

Minutes*

Senate Committee on Educational Policy
Wednesday, October 2, 1996
1:00 - 3:00
Room 238 Morrill Hall

Present: Laura Koch (chair), Avram Bar-Cohen, Anita Cholewa, Elayne Donahue, Darwin Hendel, Gordon Hirsch, Thomas Johnson, Judith Martin, Kathleen Newell, W. Phillips Shively

Regrets: Robert Leik, Cleon Melsa, Gayle Graham Yates

Absent: William Van Essendelft

Guests: Liz Eull (Budget and Finance), Associate Vice President Robert Kvavik, Associate Vice President Richard Pfutzenreuter

[In these minutes: Use of student evaluations of teaching; policy on classes and schedules; Responsibility Center Management; Twin Cities Undergraduate Curriculum Committee]

1. Student Evaluations of Teaching

Professor Koch convened the meeting at 1:00 and began it by discussing the question of making available to students the results of student evaluations of teaching. Students have indicated they wish access to the results of the teaching evaluations, and have been working on the issue since last April; one of the student representatives to the Board of Regents brought the issue up at the September Regents meeting, at which time Senior Vice President Marshak said the administration would look into the matter.

Dr. Dennis Cabral, from Academic Affairs, and/or the students wish to talk with SCEP about this issue, Professor Koch reported. The existing policy on peer review of teaching provides that the results are confidential. In the Carlson School, faculty have the option to waive confidentiality requirements so that students can have the results of the student evaluations. She said she did not know what the experience in CSOM has been.

Dr. Hendel provided a summary of what some of the University's peer institutions do in this respect; the questions used are not the same, but the types of questions are quite similar. He suggested that the Committee speak with representatives of CSOM; his understanding is that the large majority of CSOM faculty give permission to make the student evaluations available, but the proposal came as a result of a joint faculty/student/administration effort. He said he did not know how the results are used. It would be helpful, said one Committee member, if the students use them in any way.

CSOM has a narrow curriculum, pointed out one Committee member, while CLA has a much broader one. What about courses taught by TAs? If the point is to get a sense of faculty teaching ability

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as perceived by students, that objective is not served in the case of classes taught by TAs. Provost Shively noted that 49% of CLA courses are taught by TAs.

Another Committee member noted that there is a great deal of scholarship on the use of teaching evaluations; could the Committee hear from someone who knows that research? Dr. Hendel observed that while there is much research, there is little or nothing that addresses how the evaluation results help students make course decisions, or how that might help in improving instruction.

If the results are made know, it could be traumatic to junior faculty who are not good teachers (and to all faculty who are not, at some point in their careers, good teachers), observed one Committee member. Everyone enters the profession with the intention of improving their teaching, and these data should not be used to cut off that intention.

It was agreed that the Committee should explore the issue further with representatives of CSOM and with the students.

2. Policy on Classes and Schedules

Professor Koch turned next to Dr. Cholewa for a review of the draft policy the Committee developed last year. In accord with discussions earlier, Dr. Cholewa revised the policy to allow for extended classes on Tuesdays and Thursdays. She also pointed out that those longer classes should not be required to start at the same time as the 55-minute classes, because that would mean long gaps between the classes and that classrooms would not be used efficiently.

It was agreed unanimously that the policy should provide for 80-minute classes as an option on Tuesdays and Thursdays. It was also recalled that this policy does not apply to graduate courses, which may be scheduled at any times there are rooms available. It was also unanimously agreed that the starting times for Tuesday and Thursday 80-minute classes should be the same as for other classes: 8:00 a.m.

Dr. Kvavik asked that the Committee consider the logistics of scheduling; he said he had no objection to the proposed policy, but suggested that the Committee discuss it with Elizabeth Grundner to be sure classrooms would be adequately used.

One Committee member noted that 80-minute classes and 15-minute break periods would lead to even odder scheduling times than the University now has. This observation prompted another Committee member to quip that faculty and students will simply have to learn to read clocks.

3. Responsibility Center Management

Professor Koch next welcomed Associate Vice Presidents Kvavik and Pfitzenreuter and Ms. Eull to the meeting to discuss Responsibility Center Management (RCM), now being called Incentives for Managed Growth.

