

Minutes*

**Faculty Consultative Committee
Thursday, October 15, 1998
11:00 - 1:00
Room 238 Morrill Hall**

Present: Sara Evans (chair), Linda Brady, Gary Davis, Mary Dempsey, Stephen Gudeman, David Hamilton, M. Janice Hogan, Michael Korth, Leonard Kuhi, Fred Morrison, V. Rama Murthy

Absent: Kent Bales, Roberta Humphreys, Marvin Marshak, Judith Martin, Matthew Tirrell

Guests: Professors Carole Bland, Gary Gardner (by telephone hook-up), and Laura Koch; President Mark Yudof

Other: Linda Johnsrud (ACE Fellow)

[In these minutes: redefinition of scholarship; miscellaneous other matters]

1. Redefinition of Scholarship

Professor Evans convened the meeting at 11:00 and welcomed former FCC members Bland, Gardner, and Koch to discuss their impressions from a meeting they attended at Oregon State University, along with Professor Kuhi, on the redefinition of scholarship.

Professor Kuhi reported that the conference, "Scholarship Unbound," was highly organized and somewhat like a revival meeting. The discussion was designed to broaden (beyond the narrow perspectives used at OSU) the perspectives of people who deal with promotion and tenure decisions. The University's tenure code provisions may not be as narrow as those at OSU were perceived to be, but it does not necessarily cover outreach or extension work.

The movement to redefine scholarship is driven by the land-grant aspects of universities - agriculture colleges, extension services, and experiment stations. People working in those areas have felt their services, performance, and research are not adequately recognized, so pressed for a redefinition of scholarship to include what they do.

One strong feature of the OSU program is the idea of a contract between the faculty and the administration (department chair/dean). The contract lays out expectations for the faculty member and identifies a fraction of time to be spent on various activities; the faculty member is then evaluated on each fraction. Professor Kuhi said he wanted to see a detailed example of such a contract, but received only vague descriptions.

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A key issue at OSU, Professor Gardner said, is the distribution of effort in the job description; this is very different from what the University does. It allows for changes over time.

The University of Minnesota delegates to the conference met several times; they concluded that the four faculty members at this meeting, plus Professor C. Eugene Allen as chair, would meet with FCC and meet again to recommend what, if anything, Minnesota should do in response to the conference.

Professor Koch noted that the evening meetings of the Minnesota delegates, which included Regent Bleyhl as well as people from the agriculture, human ecology, and natural resources colleges, were quite heated but also enlightening. It took them all some time to understand the different perspectives being brought to the discussion and the possible impact on the University of a change in the definition of scholarship. Professor Bland added that the discussions probably belonged with a discussion of the intellectual future of the University; the reward system needs to be aligned with where the University believes it should go.

Professor Gardner agreed that this issue should be discussed in the context of the intellectual future of the institution, and said that having the discussion was perhaps more important than what might come out of it in any concrete sense. Faculty should talk a lot about this subject because it is at the heart of their work; the discussion need not mean rewriting the tenure code. He did not agree that the impetus came from agriculture; it came from the ideas behind the land-grant mission, is a national question, and the conference was funded by the Carnegie Commission for the Advancement of Teaching.

The authors of a follow-up to Ernest Boyer's SCHOLARSHIP RECONSIDERED were at the meeting, and maintained that teaching is not well-recognized at universities. Both the land-grant mission and the extension mission propelled OSU to reconsider scholarship, and both have to do with teaching. The idea of redefining scholarship is that units can define what is appropriate, can recognize teaching as a major activity that can also lead to scholarship. Critical to the OSU program is the position descriptions, something the University does not have (except maybe in cases of post-tenure review).

Professor Gardner agreed that the best part of the meetings was the discussion among Minnesota faculty; there was much put on the table, and that fact by itself indicates how little the faculty talk with their colleagues. Discussion on campus in many different ways would at least help faculty understand each others' work.

Asked about the key points upon which the Minnesota faculty agreed or disagreed, Professor Kuhl said they agreed that there was a total lack of understanding of the different cultures on the campus. The discussions they had at least started the process of understanding those differences, and that context should be part of the discussions of the intellectual future of the University. Beyond that, he concluded, there was little agreement.

Professor Gardner urged that there be organized discussions on the campus, perhaps open forums, and funds identified to bring in speakers. Professor Koch expressed concern that a discussion of scholarship be brought up so soon after the tenure debate.

Professor Evans inquired how such conversations might be designed, and the role that FCC might play in them. One problem is that talking about the intellectual future of the University can go all over

the place. The conversations would need to be focussed on key elements of the different academic cultures, where they seem to be going, the key tension points in each, and how different they are.

Professor Bland said that it will be important, in such discussions, to address the issues without damaging the current reward structure. One complaint has been that the University does not do enough outreach, but when she was involved in setting up the faculty ambassadors program, she was surprised to learn how much the faculty already do - there is a difference between perception and reality on this point. If faculty are to do more outreach, they must do less of something else.

