

Minutes*

**Senate Committee on Educational Policy
December 8, 1988**

Present: John Clark (chair), Doug Biggs, John Clausen, Jean Congdon, Roland Guyotte, Robert Jones, Marvin Mattson, Timothy Mazzoni, Gary Nelsestuen

Guests: Leslie Cafarelli, Darwin Hendel, John Howe, James Preus

1. Report of the Chair

Professor Clark announced that he would send out, with the next set of minutes, an outline of the agenda for the Committee for the remainder of the year. He also reported that Associate Provost and Associate Vice President Dolores Cross would join the Committee at its meeting on January 12 to discuss her plans for minority affairs. Professor Clark suggested, and the Committee concurred, that there be further discussion of enhancement of the Alumni-Amoco teaching awards, in view of Dean Jorgenson's letter to SCEP, but that the discussion be postponed to January 12.

Professor Clark asked Dr. Preus if there had been any action on the CEE/Day school dual records problem. Dr. Preus reported that the matter had been discussed at the MIS staff committee; there was no clear direction established but the matter is receiving attention. The question, he added, is how to proceed: Do they bite the bullet and integrate the entire CEE system--which is very expensive--or do they say it just cannot be done and let CEE go it alone? The latter course does not solve the problems. One step being considered would permit display of CEE records on a Day School transcript--but it would not permit access to a combined record during the time a student is enrolled.

It was moved, seconded, and unanimously voted to adopt the resolution attached to these minutes. Professor Clark said he would forward it to the Provost and to the Senate Consultative Committee.

2. Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of November 10 were accepted as written.

3. Honors Programs Proposal

Professor Clark welcomed Drs. Cafarelli and Preus for a discussion of the "Proposal for Honors and Other High-Ability Student Programs." Dr. Preus began by explaining to the Committee that for this year he is in charge of enrollment management and chairs an advisory committee which reports to Provost Clark and Vice President Wilderson. That advisory committee has a subcommittee which is dealing with merit award programs; the subcommittee intends to propose fairly dramatic changes in these programs. The changes are to begin in 1990-91 and be fully implemented by 1991-92.

* These minutes reflect discussion and debate at a meeting of a committee of the University of Minnesota Senate or Twin Cities Campus Assembly; none of the comments, conclusions, or actions reported in these minutes represent the views of, nor are they binding on, the Senate or Assembly, the Administration, or the Board of Regents.

Dr. Preus recalled that he had talked about merit award programs the last time he had met with SCEP. Asked if they are working, he said that if one judged only by the numbers of students in the top 5% of their class who attend the University, one would say they are not; the University's share of those students has actually declined. What is not known is what would have happened if there had been no programs in place; further, he said, they serve to advertise about the kind of student the University wishes to recruit.

By the Fall of 1991, he said, the University should come closer to having coordinated academic honors programs. If there is a common entry point and a coordinated program, there are implications for students: If they apply for awards, they commit to applying for an honors program as well.

There are basically three levels of awards being proposed:

1. The "superstars" level, which would be a prestigious award, and consist of about \$5,000 without showing any evidence of need. There would be relatively few such awards but they would be aimed at the kind of student wanted at the University.
2. National Merit and Outstanding Minorities awards; there are about 60 of each of these awarded annually and a total of about 250 in place.
3. The Presidential Honors award, which is less than \$1,000 and probably not enough to make a difference in a student's decision whether or not to attend the University but which recognizes high ability; there are about 250-300 of these awards per year.

The draft report of the subcommittee will go to the parent committee on December 14; after that it will be forwarded to the Provost. Most items reviewed or discussed by the subcommittee, Dr. Preus told SCEP, have been recommended by various task forces over the past five years; the subcommittee has not done any consultation because it felt itself under the gun to get something done. He said he assumed that the Provost would consult with the appropriate groups of the University once the proposal had been forwarded to her.

Asked about the cost of the programs, Dr. Preus said their objective is to keep them at the current levels of funding, which amounts to about \$1.3 million per year. Of that, about \$500,000 comes from various foundations. At present they are short about \$350-400,000 in hard money and would like to see all of the funding be hardened eventually.

Dr. Cafarelli then provided the Committee with a brief history of the honors programs and the issues which have attended them. When she became Director of Educational Development in 1984, part of her charge was to take on the honors programs. The budget for recruiting high-ability students, partly seed money to the colleges and partly used by her office to stimulate programs, peaked in 1986-87 at about \$350,000; now it is down to about \$100,000. Since that money has been available, however, 13 college honors programs have been created or strengthened, including CLA, IT, three at UMD, one each at UMW and UMC, and in seven of the Twin Cities colleges. There has been an effort to work with the faculty and the colleges to strengthen honors offerings; it has been helped by the honors coordinators network, which she convenes monthly.

