

Minutes*

Faculty Consultative Committee
Thursday, September 23, 2004
1:30 – 3:00
238A Morrill Hall

Present: Marvin Marshak (chair), Gary Balas, Jean Bauer, Susan Brorson, Charles Campbell, Carol Chomsky, Tom Clayton, Gary Davis, Dan Feeney, Mary Jo Kane, Scott Lanyon, Judith Martin, Fred Morrison, Jeff Ratliff-Crain, John Sullivan, Carol Wells

Absent: Emily Hoover, Morris Kleiner, Kathleen Krichbaum, Martin Sampson

Guests: Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost E. Thomas Sullivan

Other: Gayla Marty (University Relations), Kathryn Stuckert (Office of the Chief of Staff)

[In these minutes: (1) number of meetings requiring FCC chair/vice chair attendance; (2) report on the pre-FCC meeting with Provost Sullivan (strategic planning, financing graduate education, student numbers); (3) discussion with Provost Sullivan (strategic planning, financing graduate education, searches, shaping the class of 2009, all-U commencement; (4) various issues]

1. Number of Meetings

Professor Marshak convened the meeting at 1:30 and turned to Professor Kane for the first item. Professor Kane reported that she was "stunned" at the number of meetings that she and Professor Marshak are expected to attend in their roles as chair and vice chair of the Committee. She said she appreciates and respects the culture of consultation at the University, but in some cases there seems to be repetitive discussion of the same matters. She said that she and Professor Marshak have discussed this and have agreed that at least one of them will be at all meetings, but that only in some cases with they BOTH be at meetings.

It was agreed that it was not necessary for both the chair and vice chair to attend meetings to review the Senate dockets. It was also agreed, however, that both should attend meetings that involve the President, the Provost, and the Regents. Professor Kane also inquired if the Provost and the President might meet jointly with the Committee; Professor Martin explained that the Committee tried that in the past and it did not work well; it is better that the Committee meets with them separately.

2. Meeting with Provost Sullivan

Professor Marshak reported that he, Professor Kane, and the committee chairs who are ex officio on this Committee had a good meeting with the Provost earlier in the week. One point they made with the Provost is that the strategic planning process must be seen as legitimate; he said he believes Provost Sullivan is committed to the process. Professor Kane said that the President is also, but some may believe

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there is a master plan in central administration and that decisions have already been made. She said she did not believe that to be true. What is more worrisome, Professor Marshak said, is that the University in the past has not shown that it is adept at implementing strategic plans. He is concerned that the effort may not lead to substantive results. Professor Lanyon said that the process is moving so fast (which some may like) that it will not get the support it needs; there is no explanation of how the effort will be successful because it is on such a short timeline. Professor Kane said she had suggested to the Provost that he provide an update to the faculty on where the process stands and let them know that it would be the first of several communications to keep them abreast of events.

Professor Morrison noted that the task force on the funding of graduate education was appointed on August 1 and asked to submit its report in early September. That is unusual for University task forces but it represents the way Provost Sullivan thinks about things: there is a problem, address it, and move on.

Professor Marshak told the Committee that Vice Provost Swan had reported to the Board of Regents on the percentage of students at the University who were in the top 10% of their class compared to the rest of the Big Ten. Michigan and Northwestern were at the top of the list; Minnesota was about 2/3 of the way down. One member of the Board asked where the University is going in this respect; there appears not to be a University position on this point. Professor Martin said that Board members may not agree; there is probably agreement that the University's percentage should be higher than it is, but the Board does not want to restrict access. Professor Marshak said that the Regents, the administration, and the faculty continue to be concerned about providing broad access to the University and achieving a diverse student body.

Committee members spent time discussing the strategic planning process and people's perceptions of it. Professor Marshak noted that he, Professor Kane, and the committee chairs had emphasized the effect of IMG to Provost Sullivan. For example, they were informed that less than 10% of CLA's budget now comes from the state (after IRS taxes, etc). Unless there is a change in the reward structure for deans in order to increase undergraduate academic standards, rather than simply obtaining more money from tuition by increasing enrollment, there will be push-back from the deans on issues related to retention and graduation. Professor Feeney commented that these kinds of observations suggest the need for planning; he suggested that the Committee not try to second-guess the administration on whether the process is going too fast or too slow.

