

Minutes*

**Faculty Consultative Committee
Fall Retreat
Thursday, September 11, 1997
Radisson Metrodome
8:00 - noon**

Present: Victor Bloomfield (chair), Carole Bland, Gary Davis, Mary Dempsey, Gary Gardner, Virginia Gray, M. Janice Hogan, David Hamilton, Russell Hobbie, Laura Coffin Koch, Leonard Kuhi, Michael Korth, Marvin Marshak, Fred Morrison, Matthew Tirrell

Absent: Harvey Peterson

Guests: none

Others: Martha Kvanbeck (University Senate)

Professor Bloomfield convened the retreat at 8:00 and reported on discussions he and Professor Tirrell had had with President Yudof and the chair and vice chair of the Board of Regents. He concluded that (1) there must be a demonstration of the need for institutional-level consultation with the faculty (not just consultation in the colleges), (2) there is a need to get past the pain of the tenure battle, but to attend to the sensitivities from it that remain, and (3) there is a need to mend faculty distrust of faculty governance. He noted the eight issues he had outlined for discussion at this retreat, and said he hoped that by the end of the year, the Committee could point to things it and the governance system had done that were constructive. He concluded by saying that the Committee will need to be more activist, rather than more advisory or critical about things that come its way.

In the course of the discussion of the eight issues Professor Bloomfield had set forth, the following points were made.

1. Planning for the intellectual future of the University.
 - How should the University position itself with respect to the health sciences? Can it afford to do what it is now doing?
 - How can it build the research enterprise in a time of stable or constricted funding? What is the most reasonable way to fund a research university?
 - How can it continue to compete with the private institutions?
 - How should the University position itself in the state with respect to the other higher education systems?
 - What should be done about the slip in NRC rankings over the last 20 years?
 - Is there a need for a redefinition of scholarship (not research)? In order to help a land-

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grant university better communicate with the public. [Relatedly, the new tenure code calls for each department to define adequate performance, which would include a definition of scholarship; FCC and other committees need to play an oversight role in what will be a contentious matter.]

- The uses of ICR funds (e.g., for teaching) will be a critical issue.
- There is lack of concern for the general good of the institution; only institutional-level faculty governance will likely raise these questions; it is not in the interest of colleges or departments to do so, and IMG may reinforce this tendency.
- To what extent is it appropriate for the general faculty body to weigh in on academic choices being made, as against a more traditional model whereby colleges and departments make choices and have the power?

2. Apportioning sensibly between tenure-track and term faculty.

- This is a big issue, all over higher education.
- Finances are a major issue (i.e., soft versus hard funding): how is teaching done, and how is research kept going, on soft funding? With only soft funding, departments hire teaching and research on a short-term basis.
- There are educational and curricular implications when there are more term faculty.
- There may be too many permanent full-time faculty, for what the University can afford; the numbers may need to be regulated, with a move to more contract or term faculty (which has already been done to some extent with P&A appointees); such people must be treated decently.
- There should be a task force that is pro-active on the issue, perhaps with other Senate committees; even though there has recently been distasteful experience, it would be better to have a task force on which there was administrative participation. (One possible outcome might be a University-wide faculty committee that decides on the balance of faculty lines among units.) Any such task force must include, and deal with issues of importance to, P&A appointees.

3. Giving proper emphasis to the core activities of the University.

- This will in part be taken up by the task force on governance, being chaired by Professor Dempsey. What will help the faculty be able to enhance the expression of their voice, as has been perceived to have occurred with the activities of the provostal FCCs? On the other hand, can there be too much consultation too far down the line? Another possibility is a separate consultative committee for the Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs.
- Are the capital request priorities University priorities?

4. Publicizing university activities outside and inside the University.

- There are elements in place for external publicity, such as the role Professor Marshak plays as faculty legislative liaison and the activities of the Committee on Public Understanding; the mechanisms for internal publicity (so the faculty know what faculty governance is doing) are debatable.

