

Minutes*

Senate Committee on Educational Policy
Wednesday, May 1, 1996
1:00 - 3:00
Room 626 Campus Club

Present: Laura Koch (chair), Elayne Donahue, Amanda Eidsvoog, Darwin Hendel, Thomas Johnson, Judith Martin, Ryan Nilsen, W. Phillips Shively, William Van Essendelft

Regrets: Gayle Graham Yates, Megan Gunnar, Robert Johnson, Jeffrey Larsen, Robert Leik, Helen Phin

Absent: Avram Bar-Cohen, Anita Cholewa, Paul Cleary, Glenn Merkel

Guests: Halil Dundar and Jane Whiteside (Academic Affairs); Dean Hal Miller, Dr. Dennis Cabral, Dr. David Grossman; Sam Lewis and Elizabeth Grundner (Office of the Registrar); Dean Robert Bruininks

[In these minutes: University College/CEE; course numbering under semesters; discussion of college mergers with Dean Bruininks]

1. University College

Professor Koch convened the meeting at 1:00 and welcomed Dean Hal Miller and Dr. David Grossman from CEE/University College and Dr. Dennis Cabral from Academic Affairs.

Dean Miller began by noting that Continuing Education and Extension is making the transition to University College (UC). CEE is the largest continuing education program in the country, but also among the most integrated with departments and faculty: 44% of CEE instruction is by regular faculty, compared to 52% in the Day School. The difference is that CEE draws its other faculty from the community while the Day School relies on graduate assistants--although that is changing, with the sharp increase in graduate fringe benefits.

As a result of initial discussions about UC, the President appointed a working group chaired by Provost Allen; that working group report had three themes about what UC should do: improve access to existing courses and degrees, assess demand for new courses and degrees within colleges, and develop additional certificates and experimental partnership degrees within UC. Those have been the guiding principles as CEE has been planning the change to UC.

On July 1, 1996, CEE will no longer exist; it will be UC. Dean Miller reviewed the redesign of processes that has been required, and said that original thought of a gradual change was dropped in view of the central administrative reorganization and the expected implementation of RCM. They expect to

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come out with a drastic restructuring of the operation.

Dean Miller then reviewed the relationship with the historic University College, noting the similarities between it and CEE/the new UC. They grant degrees, do not have their own faculty, are system-wide, and work with non-traditional students. The relationship will be more important as UC is given the authority to develop additional partnership degrees.

The new UC needed a faculty governance council, and there has been developed a proposal to change the existing University College Assembly into such a body. The Assembly (and the historic University College) are creatures of the University Senate, and the Senate will have to act on proposals to change the existing Assembly into a body that can govern the new UC.

Dean Miller then noted that the Twin Cities Higher Education Partnership had been established in 1993, to develop collaborative educational programs responsive to changing educational and student needs and to emphasize applied, career-oriented baccalaureate programs, and asked Dr. Cabral to talk about the joint degree programs.

Dr. Cabral started by commenting that these joint University-technical college degree programs are unique in higher education. The intent in developing them was to recognize there are changing needs in education, that there are new skill sets being called for. This is not unusual in higher education, but these were different in that the demand was immediate; people needed to get up to speed fast to respond to changes in the environment. Many of these demands centered on applied skills; the question was how to meet the need in a day of tight funding.

The University and the other public systems agreed they would try to leverage their resources to respond; this is a public effort. Once the agreement was signed, the systems explored ways to fulfill the goals. It was clear that there were needs to be met, but there was no road map on how to do so, and it had to be done fairly quickly. They developed a model that has seemed to work: a need is identified and its validity determined, and the University decides whether it has an appropriate role in responding (it cannot respond to all educational needs, legitimate or not; programs must reflect University strengths and interests).

Dr. Cabral described the process that led to the development of the two degrees, Bachelor of Information Networking (BIN) and Bachelor of Applied Business (BAB). Neither the University nor the community colleges by themselves could respond to the need for these degrees, but together they could. The faculty and administration of the colleges were involved, as were representatives from the private sector. Curricular design teams were set up, chaired by Russell Hobbie (BIN) and Mary Nichols (BAB). They wanted to have the rigor and the quality of the University, but in order not to have to worry about overhead, the programs were placed in CEE and seen as stand-alone niche degrees that were not B.A. or B.S. degrees, although they were developed and approved by the faculty. The programs were also then approved by HECB and the Board of Regents.