3. Discussion with Vice President and Provost Sullivan

Professor Marshak welcomed Dr. Sullivan to the meeting. Dr. Sullivan touched on a number of issues.

- An update on the strategic planning process and the framing concepts/vision/goals, criteria for measuring programs, and environmental scanning; once those three matters have been taken up, they will turn their attention to the internal budget model to see if it is aligned with the other elements of the process. The entire document will go to the Board of Regents in February. In parallel, the colleges and departments are also looking at issues.
- The report on financing of graduate education: the task force did a spectacular job, given its one-month timeline. The report will be distributed widely for discussion; this is a top priority for

the President and the Provost and if something is broken, the University must fix it as quickly as possible. There will be a major push for scholarship funds in October, which will include the 21st Century Graduate Fellowships.

Professor Wells commented that the task force lacked representation from the biomedical sciences; individuals in those fields who have seen the report expressed disappointment because it did not deal with acute problems in the biomedical sciences. There was discussion of the impact of thesis credits on NIH grants and the disincentive they create to hire graduate students and the more general question of where faculty should put their efforts: in undergraduate education, to generate revenue, or in graduate education, which costs a great deal. What is needed is 4-5 years of stable funding for graduate education; the University's competitors are giving 4-5 years commitments to students, including summer funds; if the University cannot do the same, it cannot successfully compete. Committee members expressed a preference for increased block grants rather than an increased number of graduate fellowships with tuition benefits. Block grants change the point of decision, to the department. Professor Sullivan said he would take these comments into account and invited others to send him comments as well. It was agreed that the opinions of the Policy and Review Councils should be sought.

- An update on the various searches underway. The Vice President for Research search ends this week; the Dean of the Graduate School search is at the point of making cuts and there should be a slate of candidates by December 1; the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs search is continuing and it is hoped will be completed no later than the beginning of the next semester; the IT dean search is nearing completion; the Public Health dean search is just beginning; the Nursing dean search is at the point of having a short list of candidates.
- In terms of the reviews of deans, one is completed and one is just being finished while two more will begin this year. Before the next reviews start, however, there will be a discussion of the efficiency and effectiveness of the review process; Provost Sullivan invited Committee members to participate in the discussion. Professor Martin volunteered to serve as part of a discussion group, inasmuch as she participated in one of the reviews during 2003-04.
- They are starting a discussion of an all-University commencement. Professor Marshak said that there should be consideration of such a commencement; the coordinate campuses have graduation ceremonies on Saturday so students could attend an all-University ceremony on Sunday.
- Discussions about shaping the class of 2009 have also started. They will pay a lot more attention to retention rates and enrollment numbers by college and whether or not there should be changes in the numbers, depending on retention and graduation rates. Professor Ratliff-Crain pointed out that there can be unintended consequences of changing recruiting goals: there is increased competition between the Twin Cities and the Morris campus for students, and fund-raising for scholarships may focus on the name recognition of the Twin Cities campus but the funds should be all-University.

Professor Marshak thanked Dr. Sullivan for joining the meeting.

4. List of Issues Pending and Other Business

Professor Marshak distributed copies of a list of the issues pending before the Committee. He asked Committee members to send him comments about the items; he said he will try to do something about them or remove them from the list. The Committee can discuss the proposed disposition of the items at its next meeting.

He told Committee members he would prepare a letter for the Committee to the President concerning the search for the Vice President for Research.

Committee members should help identify candidates for the position of Vice Provost for Academic Affairs; Professor Martin, who is chairing the search committee, urged that Committee members encourage colleagues to apply.

The report of the task force on financing graduate education should be sent to all directors of graduate studies and it was suggested that Dean Bloomfield should encourage a discussion of the report at the Policy and Review Councils.

Professor Marshak adjourned the meeting at 2:40.

-- Gary Engstrand

University of Minnesota