

**Faculty Consultative Committee
Meeting Minutes*
Thursday, April 3, 2014
12:30 – 3:00
Room 262 Mondale Hall**

* 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.

Present: Will Durfee (chair), Linda Bearinger, James Cloyd, Eva von Dassow, Jigna Desai, Janet Ericksen, Gary Gardner, Maria Gini, Tabitha Grier-Reed, Russell Luepker, Alon McCormick, Karen Mesce, James Pacala, Paul Ranelli, Chris Uggen

Absent: Avner Ben-Ner, Joseph Konstan, Ned Patterson, Jean Wyman

Guests: President Eric Kaler, Regents Richard B. Beeson and Dean E. Johnson

Other: Stephanie Austin, Jason Langworthy, Amy Phenix, Jon Steadland, Brian Steeves

[In these minutes: Discussion with Regents Richard Beeson and Dean Johnson; Discussion with President Kaler]

1. Discussion with Regents Beeson and Johnson

Professor Durfee convened the meeting and welcomed those present. He thanked Regents Beeson and Johnson for speaking with the committee and the discussion began.

Regent Beeson, Chair of the Board, provided background for the members and explained that he was elected to the board in 2009, and he currently works in community banking.

He then detailed some of the current priorities of the Board:

- Tuition and financial aid is a focus. He would like to replicate the undergraduate tuition freeze in 2015, though there is no formal proposal. Discussion has continued regarding merit and need-based aid, and the desire to continue devoting institutional resources to ensure both excellence and access. There is an ongoing need to invest in student support to improve graduation rates and timely progress towards degree completion. The Board has noted the increased student indebtedness that occurs after the fourth year of undergraduate study. These concerns will inform the budget discussion for fiscal year 2015.
- The Board is looking forward to reviewing the completed strategic plan and he appreciates the prospect of positioning the University to leverage its' breadth and achieve excellence to "solve society's grand challenges." Regent Beeson said this particular phrase resonates strongly with him.
- The Academic Health Center (AHC) and its long-range plan for success related to brand position, ability to succeed in research and make a difference in the community. He noted there is a lot of opportunity for the AHC and the Biomedical Discovery District. The Board approved the integrated structure involving the University, UMP, and Fairview along with its new name –

University of Minnesota Health. Over the past year, the Board has used a special committee that is educational in nature, to better prepare members for continued discussions regarding the dynamic nature of academic health. The creation of the committee is timely, with the arrival of Dr. Jay Brooks Jackson, Dean of the Medical School.

- The Board has made an effort to have hands-on meetings, for example, they recently spent a day at the AHC to meet with faculty and students while also touring labs and other facilities. This experience deepened their appreciation for the activities and wide range of research taking place. They have planned visits around the state this year to enable members to stay connected with stakeholders. They plan to spend time at UMD and visit University sites in southern Minnesota along businesses that have worked with the University, such as Hormel. The Board's annual retreat is scheduled for July and will take place in St. Cloud, MN.

Regent Johnson, vice chair, thanked the committee for the opportunity to speak with the members and for their long hours of hard work and discipline. He explained that this is his seventh year as a regent and this is his second term. He added to Regent Beeson's comments with the following:

- The capital budget request at the state capitol, the bonding bill, is still in negotiation between now and May 19th, which is the constitutional end of the legislative session. He noted that President Kaler is prioritizing projects, all of which are needed, and the Board recently held a breakfast in St. Paul with legislators to stress the importance of the capital projects. The Board will be meeting with individual legislators over the next few weeks. There is a need to modernize buildings on all campuses and these meetings provide an opportunity to make this clear to legislators.
- Opinion pieces authored by regents have appeared in newspapers throughout the state, and serve as outreach to support the legislative request and stress the importance of the U of M.
- Graduate education is discussed often and he expects the discussions will be ongoing. He emphasized that graduate programs are critical for the workforce and while interest remains high, there are concerns about enrollment for some programs and declining research funding. He said the value of these programs goes beyond the workforce; they are critical to advancing research and creation of knowledge.
- Shared governance and the need to continue to increase the effectiveness of meetings: The Board continues its efforts to balance meeting agendas among fiduciary, education, and governance topics and give greater focus to ensuring that dockets contain the information needed for regents to prepare for meetings. Regents enjoy the presence of faculty members attending and speaking at meetings, as the faculty perspective is essential to the dialogue.
- He always appreciates the annual dinner with FCC in October and said it is a valuable learning experience.
- May 8th is the next Board meeting. They will be honoring faculty, alumni, students, and staff and will also hold a public forum on the president's recommended FY 2015 budget. He invited members to call the Board Office to sign up to offer comments, as time will be allotted for comments on the operating budget.

Regent Johnson then opened the discussion for comments and questions:

Professor Cloyd asked if there is interaction between faculty and the Board that is not happening that they would like to see take place.

- Regent Beeson restated that the faculty perspective is extremely valuable. He has found it useful to have faculty present at regent's meetings along with administrators. Recently a panel of faculty presented, which he finds enables learning about the personalities of participants. He added that he would like the opportunity to sit in a class. He noted there is not a lot of time for this, but the Board is always thinking of new ways to connect. Professor Cloyd commented that this shadowing would be a great model for the Board, and if they have the opportunity they would have a high return on investment. Regent Beeson agreed, and recalled how valuable it was meeting people at the AHC on a more personal level, and the year before when they visited the College of Liberal Arts. Professor Durfee said faculty would be receptive and the FCC would be able to offer suggestions.
- Regent Johnson emphasized that the Board is cognizant of the difference between governance and management and added that hands on learning experiences are a valuable part of being able to govern.