There are two new collaborative baccalaureate degree programs being developed, Dr. Cabral reported, in construction management and in emergency health services. He explained the evolution of the need for the emergency health services degree.

Provost Shively commented that he works closely with CEE, and has an excellent relationship with it. Dean Miller is one of the best people in the University to work with, he said, and while they may not always agree, the working relationship is very good indeed.

A number of points were made in the ensuing conversation.

- Asked how big these programs might get, Dr. Cabral said they are experimental and have a restricted cohort; the BIN has 20 students and the BAB slightly more. They will be evaluated in a few years and a decision made about what to do.
- The existing connections to the University for students who wish to register in joint Day/CEE classes will continue, most likely. A lot of Day students register through CEE in Day classes, and they intend to try to stop that with the new registration system. The access of continuing education students to Day classes, as colleges and departments desire it, is an opportunity for CEE. RCM offers challenges on how to handle funds; that is being dealt with now.
- A student need not be formally admitted to UC to take courses. There will be two categories of students, those who are admitted and those who are not.
- The existing University College Assembly will continue; Dr. Grossman is working on constitutional changes so that a new Assembly will serve as the base for a UC governance system. The existing Assembly will continue to govern the two existing University College programs if the merger is not approved, or not approved until later; that is important, because both rely on faculty participation. Existing CEE structures will be modified to fit the new structure as well.
- The relationships with the coordinate campuses will remain intact; UC is intended to be system-wide.

Professor Koch thanked Drs. Miller, Cabral, and Grossman for joining the meeting.

2. Course Numbering

Professor Koch next welcomed Sam Lewis, University Registrar, and Elizabeth Grundner, Associate Registrar, to discuss the semester course numbering proposal that had been distributed earlier to the Committee.

Mr. Lewis reported that it had been suggested to them by a number of people that the semester course numbering system be radically different from the current system, in order that old and new courses not be confused. One way to achieve that is with the course-numbering system they have proposed, which reverts to three-digit course numbers. Most course designators would not change (e.g., MATH for mathematics), but they would be made consistent across all campuses (and very few are now a problem).

The course-numbering proposal is as follows:

- 000 remedial and non-credit courses
- 100 courses normally taken by first year undergraduates; no prerequisite courses required

200	undergraduate, lower division, may require prerequisite courses
300	upper division courses
400 &	
500	upper division and graduate
600	post-baccalaureate non-Graduate School degree: MD, JD, MED, etc
700	graduate students only
800	not used (saved for future use)
900	dissertation, thesis, etc.

The Committee discussed the distinction between 100-level and 200-level courses. The 100-level courses are to be those without any college-level course prerequisite; the 200-level courses would have as prerequisites other courses at the college level. Mr. Lewis said that his office would NOT be involved in deciding which courses should carry which numbers; that would be up to departments and should be coordinated at some level. It may be, said one Committee member, that the number selected for the course should be part of the course approval process; that implies, Mr. Lewis said, that college and curriculum committee approval would be needed.

The Committee voted that 100-level courses may have high school prerequisites but not college-level course prerequisites.

One Committee member asked that the distinction between the 400 and 500 level be sharpened or eliminated; Ms. Grundner said they were suggested to address the current problem of high 3-XXX versus low 5-XXX courses. Mr. Lewis agreed that there are fine distinctions involved; they have tried with this system to respond to complaints about the current system. One likelihood is that 500 courses would always be accepted at the graduate level; 400-level courses would require special permission to be counted as graduate work.

On the need for consistency across campuses, Mr. Lewis said they were primarily concerned about the lower levels; a 400-level course at Duluth or Twin Cities could be 300 at Morris.

One Committee member said that while this scheme might solve problems at the theoretical level, it would not do so at the practical level, because with the onset of RCM, departments would want to offer courses that bridge between undergraduate and graduate work.

