

## FACULTY CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

September 4, 2014

Minutes of the Meeting

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

[In these minutes: Committee Business, Discussion with President Kaler, Committee Business Continued, Discussion with Provost Hanson]

Present: Rebecca Ropers-Huilman (chair), Chris Uggen (vice chair), William Durfee, Eva von Dassow, Linda Bearinger, Gary Cohen, Gary Gardner, Maria Gini, Joseph Konstan, Kathleen Krichbaum, Susan Wick, Colin Campbell, Dale Carpenter, Jigna Desai, Janet Ericksen, Karen Mesce, Jean Wyman

Regrets: James Cloyd

Others attending: Deb Cran, Office of the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost; Amy Phenix, Office of the President; Jon Steadland, Office of the President

Guests: President Eric Kaler and Provost Karen Hanson

1. Professor Ropers-Huilman called the meeting to order and welcomed those present. She reported that in meetings with Provost Hanson and President Kaler earlier in the week, she and Professor Uggen, FCC vice chair, asked them to talk today about their reactions to the FCC's priorities for the year and to outline their priorities. Copies of the list of priorities identified at the FCC retreat were distributed to members. Professor Ropers-Huilman reported that she and Professor Uggen also reaffirmed with the President and Provost the value of less reporting and more discussions/conversations, which they seemed to appreciate.

2. **Discussion with President Kaler:** Professor Ropers-Huilman welcomed President Kaler who began by saying that he was pleased to learn at a meeting earlier this week with the FCC leadership that some of the FCC's priorities for this year align with a number of his own priorities, e.g., graduate education, Post-Tenure Review (PTR), equity and diversity, as well as the Strategic Plan.

President Kaler said that graduate education is a critical issue and one in which governance can play a meaningful role in working to better the graduate and post doctorate student experience. Besides the funding issue, more needs to be done in terms of programming and activities to give graduate students the opportunity to have experiences outside of academia.

In terms of PTR, President Kaler agreed this is another area where governance can have a positive impact on shaping a well-managed and meaningful PTR policy. He commented that he does not think the current PTR policy is working. When faculty do not perform to the level that they should, it damages the University's reputation. PTR can have an important role in performance accountability for faculty.

President Kaler stated that equity and diversity is another critical issue because in order for the University of Minnesota to be an excellent university, it must be diverse. He encouraged the FCC to focus on what more can be done to hire and retain faculty of color because, in the end, hiring and retaining faculty of color will serve to attract a diverse student population. He added that students of color tend to apply to institutions where the faculty and staff look like them. Faculty play an important role in hiring other faculty as well as in making the culture and climate welcoming.

In response to a question from Professor Cohen regarding Graduate School funding and the fact that the deans do not make graduate tuition policy, President Kaler suggested faculty have robust conversations with their deans about how their respective graduate programs should be structured. He added that any funding concerns should be raised during the compact process.

Professor Bearinger raised the issue that the University is not maximizing its capacity to get grants to support graduate students, and this relates to another priority identified by the FCC, which are administrative silos. Faculty should be incentivized to write training grants, but, in reality, they are discouraged from doing so. President Kaler agreed this is an issue around which further conversations need to take place with the Vice President for Research Brian Herman and the deans and faculty in order to build a roadmap to make it happen.

Professor Gardner noted the difficulty in doing post-tenure reviews without a common merit evaluation policy. He suggested standardizing the policies for evaluating substandard performance. Additionally, he brought up that the University does not have a structure in place for allowing faculty over time to change their focus in terms of the University's threefold mission of research and discovery, teaching and learning, and outreach and public service. There should be a mechanism that allows faculty the flexibility to change how they contribute to the University's mission. President Kaler added that some departments have this capacity, but, as Human Resources' processes become more malleable, it will be possible, but it will require strong department heads to make it happen.

Professor Desai commented on the lack of attention to Graduate School issues and curriculum in the Strategic Plan's grand challenges.

Regarding the issue of administrative silos that was brought up earlier, Professor Konstan noted that raises two issues:

- First, on the one hand, administrative functions should be more centralized and standardized in order to be fair and efficient. On the other hand, what seems fair and efficient from a central perspective often feels inefficient and unfair from the perspective of individual units.
- Second, there seems to be a lot of competition among the vice presidents (and also among deans) for resources and for control. One result is that policies and procedures seem to emerge from administrative units that appear unaware of the negative impacts of these decisions on carrying out the University's mission.

President Kaler agreed that all organizations have “turf” issues, and frequently people do not think broadly about how their decisions will impact the rest of the organization.

Professor Uggen acknowledged President Kaler’s earlier comments concerning PTR, and noted that it will be important for University senior leadership and the FCC to work together to facilitate a culture change to fix the PTR process. The “rejecting complacency” goal in support of the University’s vision will help to accomplish this. Faculty and staff need to be responsible for holding each other accountable.

In light of time, Professor Ropers-Huilman thanked President Kaler for a productive discussion.

Following the discussion with President Kaler, but before the discussion with Provost Hanson, the committee took a few minutes to debrief and process what they heard.