- The idea of a faculty speaker's bureau might be pursued.
- Public relations has been a dirty word with the administration, and the newspapers have defined the University's public relations; there is a need for faculty to be more proactive.
- Improving the appearance of the campus and outstanding staff treatment of parents and prospective students are two major elements of public relations that have already had a significant impact.
- What is to be the future of KIOSK?
- There needs to be a weekly information sheet, akin to BRIEF, on what the Senate and its committees are doing.

5. Rebuilding relations with the President and Regents.

- One question is the extent to which there should be faculty-regent contact. One item is renewed FCC-regent lunches or dinners from time to time; another is ex officio faculty seats on regents' committees; yet another might be to have a regent "shadow" a faculty member for a day; another might be dinners with small groups of faculty and individual regents. There is a need for confidence-building events.
- The administration may be wary about faculty-regent interactions, and wants a new relationship with the Regents itself, so the administration's view of the status of the faculty-regents relationship perhaps needs to develop. The most important relationship is that between the President and the Regents: it must be good. There must also be "no surprises."
- The regents could rely more on the faculty expertise that is on campus.
- The regents must see the faculty as part of the solution. Having someone in the Regents' office with a background in higher education would help.
- Addressing major issues of concern to the faculty would help; for example, there MUST be a resolution on the question of faculty indemnification, health care costs have gone up dramatically, and FCC must take the position that policies should not be imposed even though technically there was "consultation (e.g., the biweekly payroll); consultation has to be taken seriously, not pro forma.

6. Regaining the confidence of the faculty.

- Faculty governance must work with the President and Regents to find solutions for the University's problems, but the dilemma is how to work for the good of the University while also showing that it is standing up for faculty rights. This is not as easy as attacking the administration and the regents, but at the same time, faculty interests are not always the same as those of the administration and regents. [The committee lost faculty trust earlier because it lost its perspective: that it is representing the faculty; there must be an independent faculty voice that, while it should not damage the University, may require that there be disagreement with the administration.]
- It appears that the biggest factor affecting the ranking of institutions is faculty salaries, and that must be promoted.
- Early communication is important; without it, rumors start, and once they start, are nearly impossible to stop.
- Another avenue of obtaining faculty confidence is working with the AAUP, and there will

- be discussions about doing so.
- With respect to health care, an issue the faculty care about and action on which would help in faculty confidence, many dollars are going outside while the Academic Health Center is going bankrupt; some provisions for use of the AHC should be urged.
 - The proposed distribution of a short summary of governance activities to all faculty would help.
7. The FCC roles: steering, reactive/criticism, policy formulation, action.
8. Coordinating the FCC with other Senate committees, the SCC, and the Senate
- FCC needs to be more activist; it has been too slow in the past, and must respond to immediate problems. It should also develop a list of high-priority items upon which it intends to push; there are instances where, although a Senate committee may be dealing with an issue, only FCC can bring pressure to bear on it. At the same time, FCC is not by itself faculty governance and should not go it alone; other committees must have visibility. The one difference is that FCC (and the Senate) are elected, while other committees are not.
 - No one in Academic Affairs thinks much about higher education policy; FCC must.
 - FCC should play a sounding-board role for Senate committees.
 - Faculty need to be more informed about faculty governance.
 - There needs to be an agenda-setting meeting. (Professors Bloomfield and Tirrell will review the points raised in this discussions and prepare a draft.)
 - The chairs who serve ex officio on FCC should make regular reports about hot topics and what they are doing, and in doing so can be alerted to potential differences of faculty opinion on issues.
 - FCC and SCC need to take Senate docket items more seriously. The balance is between delegation and review versus second-guessing. This committee is elected but must delegate and not micro-manage.
 - A better role for SCC and relationships with students should be cultivated.

Professor Bloomfield thanked everyone for coming and adjourned the retreat at noon.

-- Gary Engstrand