Dr. Cafarelli said there is a need to clarify how central coordination will occur, how cross-college and interdisciplinary programs will be conducted, standards on what it is expected that honors courses will be, and the setting of common goals. The honors directors and the faculty committee support these goals; there is a need for central leadership and commitment. With the creation of a common entry point and the revision of merit awards, a comprehensive honors program should be created but one which does not compromise the colleges--it should be a federation.

Asked about the diminishing amount of money available, Dr. Cafarelli said she was not sure where it was being used. There has been a shifting base of funding, from central administration to the colleges; as the colleges have picked up the honors activities and recruiting, there has been no effort to stimulate new honors activities. Some money, as a result of the planning process, has been diverted to other parts of the University. She said she does not, however, sense any lack of commitment on the part of the administration to honors activities.

Committee members spent some time discussing the changes in the budgets for recruiting, honors activities, and merit award programs. Dr. Cafarelli said it was her impression that much could be done internally by redirecting money and people; there is also a legislative request, of slightly under \$200,000, which would be used for a director, secretary, advising, and (the majority of the money) for released time for faculty to develop and teach honors courses.

Asked about increased central coordination, Dr. Cafarelli said that at present students are recruited into separate honors programs but many would like to take advantage of opportunities in different colleges. That cross-college participation must now be negotiated on a case-by-case basis. A better coordinated set of programs would permit freer movement and access to opportunities. Another question to be addressed is what is meant by "graduating with honors" from the University; at present that varies a great deal by college.

Dr. Preus noted that part of the problem has been that the Office of Student Financial Aid (OSFA) for a long time was committed only to need-based aid. As a result, the colleges and departments accumulated their own merit award money and did not coordinate with OSFA; they managed their money so they would be sure to get the right students. There has now been a change in the central view of what OSFA should do and there has been thought that all those merit funds should be combined and used in a creative, coordinated way.

Dr. Cafarelli pointed out that the community college articulation agreement makes this an important issue; community colleges are the fastest growing group in national honors organizations; they are identifying honors students and are anxious to coordinate with the University as they prepare transfer students. It is also an important issue because of the postsecondary enrollment options act; the University has to do better with high school students and the opportunities to participate in honors programs.

The Committee voted unanimously to support the proposal; Professor Clark said he would forward it to the Consultative Committee and to the Provost.

4. Proposal to HECB

Professor Clark explained that Dr. Darwin Hendel had to present to the Higher Education

Coordinating Board today a proposal concerning outcomes assessment; Dr. Hendel wished to review it with SCEP.

Dr. Hendel explained that the proposal to HECB is a pilot discipline-based assessment of critical thinking outcomes from baccalaureate education programs. The legislature appropriated money to HECB to encourage assessment; HECB, in turn, provided money to all six state governing boards (\$16,650 each) to plan pilot outcomes assessment projects. Dr. Hendel told the Committee that he had drawn upon 72 faculty members, working in teams, to develop the project; it was decided that a project focussing on baccalaureate education was most important to the faculty so there will be projects in several disciplines on the three baccalaureate degree-granting campuses of the University.

There are two components to the project: One, an assessment of critical thinking skills at point of entry to the University, and two, a two-year project, in 4-5 disciplines, with intense faculty involvement of domain-based assessment; the latter would include a project director. There would also be an advisory committee, if the project is funded. If the proposal is to go forward, it must be connected to faculty concerns as well as to departments and courses.

This proposal seeks \$125,000; the HECB Quality Assessment Task Force will meet on December 19 and decide which proposals will be funded.

Asked why Crookston and Waseca were not included, Dr. Hendel said that Crookston was involved in the initial discussions; the decision to focus on baccalaureate education, he noted, was taken in order to avoid broadening the proposal to the point that its focus was lost.

Professor Clark thanked Dr. Hendel for his presentation and said that the Committee will come back to the issue later in the year.

5. Discussion with Interim University Librarian John Howe

Professor Clark welcomed John Howe, Interim University Librarian, to the meeting. Dr. Howe began by telling the Committee he had been in his present position since September of 1987 and would probably continue to occupy it through most of the present academic year. The search for a permanent librarian is drawing to a close, he reported, and there appear to be six very good candidates.

