

Minutes\*

**Senate Committee on Educational Policy  
March 9, 1989**

Present: John Clark (chair), Jean Congdon, Roland Guyotte, Marvin Mattson, Timothy Mazzoni, Gary Nelsestuen, Aron Pilhofer, Shelley Thomas

**1. Approval of the Minutes**

The minutes of the February 9 meeting were approved as written.

**2. Report of the Chair**

Professor Clark reported on a number of items.

Morse-Alumni Awards A meeting was held with representatives of the Alumni Association, the Foundation, and the Educational Development Office; strong support exists for the enhanced teaching awards but there is some uncertainty about funding for the next few years. Mr. Roszell, from the Foundation, explained that it is a very marketable proposal, for fund-raising purposes, but that it would take a few years to build up the necessary endowment of \$3 million to fund the awards as proposed. The question, Professor Clark said, is where SCEP believes there should be some "give" if there is a few years' delay in full funding.

The Committee agreed on the following rank ordering of its priorities for the enhancement of the awards:

- It is most important to implement the enhancement now (beginning in 1989-90);
- Second, they should be three years in duration, once granted, with a \$2500 award to the recipient;
- Third, the amount of money to the department, for use by the recipient to enhance undergraduate education, should also remain at \$2500 but could, if needed, be reduced to \$2000 for the first few years of the award; and
- Fourth, the number of awards could be reduced from the proposed number of 10.

Resolution on Large Introductory Classes A copy of a draft resolution from the Committee on Undergraduate Education was distributed; it proposed spending \$900,000 over four years, to be distributed to departments on the basis of proposals submitted for improving large introductory classes. Committee members supported the idea but expressed reservations about whether or not this "solution was up to the problem." Criticisms included: the amount proposed was nowhere near sufficient to reduce class sizes (it may be that the resolution assumed that the University would always have large introductory classes); the proposal is self-terminating, in four years, and appears to assume that ideas will be adopted and will spread beyond the initial recipients, even after the funding has ended; the proposal

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admonishes the departments on both what to teach (an introductory survey not directed at majors) as well as how to address the problem of anonymity and the inconsistency is not addressed; and it is not clear for what money would be used by the faculty teaching large classes--do they buy a new overhead projector?--and if it might be used for additional TAs, the amount is again insufficient.

Professor Clark said he would communicate these comments to Professor Tracy, chair of the Committee on Undergraduate Education.

1990-91 calendar Professor Clark commented that he had heard a number of comments about the 1990-91 calendar. Mr. Engstrand reported on the recent discussion which had taken place at the Senate Consultative Committee about the possibility of changing the calendar by pushing second summer session back (even though it would overlap with the State Fair).

It was pointed out that another possibility would be to start early, which would then require that winter quarter be split. It was argued that most students would be opposed to a split quarter. It was also suggested that all of the "stakeholders" in these questions have never been brought together and that various groups just say "no" without any public rationale.

### **3. Resolution on ratio of class hours to credits**

Committee members had been sent a redrafted version of the resolution on the 1:1 ratio between class hours and credits awarded.

The Committee reviewed several points about the issue, including:

- Whether or not any data would show that Minnesota was out of step with its peer institutions (there seem to be no printed data available);
- Which collegiate/campus units would be most affected by adoption of a policy calling for a 1:1 ratio (apparently CLA, Education, Management, and Morris);
- Whether or not adoption of such a policy would have any significant impact on the quality of undergraduate education (the consensus view seemed to be that it probably would not have a major impact);
- That any policy should take explicit note of laboratory courses, in which 1 credit generally represents 3 hours of lab time; and
- The extent to which the policy is intended to be flexible and cognizant of legitimate pedagogical reasons for departing from the 1:1 ratio (it is so intended).

The Committee asked that the draft be rewritten so that the policy itself would be contained in a few declarative sentences and that SCEP's discussion be condensed and appended as rationale. A redrafted version of the policy will be circulated prior to the next meeting.

Professor Clark suggested, in light of the foregoing discussion, that perhaps SCEP should consider

addressing the larger question of the undergraduate experience--or at least push somebody else to address it. He noted that undergraduate education is on the list of President Hasselmo's action agenda items but solicited Committee members to prepare comments for the next meeting on what, if anything, SCEP should consider doing.

#### **4. Committee reorganization**

Professor Clark reported that he has asked the chairs of committees reporting to SCEP to meet again on April 14 to provide agenda items for the remainder of the year and to discuss the committee restructuring. He suggested, as one m. o. for next year, that each member of SCEP be assigned to watch and become expert on one of the areas or topics for which SCEP will assume responsibility next year. This idea met with considerable favor among Committee members; as one noted, unless review and attention to various topical areas and subjects were not built in at the beginning, they would very likely be lost or ignored.

Professor Mattson and Mr. Pilhofer agreed to work together to sketch out a diagram, for the next meeting, on how the Committee might function next year.

#### **5. Schedule for next year**

Mr. Engstrand was asked to provide to the Committee a tentative schedule of meetings for 1989-90; he agreed to circulate it with the minutes of the meeting.

The Committee adjourned at 4:40.

-- Gary Engstrand

University of Minnesota