Following brief additional discussion, the Committee voted unanimously to approve the course numbering proposal and to request the Senate Consultative Committee to place it on the docket of the University Senate, this spring if possible. Professor Koch thanked Mr. Lewis and Ms. Grundner for bringing the proposal to the Committee.

3. Discussion with Dean Bruininks about the College Merger

She next welcomed Dean Robert Bruininks of the College of Education and Human Development (CEHD) to discuss the proposed merger of CEHD and the College of Human Ecology (CHE).

Dean Bruininks began by saying he did not know what the outcome of the process would be; he had some notice before the announcement (six days), and the merger proposal was included in the same

press conference as the announcement of the recommendation about closing General College. There was not a lot of time for him and Dean Heltsley to be part of a consultative process. At present there are two faculty members, M. Janice Hogan and Richard Weinberg, holding six to eight meetings open to the faculty and staff of both colleges to share questions and concerns.

The merger of CHE and CEHD should be one of several discussions about the long-term academic restructuring of the University, discussions that are warranted for a lot of reasons. One reason is economic; public institutions face stable funding at best, and declining funding in real dollars. To cope, in part, higher education has downsized or "rightsized," which has meant it has cut units disproportionately. Sometimes those cuts have been preceded by analysis, sometimes not, and the latter cuts are not made in terms of the overall University agenda. Higher education tends to cut across the board or disproportionately in some units, without thought to the future context of higher education; sometimes cuts are made in units that have the potential for growth, and funds provided to units without that potential.

One has also seen the budget cuts passed along as increased costs to customers. In some cases, undergraduate constituents are large enough to wield political influence and slow down tuition increases; that is less true at the post-baccalaureate level. One example where University policies are not aligned with the future: Dean Miller has data showing major University growth in part-time and life-long students and occupational learners, but the University frequently institutes revenue policies inconsistent with the directions it wants to take by pricing high the areas growing most, thus handing its competitors the advantage.

There must be creative responses in academic restructuring and re-engineering, so the University becomes a highly efficient organization and one that makes sense--or costs will increase, and they will be passed on to customers who cannot afford them.

Restructuring is, therefore, a good thing to consider. The problem is that these proposals have not been rolled out properly. One should not talk about the merger of only two colleges without careful advance analysis and planning work, discussion of why it is or is not a good idea, and what goals the proposal would optimize. Nonetheless the process is underway and Provost Allen will make a decision by June 1.

Dean Bruininks said things have been difficult and awkward for him and for Dean Heltsley, because their plans for renewal of their colleges have gone to the back burner, except in a few areas. When something is so visible, it affects people dramatically and diverts their attention. There are opportunities in academic restructuring, but there are also opportunity costs.

He said he would have preferred there to have been more extensive discussions about the environment the University is in and expects to inherit, the major forces that will affect the directions of higher education, the goals and operating assumptions of the institution, and planning principles that should drive the discussions, so that when the discussion was over, there would be a sense of what decisions should be made. The questions are right versus right, what does one want to maximize. Provost Allen believes that larger is better; Dean Bruininks said he has studied the cost-size relationship, that the relationships are a U-shaped function, and that it is far from clear that larger equals lower costs.

There could be positive things from a merger, Dean Bruininks told the Committee. His position on it is:

- It should be preceded by discussion and consensus-building, careful analysis of advantages and disadvantages
- The discussion will gravitate to personal safety (i.e., one's job), not the public opportunity; as June 1 approaches, the concern about personal safety will increase.
- If there are to be mergers such as this--which is why SCEP is important--they must leverage positive academic change, so that units put together will allow more creativity and make sense. They can be neutral on creativity and still make sense if they save money. It is not clear it makes sense if units are forced together that do not have a strong shared sense of mission, because the result will be a lowered level of focus and internal commitment, with the possibility of increased costs and lower productivity.

One Committee member said that some things about the merger make sense, but one can question putting Food Science and Nutrition and Design, Housing and Apparel with CEHD. Dean Bruininks said that CEHD is primarily a post-baccalaureate unit with a substantial level of sponsored research. Education and Human Development is already collaboration with Social Work and Family Social Science, and there could be synergism with these two departments. He said there will be a report from Professors Hogan and Weinberg on May 15; it would be useful for SCEP to review it and he promised to provide it to the Committee. If nothing else, he said, it would be helpful if SCEP watched the process and learned lessons that could be generalized to the University as a whole.