Professor Campbell commented that a lot of the issues that President Kaler raised are in the jurisdiction of the department heads. Having said that, it is unclear why faculty need to prompt/persuade their department heads to do their jobs. Whether faculty and other University employees like it or not, the University operates much like a corporation, with a corporate hierarchy.

Well-managed, large corporations, stated Professor Gardner, actually have a lot to offer other large structures such as the University. One thing a well-managed corporation does is career development. The University, on the other hand, does very little for career development for any of its employees. This issue is magnified when one looks at department heads and chairs because frequently they have never been trained on how to manage people. The University does not do a good job of investing in and training its employees.

Professor Bearinger said there is a real myth that seems to be pervasive in Morrill Hall that everything that takes place in a college gets run through the deans. She is frustrated when she is told deans would be happy to engage in such and such a conversation. Deans are not always interested in engaging faculty, she added.

In Professor Konstan's opinion, the problem is even broader than has been described thus far. For example, to say the solution for graduate education funding is within the realm of each college neglects the huge issue, which are the matters that span across colleges. Problems that span across colleges cannot be solved by the deans because of how the University is structured and its administrative silos. There also does not seem to be a willingness or interest in managing across colleges.

Professor Desai said the reality is graduate education costs more than undergraduate education. The quality of undergraduate education cannot be maintained if graduate student tuition and research funding is not addressed because it has an impact on undergraduate education as well. As a result of this issue, programs become smaller and untenable, and it is difficult to recruit and retain faculty. Without strong and supported graduate programs, the University loses on multiple fronts, e.g., undergraduate students, faculty and graduate students. Ignoring graduate education will have a vertical impact across the University.

Professor Gardner made two points in response to previous comments. First, he suggested the FCC talk about the University legislative request with President Kaler before it is finalized so the committee might play a consultative role in shaping the final document. Second, in order for a R1 university to deliver quality undergraduate education it requires quality graduate students and strong/supported graduate programs.

In Professor von Dassow's opinion, the FCC has a responsibility to make him aware of the obstacles surrounding funding graduate education. Professor Uggen added that he has been giving graduate education a great deal of thought and is unclear whether the FCC is the body that can actually do anything to effect a change.

Professor Mesce voiced concern that the deans seem to take the position that the challenges around graduate education are out of their hands and are something the administration needs to address, but President Kaler indicated differently saying it is a decanal decision. The high cost of graduate education has been an issue for quite some time. She proposed asking President Kaler what he would be willing to do to make a big change in graduate education funding.

Professor Carpenter agreed with Professor Uggen's earlier comment about the FCC's role as it relates to graduate tuition and what it can realistically do about it. In Professor Konstan's opinion, there are two things the FCC can do about it and it involves raising the visibility of the issue. He proposed:

- Having the intellectual futures conversation on graduate education or have FCC convene another event with a mix of faculty, deans, and administrators to review the challenges around the sustainability and viability of graduate education at the University.
- Exploring the issue of subsidies for graduate education (this could be a topic for SCFP to take up if it is interested).

Professor Gardner suggested the FCC have a conversation with President Kaler about the budget model and its impact on graduate education funding. Additionally, Professor Bearinger proposed providing perspectives/examples to President Kaler about how things are actually working at the collegiate level because there seems to be a disconnect here.

**3. Discussion with Provost Hanson:** Professor Ropers-Huilman welcomed Provost Hanson to the meeting and asked her to comment on the FCC's priorities she had been given and how they might align with her priorities for the year. Provost Hanson stated that just about all the FCC's priorities align with her priorities. An overarching priority, stated Provost Hanson, will be to work in an integrated way with faculty governance as the strategic plan rolls out.

In terms of the issue of graduate education funding, Provost Hanson said she would be interested in getting members' feedback on this issue because this is an area that will likely see changes proposed this year. Over the summer, discussions continued with the deans, etc. about an alternative model for post baccalaureate education. In addition, a small team from her office has been going to individual colleges to have more detailed conversations regarding graduate and professional education. The expectation is that her office will have specific recommendations on this issue within the next month. Provost Hanson noted she plans to convene a small advisory group of faculty to look at the recommendations and would also value getting input from the FCC. Based on on-going discussions, she anticipates a recommendation for a new model for funding research degrees that is not wholly tied to cost pools will be brought forward.

Professor Bearinger asked Provost Hanson to clarify how graduate tuition is set. Provost Hanson said the rates are determined based on how much it costs to deliver a particular graduate program. Professor Cohen remarked that the process seems quite nebulous at best. Provost Hanson agreed to provide the committee with more details about the process, e.g., who are the players, sequence of events, etc. at a future meeting. She reminded members over the past few years that here have been a few exceptions to the normal process. Provost Hanson, however, said there is an emphasis on keeping the process uniform.

Professor Konstan noted when President Kaler was here earlier that he reported the deans have the authority to set graduate education tuition. The FCC does not believe the deans have as much say in the process as the president indicated. Provost Hanson reminded members that the graduate tuition dollars are in the colleges and in some sense what happens to that money is in the dean's control. Provost Hanson rhetorically asked whether this gives the dean absolute authority for setting tuition or creating a new program, and, of course, the answer is no. Professor Konstan added it is the sense of the FCC that graduate education funding needs to be a concerted effort similar to how undergraduate tuition setting has been handled. Provost Hanson assured the committee she knows President Kaler agrees with this and this is a priority for him.