Dr. Kvavik began by saying that a number of issues will emerge from the presentation that are of great importance to this Committee, and that the administration will need the help of the Committee in dealing with them. If the incentives under RCM operate as they should, there will be questions about who teaches what and about the mechanisms needed to govern the University.

Provost Shively said he would like to foreshadow something that he and Provost Allen have been considering as a way to regulate and distribute undergraduate teaching. They have thought about an academy of undergraduate faculty, a group that would set the undergraduate curriculum and that would help avoid a lot of competition in undergraduate curricular offerings. They are waiting to see how the example of the reorganization of the biological sciences works out, which is a good plan that includes prerequisites for "master teachers" (drawn from both undergraduate and professional colleges) to deliver undergraduate biology courses. He and Provost Allen would like to consider such an option for the entire Twin Cities campus in order to forestall destructive competition under RCM.

[Note: Much of this presentation was identical to that made to the Senate Committee on Finance and Planning on October 1, and those minutes should be read first; these minutes will highlight only points of difference.]

- The biennial request budget anticipates growth, so there is a need to create incentives for decision-makers as the University moves forward.
- The "responsibility centers" are the ones that now exist (and the chart of accounts will not be modified). They will, however, be divided into two types, those that generate tuition and those that do not.
- In allocating tuition, it was agreed that the revenues should go to the colleges, not the departments and not the provostries. It will be up to provosts and deans to take the plan further, if they wish; those who have developed this plan are not recommending they do so.
- It is hoped that when the new systems are in place, tuition revenues will go directly to the accounts where they are to be credited; the present systems do not allow that to happen.
- While tuition dollars will be deposited directly with the colleges, the Board of Regents will not relinquish its authority to set tuition rates, especially at the undergraduate level.
- Where the role of SCEP will be important is this, Dr. Kvavik said: if one believes that education should be broad, the University must be careful not to set up incentives so that colleges set up curricula that make it unattractive or difficult for students to go outside the college. If faculty are professionals, they should believe as faculty in a certain kind of education. Departments should not be permitted to move into inappropriate markets, or use faculty to make extra money for the department. The faculty as controllers of the curriculum must have a fairly heavy hand on curricular decisions, and they should be able to move in to prevent damage to the undergraduate curriculum.
- One Committee member observed that it is possible that because the deans of the undergraduate colleges will be unable to set tuition rates, while the deans of professional schools will likely have more flexibility in this respect, one could see the professional schools prosper vis-a-vis the undergraduate colleges. This would not be as a result of any chicanery, simply the product of the system. Dr. Kvavik noted that the provosts will have state funds at their discretion, funds that could be used to underwrite high quality undergraduate education.

- If a college chose not to participate in the biological sciences reorganization, and keep students (and their tuition) to itself, it might find that its resources were insufficient to do so--or a curriculum committee might say that the curriculum is too narrow and regulate the college's activity.
- In terms of the division of tuition revenue (25% to the college of the student's enrollment and 75% to the teaching college), the revenue would be directed to the college that pays the faculty member's salary. In the case of interdisciplinary courses offered by (and paid for by) the Graduate School, the Graduate School should receive the tuition income.
- Summer Session and University College will be treated as all other colleges, and students in those units have been defined. Summer Session would normally not receive tuition income as a teaching unit, unless it incurred the cost of delivering the course. It might be the college of enrollment for a student who takes only one course at the University, during the summer. The incentive for Summer Session is to receive support with state funds and offer a more efficient way to stimulate enrollment than for each college to market its own summer offerings. The incentive for faculty remains the same: they get paid; in this case, their college would also receive funds. Summer Session income, as with regular tuition, would be deposited directly with the colleges. The Summer Session office supports this plan.
- In terms of facilities, they have not resolved how to deal with the varying quality of teaching space--or how to deal with classroom space at all. It may be that the Registrar will receive the money; it could be "Classrooms, Inc.," with departments charged for classrooms. Departments might receive the \$5/square foot for classrooms they now have, and perhaps there would be a discount on classroom rentals later in the day.
- Departments would be charged for additional space if they expand, but presumably they would be generating more revenue. Alternatively, the dean or provost may say the program is of such high value to the University that it will receive additional state subsidy funding.
- If the system leads to questionable results, it will have to be tested to see if there are corrections for those results; if not, one can question if it should be adopted, Dr. Kvavik said. This is NOT a "done deal"; the committee did the best it could, and there must now be intelligent discussion about it before a decision is made.
- Over time, if use of space at the University is inefficient, departments may want to go off-campus. In setting facilities rates, one must be mindful of market prices. Dr. Kvavik agreed, and noted that many support services also provide services, and there is a need for a regulatory mechanism to control monopolies.
- With tuition, indirect cost recovery, and facilities dollars delivered to the colleges, what is left is the state subsidy; that is what the University leadership will use to influence behavior and priorities. Mr. Pfitzenreuter explained how the operating base subsidy would be calculated.
- Variations in tuition from year to year will be the problem of the colleges, not the central