Asked if he had seen Provost Allen's conceptualization of the structure of the campus, Dean Bruininks said he had. In the case of General College and the CHE-CEHD merger, one unintended consequence is that the people in the units feel devalued, although not about their work. If one is targeted for a merger that is not part of a larger context, it looks as though one is being singled out. He said he feels strongly that a major issue in this country is children, youth, and family--the investment in human capital in this country lags a long way behind the rest of the world; the United States ranks 17th or 18th in the world in per-capita investing in K-12 education, which is scandalous. The merger should not be an excuse to cut budgets further, Dr. Bruininks warned, because these are areas with tremendous growth opportunities for the University. There is deep suspicion among faculty and staff that the merger is an attempt to downsize; one cannot ask people to be creative in program restructuring AND to downsize at the same time. They must be asked to work creatively to leverage the gains.

Provost Allen has SAID the objective is not to reduce resources, one Committee member pointed out. Dean Bruininks agreed and said he believed Provost Allen. Dr. Allen's commitment to children, youth, and families is solid and deep, but it is hard for those in academic units, in the midst of the turmoil, to see the positive benefits of the merger when they are the only ones facing this prospect. He has tried to approach this positively, he said, but it is important that academic restructuring be driven by a clear sense of mission, goals, principles and ideals. If one wants to cut programs, there should be a different process used--if a program does not have value, one should say so.

This merger proposal is not part of the planning process, one Committee member said; colleges

have all had a planning process for 20 years, but this is outside it. Dean Bruininks said there are different paradigms for restructuring a complex organization. The decision about Waseca, for example, followed a different paradigm, and was probably the right decision; the University had no advantage, the costs were too high, other institutions were doing just as well as Waseca, and it should have been closed. In that case, there was analysis in advance and it was guided by planning goals and assumptions. Most programs have grown up over a period of 100 years, however, and are not so easy to close. The planning model or process is the right way to shape otherwise valued units, and processes that occur outside it tend to be disruptive.

Professor Koch thanked Dean Bruininks for joining the Committee.

4. Critical Measures: Use of Reputation

Professor Koch next welcomed Drs. Darwin Hendel, Jane Whiteside, and Halil Dundar from Academic Affairs to discuss the third-phase critical measures. Dr. Whiteside reviewed the development of the measures and reported that they are drafts for discussion.

With respect to the specific use of reputational rankings as a critical measure, Dr. Whiteside said they have heard a full range of opinions on the matter, from those who believe they are very important to those who believe they should not be used at all. There are methodological problems with the measures, and there are elements of this kind of measure that are covered in some of the earlier measures that were approved.

In terms of graduate programs, she noted that the National Research Council rankings are now recommended to be included in the earlier measure of scholarship, and they also do not cover a lot of programs to which the University is committed. Professional programs have nothing as comprehensive as the NRC rankings, although there are a lot of professional school rankings and the programs should be asked which ones most reflect their situation.

The undergraduate rankings are the ones they have struggled with the most, Dr. Whiteside reported. The US News and World Report rankings are the most visible, but there are methodological and credibility issues associated with using it. One suggestion has been using data from students who take the ACT and look at the number of students who list the University as one of their top six choices and the percentage who identified Minnesota as their first choice, as a proxy for undergraduate programs.

There are a lot of reasons students might not rank the University high, said one Committee member; if they want a small college, they will not. Dr. Whiteside agreed, and said there is no perfect measure, and how students rank institutions will depend on how they weigh size, location, cost, and reputation. One can be suspicious, said another Committee member, that there will be a positive correlation between size and student rankings, because they will have heard of the institution; there have to be other indices, and comparisons of campuses of similar size. There are limits to the availability of the ACT data base, Dr. Hendel noted; the University can obtain information about the University, but not about other schools.