There are structural constraints emanating from the Office of Budget and Finance on what the deans can and cannot do with regard to funding graduate education, noted

Professor von Dassow. The deans are not completely free to manage the funding they receive. Another issue mentioned earlier today, said Professor von Dassow, is if the deans make all the graduate education funding decisions, this actually inhibits cross college cooperation. There is a structural incentive for deans to act independently rather than collaboratively. Provost Hanson said the deans discuss these matters as a group. She then asked committee members for examples of specific constraints. Professor Cohen cited the example of diversity in funding packages for graduate programs and students in these programs. In many cases, it is cheaper to hire a post doc than to take in new graduate students. There has not been a robust, University-wide discussion about quality floors and level of competitiveness that the University would like to see in its graduate programs as well as discussion about to what standards the deans should be held accountable. Provost Hanson agreed with Professor Cohen that this should be a University-wide discussion. She added she believes it will help to refocus the Graduate School on the institution's research mission. Provost Hanson said Professor Kohlstedt made a lot of progress during her time as Interim Graduate School Dean in raising quality issues with certain colleges and talking with them about underperforming programs. In order for improvements to be made, Provost Hanson noted she would like to hear about other examples of what is and is not working.

Professor Bearinger recalled in the spring of 2013 the Senate Research Committee (SRC) adopted a training grants statement outlining the issues that were interfering with getting institutional training grants. The University is not adequately competitive when it comes to training grants, which, in part, is due to its policies/models, e.g., the budget model, taxes. Training grants are a way to help support graduate students and the University is doing a poor job in this area. Faculty are being discouraged by their deans from writing training grants because doing so costs the department money. Provost Hanson asked to get a copy of this statement.

Professor Ropers-Huilman asked Provost Hanson if there were other FCC priorities that she would like to comment on besides graduate education. Provost Hanson said the issue of equity and diversity is also a priority to her. She added she would like to see changes in how her office oversees faculty hiring and asked members their thoughts on to what degree her office should oversee the hiring processes in the colleges. Professor Carpenter raised the issue of the Supreme Court's increasing skepticism of race conscious hiring by public institutions. Is the University giving any thought to this increased skepticism, and the likelihood the University may soon face a post-affirmative action future when race cannot be taken into account when hiring? Provost Hanson reported the University has been and continues to follow this issue closely. Professor Desai said the University had at one time a reputation for hiring faculty of color, but, over time, there has been a notable decline. When faculty of color are hired at the University and do not see other faculty of color when they arrive, particularly at the mid-level, they often leave. The University needs to concentrate on hiring diverse faculty, particularly at the mid-level as well as building units that have ties to the community. Professor Cohen agreed with Professor Desai's comments and said in his opinion the colleges need to be held more accountable, e.g., institute better and more imaginative/creative processes for recruiting faculty of color, conscientiously scrutinize applicant pools. He was not, however, in

favor of central administration scrutinizing colleges' applicant pools. Each college, added Professor Desai, should have a faculty diversity committee that works with the associate deans and deans to do a better job of recruiting diverse applicant pools and retaining faculty once they are hired. Provost Hanson acknowledged these comments and noted that some colleges do a better job of scrutinizing their applicant pools than others. Professor Durfee suggested central administration provide the college search committees with resources to help them recruit a diverse applicant pool. As the discussion ensued, and members shared their thoughts on this subject, Provost Hanson commented the colleges need to make a concerted effort in recruiting faculty of color. Diversity concerns should be integral to the hiring process. Too often, units think in terms of special "diversity hires," and seek special funding for these, but the fact is that regular hiring must also be concerned with diversity. It is good to have a special pot of money identified for target of opportunity hires that increase our diversity, but we will not achieve our diversity goals unless we go beyond that and use our regular hiring funds to help achieve greater diversity, as well, she concluded.

Professor von Dassow asked about where the Strategic Plan fits into the diversity priority. Provost Hanson said hiring diverse faculty is not the sole responsibility of individual colleges but a University-wide goal that is discussed during the compact process. The University relies on knowledge of the deans and faculty in the individual colleges concerning their disciplines. Deans have a responsibility to know the direction their fields are going in terms of strengths and where opportunities exist. The issue of hiring diverse faculty will not simply get better by augmentation. In response, Professor von Dassow commented faculty do not participate in the compact process. Provost Hanson said the colleges have mechanisms in place, e.g., collegiate advisory and budget committees, for facilitating discussions that shape their compact requests.

In light of time, Professor Ropers-Huilman thanked Provost Hanson for her time and a good conversation. She added she hopes going forward to have a conversation about how the FCC can best work with her office as well as with the deans.

The committee spent the remaining few minutes debriefing from their discussion with Provost Hanson.

Hearing no further business, Professor Ropers-Huilman adjourned the meeting.

Renee Dempsey  
University Senate

