific knowledge in individual courses. The program chair or dean for undergraduate studies look at more general skills, which cannot be assessed properly in most courses, unless they are specifically aimed at communications, interacting in diverse settings, and such, in which case they are part of the first group of courses. This seems entirely obvious and it is a discussion the Committee should not be having, and is not a fight the University should be having with its accrediting body. He said he was baffled by the fact that there are different stances on an issue that has been at the heart of academic (rather than vocational) higher education for a very long time.

Professor Gardner reiterated a number of points. The SLOs are reasonable for undergraduate education as a whole. However, it is important to look at assessment at the level of the major, which is where students get their degrees, not at the level of individual courses. The coordinator or faculty committee for each major should look at the syllabi of all the courses listed in the major and assess how the SLOs are being met. The faculty in most colleges do not find this onerous, so the question is how individual courses are assessed in the college where most of the complaints have occurred, not the SLOs themselves.

Professor von Dassow agreed with Provost Hanson that ECAS is the lightest touch and also the most meaningless. The current assessment regime purports to ask about the major but it is at the course level. Provost Hanson said she did not know what the "current regime" is. It is different by college, Professor von Dassow responded, and referred to the CLA document she had distributed at the previous meeting. Provost Hanson said that assessment is more at the level of the program or major and asking what faculty want to be the outcomes of the major. Professor von Dassow said the Student Learning

Outcomes are not specific to programs and remarked that assessment of predetermined outcomes in engineering, for example, is not analogous to assessment of learning in humanistic fields.

Provost Hanson closed by repeating the point that grades are not accepted as assessment and that plans are being developed that are slightly different from college to college; assessment plans are also being further defined in CLA.

Professor Durfee thanked Provost Hanson for joining the meeting.

## **2. Revised Educational Policies**

Professor Durfee welcomed Associate Vice Provost Bardouche to the meeting to present three policy revisions related to the question (1) of students taking MOOCs and then, potentially, seeking University credit for them through a departmental exam, or (2) of receiving a 5 on an AP test and asking for University credit, or (3) about transfer credits.

In all three cases, Ms. Bardouche explained, the proposed changes do not alter the policy but are intended to make it clear that in all three cases, one must be an enrolled University student before credits will be awarded. She had affirmed this in material provided earlier to the Committee:

As a reminder, the proposed revisions are to make clear who is eligible to receive credit through each of these three mechanisms and *in particular when that credit becomes applicable to a U of M degree program.*

- Transfer credits -- become applicable after the student is admitted as a degree-seeking student
- AP, IB, CLEP -- are applicable after the student is admitted as a degree-seeking student
- Dept'l Exam Credit -- only currently enrolled, undergrad, degree-seeking students are eligible for credit by exam

Professor McCormick reported that the Senate Committee on Educational Policy (SCEP) also clarified that in all these cases a student receives T credits, not an A-F or S-N grade, and that all degree requirements have a set of courses that require A-F grades. The clarifications proposed by Ms. Bardouche (and approved by SCEP) speak to who is eligible to receive T credits and when they are applicable to a degree. Ms. Bardouche added that these clarifications respond to a concern expressed in the fall by Provost Hanson: they make it clear that the University is a degree-granting institution, not a credit-granting institution.

Committee members raised and discussed a few points.

-- If a student wishes to receive University degree, he or she must have a minimum of 30 credits earned at the campus from which the student is graduating. T credits do not count. (But the T credits do count toward the overall total of 120 credits required for a degree.)

-- Ms. Bardouche said she would check on whether an AP lab course would count toward meeting the liberal education requirement of a science course with a lab. [Subsequent to the meeting, Dr. Schiff clarified that the decision is left to the department offering the LE-certified course. A department makes two decisions: whether to give T credit for the course and whether to approve liberal education credit associated with that T credit.] Professor Gardner inquired if an AP course reflected a 1XXX biology

course at the University; he finds he must re-educate some students in high school biology even though they have taken the AP test and scored well. Professor Durfee noted that the department decides what AP tests and scores it will accept. Professor Gardner noted that there is no Department of Biology.