- administration. With 80% of budgets tied up in salaries, that will be a VERY big problem. If units are teaching so that they generate more revenue, however, they will have more money than they do now. Mr. Pfutzenreuter also said that the predicted tuition base for the colleges are low, so the proposed base will be lower than actual tuition revenues, and the risk to the colleges at the outset will be minimal.
- This could drive colleges back to large classes, as a way to generate tuition revenue, even though large classes might not be educationally sound. True, Dr. Kvavik agreed, but said that another college might choose to offer smaller classes, in order to attract students who do not want large classes. The problem, said another, is that in many cases there are monopolies. Dr. Kvavik said this relates to the question of University expectations about quality and the impact of faculty professionalism. The colleges could also use state subsidy funds to buy down class size.
 - The plan assumes more oversight and committees than currently exist; it is not clear how long-term institutional goals will be achieved. The state will not finance higher education as it is now, Dr. Kvavik responded; the University must distribute state funds so they generate more tuition revenue, and it cannot have a lot of classes with only two or three students. The problem is not 2-3; it is when classes go from 50 to 100, said one Committee member. Faculty must keep tabs on this, and work with deans and provosts in their professional role to be sure that professional standards are maintained. It is to be hoped that people have a set of core values and operate in the right way.
 - What about the course where the students are from outside the college and the faculty is also from another college? What incentive is there for the college to offer the course? Provost Shively said one option might be "cartelization" of the undergraduate curriculum, regulation of it through the undergraduate faculty. This could to some extent counteract RCM, but the incentives could be arranged. There are ways to avoid the nightmares, he said.
 - How will support units (libraries, information technology, parking, the President's office, the Regents' office) be funded? There are several possibilities: by an operating subsidy, by charges, by special assessments (e.g., for provision of the new human resources system, units might pay a charge). Such assessments would be levied on all units, including support services and units, to help pay for institutional goods (now, for example, the University installs a new human resources system, and funds it from O&M dollars; that decision has a greater impact on the academic units than it does on support units, which may not receive O&M funding).
 - This is an evolutionary process, not revolutionary change; the deliberations must be careful. To be put in effect by July 1, 1997, comments are needed by November 1, 1996, because winter and spring will be spent on the legislature.
 - There could be a conflict between RCM and the critical measures. The latter were not defined in the context of RCM; one can worry how the critical measures will be kept in front of the faculty and deans. If improving the graduation rate means heavier course loads, which makes the University more popular, that may mean more students will come and they can be charged more.

Professor Koch thanked Dr. Kvavik, Mr. Pfutzenreuter, and Ms. Eull for joining the meeting.

4. Twin Cities Undergraduate Curriculum Committee

Professor Koch then turned to Professor Martin for a short discussion of the reviewed curriculum committee proposal. Professor Martin noted several changes that had been made in the proposal (including calling for college curriculum committee designates to serve as the majority of the committee), and re-emphasized that the committee would not duplicate the work of college committees. It was agreed that the increased need for this committee, given RCM, should be highlighted. It was also agreed that the enforcement of the committee's recommendations would rest with the provosts.

The Committee then approved the proposal for placement on the docket of the Twin Cities Campus Assembly on October 16.

Professor Koch adjourned the meeting at 3:00.

-- Gary Engstrand

University of Minnesota