The Committee had previously been provided copies of Dr. Howe's comments on the "State of the University Libraries"; as Dr. Howe pointed out, the address had actually been delivered to library employees but the message was intended for the entire University community. He had, he said, tried to describe the major planning activities of the libraries in the past year and to outline the major issues needing attention by the library, the faculty, and the University. He also said that he wanted to connect the libraries to the University in many ways, especially socially and politically; there is, he commented, a need for "external relations" on the part of the libraries.

The libraries, he told the Committee, need the support of the faculty and students; they are required for good teaching and good research. He has told the President and the Provost that the libraries need to be nurtured. The libraries have not represented themselves well to the University but there must also be concern and curiosity on the part of the administration and the Senate structure.

There have been three major planning initiatives built from Commitment to Focus and Strategy for Focus:

- A programmatic rationale for an increased budget (for staff, LUMINA, acquisitions, and services); the central administration has listened to the arguments, apparently, because the biennial request includes approximately \$5 million for new operating funds for the Twin Cities libraries.
- The need to upgrade the physical facilities (remodeling of the IT library, capacity to care for and house the extensive special collections, and provide for continuing general collection growth); the University library does not "throw things away," as other libraries do, because it is a research library and the "library of record" as a state resource. The rich array of archival and special collections, one of the best in the nation, is presently stored in warehouses and other locations where they are subject to wide temperature variations and even rain.
- A fund-raising drive; of the \$360+ million from the Minnesota Campaign, almost none of the money will go to the libraries. They are at present developing the logic, ambition, and timing of a fund-drive; the effort will begin in the near future.

Dr. Howe was asked how much of the support being sought is ritualistic and how much is based on need; the question arose in the context of comments about seniors who have never used the libraries. SCEP, as an educational policy committee, should be concerned about the use of the libraries. Dr. Howe responded by agreeing with an observation that one reason students may not have used the libraries is because faculty have not built classes and programs in such a way that library research is required. Another aspect of the level of use question, however, has to do with the extent the librarians get out to the campus, to the faculty, to find out what activities are taking place so that acquisitions can be appropriately shaped. Further, there is good reason to believe that some faculty are "innocent" of the full range of information that is readily available. Finally, the use of LUMINA will help; it will provide a way to gain access to a huge volume of information.

Committee members raised the possibility of offering a course on the use of the libraries, of perhaps 1 credit, which would be obligatory for freshmen. The idea seemed to be worthwhile but the numbers of students who would be involved are staggering. It was noted that such courses are a part of the curriculum at some other institutions.

Dr. Howe was asked how "change in the world," where there is more emphasis now on such places as China and the third world, affect the libraries. He said that it involves "connecting" the libraries more consistently and aggressively with the academic programs. Libraries mostly respond to the need of their users; they need the capacity to move resources in order to keep up both with technology and with programmatic shifts in the University. When new endowed chairs are created, when new subfields are proposed, part of the planning should include the extent of library support which will be required. Academic Affairs has done a good job of integrating the libraries into academic planning; that need to keep abreast of disciplinary trends is also the reason that he is pushing the library staff out into the units.

Asked about the future of Walter Library, Dr. Howe said they had two options: Remodel the building or tear it down and build anew. After talking with the Dean of IT and the faculty, and after looking at their overall strategy, the Libraries decided to remodel. They intend to make it a highly functional and technologically useful facility; they also intend to restore its architectural beauty.

One Committee member commented that when he first came to the University he was very impressed with the journal subscriptions and the range of acquisitions; in the intervening years, there has been a noticeable decline in the quality of the offerings and in some fields the most recent books that can be obtained are ten years old. Dr. Howe pointed out that 20 years ago the University Libraries ranked 7th in size and between 6th and 8th in rate of collection growth. Now it ranks 14th in size and 22nd in rate of growth. While numbers are now less significant as a measure of quality, they do nonetheless reflect the relative decline in the support for the libraries--and they also reflect the underfunding which plagues the entire University.

Dr. Howe was asked about the rate of theft; he replied that as far as they can tell the rate is no higher than peer institutions since the installation of the "tattle tapes." That, considering the location of the library (in the center of an urban area with a lot of traffic) is pretty good. The reason they have to say "as far as they can tell" is because until LUMINA includes circulation information, they do not really know how big the collections are and what the losses are. Once that addition to LUMINA is implemented--within a year--the management of the collections will be much easier.

The Committee adjourned at 5:15.

-- Gary Engstrand

University of Minnesota