-- The rationale for allowing D grades to transfer, even though they do not count in the major, is that D grades within the University count. (Vide infra for further comment.)

-- The questions about biology and AP tests raised the question of whether the liberal education requirements need re-examination. Professor von Dassow concurred that there needs to be re-examination of whether AP courses should be accepted as substitutes for University courses; there is considerable dissatisfaction in the humanities about what occurs. Professor McCormick noted three possibilities: whether to accept AP courses at all, whether to accept them as replacement for University courses, and whether to accept them as fulfilling liberal education requirements; Professor von Dassow said that in her view, there is concern about all three because they are seeing students with little or no knowledge to build on. Professor Konstan suggested trusting the first and third to departments to handle; in the case of the second, whether they should count as University courses, requires a faculty discussion about how much the faculty believe there are other ways to obtain knowledge that are an appropriate replacement for a university education. The logical extreme of accepting knowledge from a variety of other sources, as is the current trend, is that someone could show up at the University's door at age 50, claim to have led a thoughtful life, and request a degree. He agreed that the liberal education requirements should be revisited, and whether they are course-based versus a set of courses; once that is done, the answer to the question about AP courses may be clearer.

-- There are structural limits on how many credits one can earn not at the University, including college and departmental requirements. A student could obtain hundreds of T credits that would not count in a University program. Prof. Konstan suggested still that a maximum be considered for the number of T credits, in case in the way they count toward a degree might be changed.

-- What committee decides that the University will accept a D as a T credit? That could be false representation of what a student knows or has done. It is SCEP and FCC that make recommendations to the Faculty Senate, Professor Durfee said. Professor Mesce said she would like the question of accepting a transfer D re-examined. Professor von Dassow suggested that not accepting D grades could encourage grade inflation at other schools, to give students a C instead of a D so a course would transfer. And if the University would not accept a D for transfer credit, perhaps it should not accept it for credit from a University course. Ms. Bardouche observed that if a student with many D's on the transcript applied, he or she probably would not be admitted; a low GPA at the first institution means a student is not likely to be a good candidate for admission to the University.

-- Has there been discussion of the College in the Schools program? Those are University courses, not transfer credits, Ms. Bardouche pointed out. MnSCU credits are transfer credits.

-- Professor McCormick asked if the University might be in the position of "laundering" credit if it accepts transfer credits for a D, gives a T, and the student then transfers elsewhere with a T looking better than the original D. Ms. Bardouche said that what she sees is that students who do poorly at the University transfer few credits elsewhere. Professor McCormick asked, if the University chose to no longer accept D's, would that have consequences in how other universities treat our D's. Ms. Bardouche reminded the Committee that most peers regard a D as carrying credit.

The Committee voted unanimously to approve the proposed policy changes and to place them on the docket of the Faculty Senate for action. Professor Durfee thanked Ms. Bardouche for joining the meeting.

### **3. Discussion with President Kaler**

Professor Durfee now welcomed the president to the meeting and noted that he and Professor Uggen had provided the president with a few suggested topics.

President Kaler began with the tension around the budget and allocation of state funds to the Duluth campus. He explained that the contretemps began with an article in the student newspaper about the allocation of funds among the various campuses; he has gone to Duluth and had a frank discussion and explained that the campus has a budget challenge—as do a number of units around the University. The problems will be worked through.

The two primary reasons for the budget problem (that amounts to about \$9 million recurring) are that there was an irregularity in graduate student fringe benefit calculations that was not discovered immediately and there was an enrollment lacuna (Duluth is about 500 students below the level that was budgeted). He and Vice President Pfutzenreuter are working with the campus administration to put the campus on a sustainable path. Duluth is highly tuition-dependent, the president said; as state funds declined, those units that were tuition dependent increased tuition. It is a challenge to compare different campuses of the system and not possible to do so with a single ratio given the different missions of the campuses.

