

**Faculty Consultative Committee  
Meeting Minutes\*  
Thursday, April 24, 2014  
Room 238A Morrill 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, Avner Ben-Ner, James Cloyd, Janet Ericksen, Jigna Desai, Gary Gardner, Tabitha Grier-Reed, Joseph Konstan, Russell Luepker, Alon McCormick, Karen Mesce, James Pacala, Ned Patterson, Paul Ranelli, Christopher Uggem, Eva von Dassow, Jean Wyman

Absent: Maria Gini

Guests: Provost Karen Hanson, Sally Kohlstedt, Scott Lanyon

Others: Deborah Cran, Jon Steadland

[In these minutes: Graduate education and next steps discussion]

**Graduate Education Next Steps**

Professor Durfee convened the meeting and introduced guests Provost Karen Hanson and Professor Scott Lanyon.

Provost Hanson began the discussion and informed members that she and Sally Kohlstedt, Acting Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate Education, will discuss graduate education at the Board of Regents May meeting. The Board also plans to discuss graduate education at their retreat in the summer, which will be helpful to the administration's continuing effort to make progress on the recommendations of the Special Committee on Graduate Education.

She explained that progress has been made on some of the Committee's recommendations and also thanked Dr. Kohlstedt for her leadership in these efforts. She sees the main task of the Graduate School as assuring graduate program quality, and as a result, a new approach to program reviews is being developed.

Provost Hanson said that the reorganization of the Graduate School has been discussed frequently, and with this in mind, she presented an outline of a new direction she would like to move in by grouping research-based degrees under the Graduate School and professionally-focused postbaccalaureate degrees under another administrative structure. All these post-baccalaureate degrees are U of M degrees, are governed by policies, and will have oversight. She is currently gathering feedback on this proposed structure and has also discussed this structure with the Twin Cities deans with the goal to have a finalized structure for endorsement sometime in the fall. She explained this framework in greater detail and distributed a handout of the preliminary structure:

- Sometimes, faculty and administrators try to structure their programs with an eye toward whether or not various elements will add to their cost pool charges for the Graduate School, rather than focusing only on what is conducive to the best program and how we can add the most value for our programs. In this proposal, the Graduate School would focus on the quality of research-based degrees such as the M.S., M.A., and Ph.D. degrees in every major.
- Professional degrees include the so-called first professional degrees and professional Master's degrees, along with professional certificates. They are often programs with specific accreditation requirements and they are often steps to licensure. The degree standards may be heavily driven by the external environment. They would remain managed by their schools and deans but there would also continue to be some oversight by the Provost's Office.
- The deans are not opposed to this proposal, and they are interested in more details. Some have specific concerns about the logistics of applications and admissions.

Part of the objective here is to keep the academic decisions separated from concerns about cost pool charges. If we distinguish post-baccalaureate programs in this way, however, we may need to consider an administrative "tax" to support the Graduate School, instead of cost pool charges, because it might not be financially feasible without one.

Before opening the discussion for comments, Provost Hanson outlined the problem the restructuring is attempting to solve. There is currently a constant debate about what counts as in and what counts as out of the Graduate School. There are attempts to structure programs in terms of how students are counted and whether or not they will be figured in for the cost pool charges. She believes the Graduate School can create the greatest added value by overseeing and ensuring quality and by clearly focusing on research degrees. The professional degrees already have oversight through professional accreditation and other techniques, such as licensure requirements and exams. A new structure would reduce the tendency for budget considerations to dominate the discussion, and would thus keep the focus on what is best for programs academically. Members made the following comments in response to the framework:

- Professor Bearinger acknowledged the clarity this could provide. She emphasized that this is the time to develop a greater understanding of postdoctoral programs. Provost Hanson agreed and has seen units debate over whether or not a degree should be under the Graduate School. All U of M degrees and postdoctoral education should have university oversight, but that oversight doesn't all need to be assigned to the Graduate School. Professor Bearinger clarified that she was referring to postdoctoral fellows, to which Provost Hanson replied that this is also a topic under consideration at this time and her inclination is to think that the Graduate School should play a more important role in this area—again, because of the research connection.
- Provost Hanson responded to a question that graduate education policies should apply to all post-baccalaureate education, but there needs to be further clarification about the specific policies. There is a need to delineate which policies cover all post-baccalaureate degrees and which are specific to research degrees.
- The character of the professional degrees would not be altered by this structure of responsibilities, so this should not impact financial aid.
- Members expressed that the label of a degree does not consistently convey whether a degree is professional or research oriented. For example, many M.S. degrees are completed by working

professionals that do not go on to conduct further research. Provost Hanson agreed and noted that this is why detailed discussions with every college and school would be necessary to determine an appropriate sorting of programs.