Professor von Dassow said that there are faculty representatives on the governing boards of some peer institutions, yet there are no permanent faculty members on the Board. She further noted that there is a permanent student member. She then asked for their thoughts on adding a faculty representative.

- Regent Johnson said that reserving a seat for a faculty member would require a change in the state statute. He said that in the short term, contact with FCC leadership is especially important in gaining faculty perspective and he hopes faculty are never fearful to offer their opinion.
- Regent Beeson said he understands the value of having stakeholders on the Board, however he is against having employees, such as faculty and staff on the Board. He explained that there were previous issues with a former regent who chose to step down because it was found to be a conflict of interest to serve as an employee of the University while also being on the Board. He finds having a Board that consists of outside perspectives to be extremely valuable.
- Professor Durfee commented that the responsiveness of Board members is remarkable. They will respond individually to emails and have expressed appreciation for hearing input from faculty leaders. He encouraged members to start a conversation with a Board member if they wish to provide input.

Professor Luepker recalled the issue raised by Regent Johnson of growing graduate and professional student indebtedness. He then asked if the Board has discussed a solution to this problem.

- Regent Beeson said that the professional schools are under great stress, the law school most significantly, given the market. The disconnect between cost, debt, and the job market exacerbates this issue. He said that more aggressive fundraising and reallocation of funding is needed. The Medical School notes that residency slots can be a big constraint. They are looking forward to reviewing recommendations from the administration regarding graduate education. Resource allocation will need to be different from the past.

Professor Bearinger said that she and Professor Gardner, as legislative liaisons, would like to be included as a faculty voice at the meetings with legislators, and emphasized the importance of staying in contact with legislators.

- Regent Beeson emphasized the importance of conveying a consistent message to legislators. Regent Johnson agreed, it is important to have representation from across the University, but consistency is critical.

Professor Ranelli asked if the University is involved in helping rural areas have the same Internet connectivity as urban areas.

- Regent Beeson said this may be a question for the Extension program. He noted that the Medical School, along with the Mayo Clinic, have become leaders in connecting with the broader community as they have representatives within rural communities.

Professor Grier –Reed asked how the conversations are similar or different when thinking of undergraduate and graduate education and areas of growth or strength.

- Regent Beeson said that the conversations are different, quality is as or more important in regard to graduate education because students are making a larger investment and there is concern for how the market intersects with that degree. The Board is eager to hear the administration's response to recommendations from the Special Committee on Graduate Education. Graduate education is the doorway into research and staffing for teaching.

Professor Pacala asked if the Board has discussed the increasing economic disparity that society is experiencing and how this extends to education opportunities. Is working to reverse the increasing economic disparity part of the mission of the University?

- Regent Beeson said that this is a concern and the Board understands that qualified, low-income students are discouraged by their perception of the cost of higher education. He added that having need based aid and targeted communications is part of our responsibility, we are not as diverse as we should be, and some communities are severely underrepresented. Regent Johnson added that the University does a better than average job of admitting qualified students based on potential, which should help some students overcome these disparities. He reiterated that they have discussed the need for diversity of faculty, students, and staff. Regent Beeson emphasized that the University admissions process is truly need blind.

Professor von Dassow followed up the previous response to her inquiry by saying that she understands that the stipulations specifying the composition of the Board in the University charter would have to be altered, but does not see a faculty member serving on the Board as a conflict of interest. She said this is not an issue for peer institutions that have faculty members on the board.

Professor Gardner, as an ad hoc member of the committee and as a legislative liaison, said that he does not see the issue, as whether a faculty member should be able to vote, but rather that there be a faculty presence, should a question come up and faculty perspective is needed. As they are legislative liaisons, the Board could have a faculty liaison.

- Regent Beeson responded that there are many stakeholders and it would be very difficult to designate certain seats for this reason.

Professor Uggen said that it is clear to him that the Board has the best long-term interest of the University at heart and asked if they are concerned about recruitment and succession on the Board and if they have recommendations on how to help this recruitment effort.

- Regent Beeson said that everyone should be responsible for finding new candidates including current and former regents, faculty, students, and staff. He added that the process is not easy and candidates have to be the right fit. This is currently a concern, as three senior members will soon be concluding their service. They strive to have a balanced Board, with varying life experiences. Regent Johnson added that they are looking for a broad representation of individuals who care

deeply about the University and are not just working for self-interest. It takes a lot of work to be elected to the Board, so the right candidates can be difficult to find.

Professor Durfee asked Regent Johnson, a resident of Willmar, MN, what are the citizens of broader Minnesota saying about the cost and value of undergraduate education at the University.

- Regent Johnson said that citizens continue to see the increased value of a U of M degree. Last year 20 students from his area applied to the Twin Cities campus, 10 gained entrance, and he spoke with 8 of 10 that did not get in. They discussed the high standards one must meet for acceptance, and he feels the perception of the University has never been better. The University is highly esteemed but there is concern about debt at the undergraduate, graduate, and professional levels. Regent Beeson commented that he was surprised at how much goes in to communications and branding, but he sees the most important factor and what drives the value of the University is the faculty and student relationship.

Professor Durfee concluded the discussion in the interest of time and welcomed President Kaler to the meeting.

2. Discussion with President Kaler

President Kaler and members discussed the University's faculty governance system and how to improve the structure and increase efficiency. Professor Durfee proposed that this portion of the meeting remain off the record.

In the spirit of operational effectiveness, Professor Durfee adjourned the meeting early at 2:05.

Jeannine Rich
University of Minnesota