Chancellor Black at Duluth is engaging in a re-prioritization discussion on the campus, an effort that is unrelated to the budget challenge but that occurred at the same time, the president related. The central administration will help the campus, but at the end of the day it is difficult to analyze the geographic distribution of funds because the campuses have different sizes and different missions, and creating comparative data is fraught with inaccuracy.

Professor Cloyd asked if the president knew why Duluth enrollment declined and whether that also happened at the other campuses. It did not happen at the other campuses, the president said, and at Duluth it declined unexpectedly. There is now a new campus admissions team, and the administration is also having a robust discussion with admissions officers about a stronger system approach to admissions. The president concluded that the problem will be solved.

Professor Durfee asked the president to comment more generally how the University is doing as a system, given the elimination of the system academic administration office when Dr. Jones left.

President Kaler said the chancellors feel more connected to the system and they have more face time with him—and he is more involved in discussions rather than having them take place through another administrative office. Both he and the chancellors are more satisfied.

Professor Ben-Ner asked about the process for evaluating the chancellors. The president said he does their evaluations annually. The administration is doing a 360-degree review of all senior officers

every three years. Professor Ben-Ner asked if there is a matrix. There are job descriptions and expectations but no matrix, the president affirmed.

As for the goal of reducing administrative costs and administrative burdens on faculty members, the president said the University is on track for this and the next budget to meet the cost-reduction targets set by the legislature and will receive the additional 1% of the funding contingent on meeting the targets. It is also important that the University make new investments, which it must do through reallocation. Professor Durfee asked where the key savings are being achieved. There is no one single place, President Kaler said; the savings are coming in bits and pieces. Examples include the merging of the two foundations and closing the system academic administration office. It is very granular—and it is not, nor would it be appropriate, to achieve the savings in a single large chunk. The savings are marbled through the organization. Part of the process also includes learning where to make long-term investments to save money.

Professor Cloyd said it important to get the message out to the state, and it is important that faculty, staff, and students are provided with information they can use. Is there a way to do so? It is a challenge to communicate internally, President Kaler said, and the University is receiving a fair amount of publicity about its efforts. Can the faculty and others receive information that they can share with neighbors, Professor Cloyd asked? The president said he could provide a list of the savings that have been achieved. The president said the website [excellence.umn.edu](http://excellence.umn.edu) is very helpful in this regard [click on "successes."] Professor Cloyd suggested that the best information sharing is at the departmental level, so he could ask department heads and chairs to provide information. Professor Cloyd suggested that the best information sharing is at the departmental level, so he could ask department heads and chairs to provide information.

Professor von Dassow said she recognized that costs are marbled through the institution and asked how the president draws a line around administrative costs. Reporters and others may not even know the difference between staff and administration, so it would be helpful to know how things are defined. President Kaler recalled that the Committee has heard the analyses of the cost of mission, which provide definitions for mission support and mission delivery. Those analyses are quite clear, not something that many institutions do, and it is important the University conduct them. [See [http://regents.umn.edu/sites/default/files/docket/Oct2013\\_port.pdf](http://regents.umn.edu/sites/default/files/docket/Oct2013_port.pdf), University of Minnesota: Cost Definition & Benchmarking FY 2013]

Professor Konstan said that people are hearing about cost savings in a number of cases, but they must be achieved while also improving service. They have also been achieved through a partial centralization of services. He said he would like to hear about the president will evaluate not only the cost savings but also the quality of services. President Kaler said that much of the evaluation cannot be done until the completion of the upgrade of the Enterprise Systems and the "hypercare" that will follow it. If the answer is that processes take more time, it will be time for re-evaluation.