- Professor Konstan explained that helping to equalize the financial issue is important. Part of the public mission is the education of students and researchers to advanced levels, however this is not sustained by budget models that exist today. He said that a public statement that explains that this is something worth subsidizing is important. This could be a cost associated with teaching to prepare future educators. He then posed the following questions: If you subsidize, do you manage? Undergraduate tuition, is it locally or centrally managed? (Provost Hanson responded that undergraduate tuition is managed by colleges.) Are we moving in a direction where the Graduate School is set up to manage and allocate the subsidies to programs in a way that optimizes or reflects quality to the graduates of those programs? Deciding the role that the Graduate School will have before the structure is in place will be critical.
- Professor Lanyon said that the Special Committee on Graduate Education discussed structure but did not go further on specific recommendations because of budget concerns. He said he likes the notion of moving forward in a budget neutral way to the benefit of the community. He added that members noted some reasons to have post-baccalaureate education managed loosely and in some cases more closely. They discussed the possibility of a vice provost for post baccalaureate education to be over both areas and then dean of the Graduate School for only the research degrees. This would honor the distinction while making it possible for someone to support common interests.
  - Provost Hanson said that she is not sure that a vice provost for post baccalaureate education could be operationalized to warrant that level of title and oversight because most professional degree oversight takes place within the schools and is highly responsive to external standards. She agrees that there is a need to have an office paying attention to both areas and potentially it would be the Provost's Office because in some real way it already is. She added that it would be unappealing to add an administrator at this time, because we're trying hard to cut administrative costs.
- Professor Luepker agreed that this is a good time to look at this issue. He believes the Graduate School restructuring has not worked as expected. If these changes are put in place, the Graduate School needs to be responsive and timely; this should be a service group in addition to monitoring and oversight.
- Professor Gardner expressed concern with the process of interdisciplinary programs going from central administration to college oversight because he has witnessed many of these programs disappear. He is also concerned about programs with the classification of intercollegiate or interdisciplinary with faculty members from multiple colleges. What happens to programs as colleges absorb faculty?
  - Professor Durfee seconded these concerns and agrees that the oversight of programs that involve several colleges needs to be considered.
- Dr. Kohlstedt said that she believes this is a clarifying strategy and sees this as a positive step. During the development of the structure, she had advocated for policies that consider all post-baccalaureate education and sees this is also a concern for Provost Hanson. She added that there needs to be a strong dotted line and collaborative relationship between the Graduate School and

professional education. She also believes they need a strong Graduate School because it is often perceived as a symbol of the importance of graduate education.

- Professor von Dassow said that though there is a clear rationale for separating professional from research degrees, would this bifurcation in fact reinforce divisions and inhibit work across colleges?
  - Provost Hanson responded that this would not make the issue worse and emphasized that within the new structure, the focus is that all of the programs are part of the University. There are things that could be done better if they were not done in a decentralized manner.
- Professor Bearinger suggested that visibility of Graduate Education be named as one of the areas of responsibility of the Graduate School as well as support for securing institutional training grants, which serve as the foundation for graduate students having success with obtaining individual grants.
- Professor Konstan said that when there are multiple levels of oversight for the same details it becomes very challenging. They will need a way to work with appropriate academic oversight, but avoid confusion between two different offices.
- Professor Gardner explained that joint degrees in the law school are examples of programs that encompass a professional and science degree and need explicit matrix management. There should be accountability from both areas.
  - Provost Hanson said that if the oversight of the Ph.D. portion is clarified this could enhance the programs.

In closing, Provost Hanson explained that the structure is still being developed but encouraged members to discuss the proposal with colleagues and bring feedback to the committee and to her. She plans to continue refining it and will return to FCC at a later date.

Professor Lanyon added a last comment about the role of faculty governance in graduate education. He said that they had discussed the Senate Committee on Educational Policy as a likely candidate, but it is possible that this is not an ideal place because that committee is more policy oriented. In response to a question, he explained that the Graduate Education Council is elected and reports to the Vice Provost, therefore it is within the Provost's Office structure, not part of the University Senate's governance structure.

Professor Durfee said that Graduate Education would continue to be a regular item for FCC and SCC.

Before adjourning, members unanimously approved to have Professor von Dassow nominated to continue as Senate Vice Chair, which will then be voted on at the May 1, 2014 Senate meeting.

Jeannine Rich  
University of Minnesota