Drs. Hendel and Whiteside discussed with the Committee the kinds of data available from ACT, and the uses to which it might be put. Reputation may be more important the farther away someone is;

those closer may know more about the institution, and proximity could be more important than reputation.

Asked about professional school rankings, Dr. Whiteside said it is not clear how they would be used. They do not lend themselves to goal-setting. Ideally, using the rankings would not be linked to a number, and the information would be visible but not something units would be judged by. They will be, however, pointed out one Committee member. Dr. Whiteside agreed, and said that is why many are nervous about reputational studies; if one is not careful, the legislature could tie funding to rankings-- something over which the University has no control, except over the long-term.

Why is this a critical measure, asked one Committee member? What is critical about it? Some see it as significant, Dr. Whiteside replied, as an important way in which people view the University that cannot be ignored and that should be dealt with in a positive way. The negatives associated with the use of rankings include uncertainty about what they mean and what problems would be created if one set up a critical measure using them.

It is important there be a consistency between the reputation of the institution and its quality, Dr. Hendel said. There have been comments that for the University, there is a lag between the quality that is present and its overall reputation. Or institutional reputation may have been positive in the past about professional and graduate programs but not about undergraduate education on the Twin Cities campus. The University needs to pay attention to reputation and the quality that supports it, because not doing so in the past has hurt the institution as a whole. They have heard the full range of suggestions. Dr. Whiteside added that they must come to terms with the various views and use the rankings in the right way, so that they do something that is both meaningful and helpful. There is a danger, as Dean Bruininks pointed out, of unintended consequences, and her own bias is to be careful in using reputational rankings.

One Committee member, from a highly-ranked department, observed that the rankings had done nothing to attract undergraduates; where it had an effect was on graduate students. That result is not surprising, Dr. Hendel said; he observed that the presence of good programs is not publicized to undergraduates. Could program reputations bring undergraduates here? Perhaps if they were made known. They could be made known not only to prospective students, but also to those who are already at the University.

One concern about undergraduate rankings is that most students have no idea what they are going to do, beyond "going to college." Will they look at a program because of its teaching and what they will get out of it, or at its research reputation? Undergraduates look at teaching, which are not in the rankings at all.

What is the Committee to do, asked one Committee member? Not take formal action, Dr. Whiteside responded, but because this is the lead committee on this measure, its recommendations will receive particular attention; they will revise the measures according to the advice they receive before they take the measures to the Board of Regents in June.

One Committee member argued that using the percentage of students who choose Minnesota on the ACT is hopelessly flawed; there are other factors that affect student choices far more. There must be research on why students pick a college; one can bet academic reputation is not a major factor. Dr.

Hendel explained that studies about institutional choice suggest a small number of factors are important; they include academic reputation, cost, size/location/proximity, and a lot of other independent things. A lot of students would not list the University because of size, or Carleton because of expected cost, it was said. Nor is it wise to look to 18-year-olds for knowledge about the reputation of the University, added another Committee member. There is also a tautology there, said another, in that students most likely to come to Minnesota are asked what schools have the best reputation.

Asked if the reputational measures should be used as a subset of something else, or not at all, Committee members seemed to agree they should not be used at all. Calling it "critical" is a concern, because that also suggests confidence in the validity of the measure that is not warranted. Nothing would preclude a unit from including such measures in its own reports, Dr. Whiteside agreed.

In response to a comment that college faculty around the state should be asked their views, Dr. Hendel observed that to some extent reputation is comparative. The NRC data were national, very expensive, and time-consuming to obtain. Any measures that the University would want of the undergraduate experience should be developed in conjunction with other institutions. What is currently available is primarily about institutional selectivity. If one believes that a good proxy for the undergraduate student experience, that is OK, but an institution could have a tremendous reputation but offer a lousy undergraduate experience. That is a dilemma; despite the fact that US News and World Report rankings are assumed to speak about the undergraduate experience, they are really about other parts of the institutions.

If the University is interested in its reputation from the perspective of prospective undergraduates, suggested one Committee member, it should find out what causes them to make their judgments. That may be a matter of marketing.

Hearing no more comments, Professor Koch adjourned the meeting at 3:15.

-- Gary Engstrand

University of Minnesota