Professor McCormick said that it would be desirable to have something about affordability because of strong aid packages on the University's website. Ms. Phenix reported that the articles on the website rotate but there is an Operational Excellence site, at [excellence.umn.edu](http://excellence.umn.edu).

Professor Ben-Ner asked whether the University tracks administrative cuts that a department chair might make. It does, the president said. Professor Ben-Ner recalled that there were two consulting

reports on reducing administrative expenses; who is in charge of implementing them? The appropriate vice president, President Kaler said. Who is looking at the administrative structure of the colleges, Professor Ben-Ner asked? The deans, the president said; this is a good opportunity to look at administrative expenses (e.g., whether they need all the associate deans).

President Kaler said that Diana Harvey in his office has done a large amount of important communication on the process. Professor Wyman suggested that a communications person look at how reports are written and asked if something as simple as a "thermometer" to measure savings might measure progress and impact. The president concluded from Professor Wyman's and other comments that the institution needs to engage in more communication about what is being done.

Professor Gardner said that many people in P&A positions perform multiple tasks and it is difficult to tease out administrative activities and those directed to program support. The real issue at hand is that the institution does a lot of administrative things that seem like a good idea, but do them without looking at the costs and consequences. Those things need to be looked at at the department, college, and institutional level. President Kaler said that there is a place on the Operational Excellence website where one can make suggestions. Part of the problem is how to get people to talk about changes: they can talk about changes—or they can cut the budget and people figure out a way to make things work.

The president spoke briefly about the upcoming legislative session and said he would appreciate voices of support. He also said he is comfortable with the strategic planning process the provost is leading.

The president noted that the Committee has discussed Student Learning Outcomes and accreditation, something he would be glad to talk about as well, but he observed that that is a faculty-provost conversation. He recounted that in the mid-1990s ABET adopted learning outcomes and said that his reaction after his first encounter with them was they were repulsive and he thought they were ridiculous (although they had no choice about implementing them). Over time, however, he found them enormously useful, and realized that they were the cause of the faculty talking for the first time about their courses. They learned a lot and made curricular adjustments. He said he understands that some faculty are reluctant about learning outcomes, and while he believes students are well served by them, that is a faculty conversation about how to organize them, and it is not an opportune time to make changes in the midst of the accreditation cycle.

Professor von Dassow said, about the learning outcomes, that it would be very different if they were attached to the disciplines. But the seven Student Learning Outcomes for the Twin Cities campus are not, which is the reason she and others are resisting their assessment for the purpose of accreditation. They are big empty boxes, and while they may be the outcomes of major programs, faculty are required to demonstrate that they are met through individual courses and even assignments. But it is intrinsically impossible for an introductory 1xxx-level course, for example, to produce the outcome "have mastered a body of knowledge and a mode of inquiry." There is a gap between principles and implementation and it isn't possible to map all department curricula to these seven learning outcomes.

President Kaler said he respected Professor von Dassow's point of view but he disagreed with her. He said he believed a campus-wide alignment around the Student Learning Outcomes is appropriate—and required. How they are related to courses is up to the faculty to determine. The idea is to show how students progress toward the outcomes, which he believes to be a good thing.

Professor von Dassow said that doing so makes sense if the outcomes are specific to disciplines. These seven student learning outcomes, however, are on the whole surpassed by those specified for the new Common Core standards for K-12 education. She also said she understood the timing question and suggested the process of reviewing the learning outcomes could start now in order to finish after accreditation and yield something better.

Professor Konstan asked if anything occurring in intercollegiate athletics affects what is going on at the legislature. Does the president receive any pushback on winning (or lack of it) or salaries? He does, the president said. There is general support for the increase for Coach Kill, although there will be some criticism as well, but people understand the importance of revenues and being successful in football. Sports do matter, and he said there was a great deal of talk in St. Paul when the men's basketball team was ranked 8th in the country.

Professor Durfee thanked the President for joining the meeting, and adjourned it at 3:00.

-- Gary Engstrand

University of Minnesota