There is a distinction between quantity and quality, Professor Gardner observed; that is why the position description is so important. If someone is to spend 80% of their time teaching, that should be the standard by which they are evaluated - standards are important. The question is how to evaluate excellence; excellence in teaching need not diminish excellence in research. Professor Bland responded that the agendas are different, and most examples they heard were ways to affect the promotion and tenure process, not about funding or different kinds of appointments.

The gains they talked about, Professor Kuhl said, is that people felt better. There were no change in faculty numbers or funding. It also does not count either quality or productivity, Professor Bland added. The program is only three years old, Professor Gardner pointed out, so measuring change is difficult at this point.

How will faculty be engaged in this, asked Professor Hamilton? Parts of the University are in turmoil, and people are looking inward. He is encountering the feeling that people believe they have to solve their own problems, and it is not clear this kind of discussion could help them do so, so they will not want to get involved in it. Even if it occurs in the context of a discussion of the future of research, they will still not want to be involved because they can go anywhere to do their research.

The trick will be to get people together across cultures and boundaries to talk, Professor Evans said. When does this happen now? There are a number of places; the Committee could perhaps play a role in increasing them.

One problem in discussion the future of the research university is the way it is framed, Professor Gudeman said. The question should be cast as "what should be the intellectual future of the University," because that will get people more engaged in helping identify the road to be followed. Professor Evans concurred; so did Professor Bland.

At the root of the problem across cultures, Professor Murthy said, is the belief that there is one definition of scholarship or service, that there is a uniform way to do business. Has anyone asked if there is only one way? Professor Gardner said no one has asked; does University of Minnesota policy reflect the view that there is only one way? These are debatable questions that need discussion, he said; people will come into the discussion from different places, and any discussion will need to include definitions.

Asked what advice FCC had for the committee, Professor Evans said it would like to hear ways to frame and focus useful discussions across cultures and how to pull people together. Who should be at the table? What should be the consequences? What would be the goal? Does FCC want an outcome, Professor Bland added.

Professor Hogan suggested that this would be a suitable item for Senate discussion, perhaps with a panel discussion. This could lead to rich discussions in departments, not all of which might come out the same. They could be informed discussions at the local level, allowed by the tenure code, and would give faculty a better way to address these questions in their own lives and within a department. FCC could take a lead role in framing the discussions, in the context of consideration of the intellectual future of the University.

Professor Gardner noted that the Committee on Faculty Affairs is looking at the nature of faculty appointments and what other classes of faculty might be; that is difficult to do without a definition of scholarship, he said. What is it that makes faculty different, that makes it appropriate for them to have tenure? A definition of scholarship would help answer those questions.

Professor Evans thanked Professors Bland, Gardner, and Koch for joining the meeting.

2. Other Matters

The Committee turned briefly to other items of business.

-- At its next meeting the Committee will hear from Professor Purple about an AAUP proposal to socialize young faculty.

-- The President supports a more aggressive approach to evaluation of the University's options with respect to health care insurance, and even though data may be difficult or impossible to come by (with respect to the possibility of the University separating from the State Health Plan), the effort should be made. On this matter, public recognition needs to be accorded to Professor Richard McGehee for his extraordinary work on the health care issue.

-- There has been talk of the need for a small pamphlet on the governance system, something that could given to faculty and others. It was agreed that drafting such a document should be done by FCC members; Professors Dempsey, Hamilton, Murthy volunteered, and Professor Morrison (who was not present for this item) was designated chair of the ad hoc writing group.

-- Other items coming to the Senate Consultative Committee include a revision of the protocol on Senate Committee participation in searches for central administrators and a protocol on the disposition of resolutions and statements adopted by Senate committees.

With respect to searches for administrators, FCC members have often had difficulty attending interviews, and the result can be embarrassing for the candidate and the Committee. Part of the problem is that the times for interviews are set on short notice, and fixed, so that anyone who already has commitments is unable to attend. It was agreed that former FCC members should be asked to participate.

-- The Regents and administration are discussing a new policy on the devolution of authority, and the goal is to make it clear that the Regents delegate authority to the President (i.e., not to vice presidents or associate vice presidents or others, so that lines of authority become blurred). In the leave policy, the language will be changed to say that the President will develop procedures, in consultation with the Faculty Senate (rather than having the Regents delegate authority to the Faculty Senate). The President is

open to discussing this issue, and how to maintain shared governance while also clarifying lines of authority.

3. Discussion with President Yudof

Professor Evans next welcomed the President to the meeting. There were a few short discussions on several topics.

-- The President will ask Vice President Carrier to gather information on health care so the issue can be examined.

-- On the devolution of authority, it would be appropriate to have a small faculty committee work on the issue, to be sure all safeguards remain in place. There should also be earlier consultation in policy development, so that the question of "reformatting" need not arise in the future.

-- The President needs to be aware, apropos the biennial request item for clinical education in hospital settings, that there are units outside the Academic Health Center that carry on such education (e.g., dietitians, speech pathologists), and they could also be affected by trends in health care costs.

Professor Evans thanked the President for joining the meeting, and adjourned it at 1:00.

-- Gary Engstrand

University of Minnesota