

MINUTES*

Senate Committee on Educational Policy
Wednesday, February 10, 1999
1:00 – 3:00
Room 238 Morrill Hall

- Present: Judith Martin (chair), Shumaila Anwer, Darwin Hendel, Gordon Hirsch, Laura Coffin Koch, Christine Maziar, Darcia Narvaez, Palmer Rogers, Tina Rovick, Richard Skaggs, Suzanne Bates Smith, Steven Sperber, Craig Swan
- Regrets: Robert Johnson, Martin O’Hely, Jeff Ratliff-Crain, Thomas Soulen
- Absent: Laura Beauchane, Angela Bos, Kathleen Newell
- Guests: Men’s Athletic Director Mark Dienhart, Baseball Coach John Anderson, Academic Counselor Cindy Pavlovski; Professor Katherine Sedo (Chair, Assembly Committee on Intercollegiate Athletics)

[In these minutes: exception from Senate policy on events during study day and finals week for baseball; governance of professional masters programs; applied doctoral programs; classrooms and semesters; the 2001-02, 2002-03 calendars; teaching award (re-)eligibility]

1. Baseball Exception

Professor Martin convened the meeting at 1:00 and welcomed Dr. Mark Dienhart, Director of Men’s Athletics, along with Baseball Coach John Anderson and other members of his staff. She noted that the men’s athletic department wished to appeal the decision of SCEP to deny the baseball team an exception to the Senate policy barring events during study day and finals week, which had been discussed at some length at an earlier meeting.

Dr. Dienhart thanked the Committee for the opportunity to meet with it. He said he wanted to clear up any misunderstandings about the process that had been used to bring forward information to the Committee and to respond to the perception that the request had come at the last minute and had been opportunistic.

Dr. Dienhart explained that baseball was an unusual sport for a school in a northern climate, and some schools similarly situated have dropped baseball. The campus facility is only available 4-5 weeks per year, so the team must travel for competition. They are able to

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use the Metrodome--the site of the games for which the exception had been requested--only on occasion, and only when dates are made available to the team (primarily in February and March). Given the change to semesters, and in final exam dates, SCEP was assured that a request of this sort from the baseball team will not recur.

The discussion of this request began in November, 1997; Dr. Dienhart explained the process that the department had followed in bringing the request forward. He noted that this is only the second time that a request for an exception for baseball had been made. He said that the department takes pride in the baseball team, both academically and athletically, and recited data concerning the academic performance of the team. The team and the academic counselor prepared a study plan that he hoped faculty would want to see, and they preferred to use the Metrodome because it kept student-athletes in town rather than on the road. The request was not thoughtless, but rather an opportunity to deal with the circumstances of the climate.

Dr. Dienhart also later added that this is not a contractual issue; the opposing team's school understands that the games may not be played if an exception is not granted.

Coach Anderson also thanked the Committee for the opportunity to speak with it, and assured Committee members that the process was not intended to be "last minute" and that the study plan for the team probably meant they would be studying more than they would if left to their own devices. He said he would not be making the request unless he was sure the team members could handle the events. He also noted that they do not control their access to the Metrodome, and that such events allow the team to be at home and to prepare for finals.

One Committee member recalled that what had been most disturbing was the late request, when schedules of final exams are known for several years in advance. Coach Anderson again reviewed the steps they had taken, beginning in November, 1997, and that the request had gone to the Assembly Committee on Intercollegiate Athletics in March, 1998. He noted that ACIA had held the requests until all of the schedules were in, and said he wished now that he had requested a special meeting--rather than letting this be taken up with all other team schedules in the routine manner--so that the request could have been presented in a more timely fashion.

There was also concern on the Committee about receiving these requests in piecemeal fashion. With schedules known far in advance, the Committee wanted the athletic programs to adhere to them and not to request individual exceptions. Coach Anderson agreed, but said that no other dates were available, and assured the Committee that they always try to respect the University's final exam schedule.

Dr. Dienhart recalled that the last time the Twin Cities men's athletic department had requested an exception was 1993.

Professor Martin thanked Dr. Dienhart and others for coming.

Following the departure of the guests, Committee members deliberated the exception request again. After brief debate, the Committee voted 6-3 (with one abstention) to approve the exception.

2 Graduate Education Issues

Professor Martin turned next to Dean Christine Maziar for a discussion of graduate education issues. She started the conversation by informing Dean Maziar of an email message that had been received by a graduate student. The student had read the Senate policy on grading, and noted that the definitions attached to each grade applied to undergraduates; he asked what the definitions were for graduate students. Dean Maziar said she would be surprised if there were a uniform policy; Professor Martin said the question was whether or not there should be a statement in the grading policy that graduate (and professional school) grading was up to the department and instructor. With little further ado, however, she suggested that the matter be referred to Dean Maziar and that the Committee take no action. There was no dissent from this suggestion.

Discussion then turned to professional masters programs. Dr. Maziar distributed a draft document from the Graduate School suggesting that the programs be conducted under the aegis of the Graduate School.

These degrees are usually seen as terminal masters degrees, Dr. Maziar commented; they do not typically lead to a Ph.D. There is an increasing number of these programs, in response to community demands, which do not fit into traditional Ph.D. programs. One concern is that the way these programs are established varies across the campus; some go through Graduate School Policy and Review Councils while others do not. The draft document calls for all of them to go through the review processes of the Graduate School.

A number of existing programs are not administered through the Graduate School (e.g., the Executive MBA program, the M.Ed. program), and this proposal would not bring those programs into the purview of the Graduate School. These are essentially evening and weekend degree programs aimed at non-full-time students. The MBA program is not offered through the Graduate School, so it would make little sense to have the Executive MBA or related programs in the Graduate School. The proposal suggests that when a unit's regular programs are administered through the Graduate School, then so also should the professional masters programs.

Asked if there had been a cost-benefit analysis of whether these programs are a benefit to the colleges, Dr. Maziar said the colleges have done this analysis. One element of these programs that makes them attractive to colleges is that they offer the opportunity to develop a

tuition and fee schedule that differs from what is set by the University for regular academic programs; they can charge what the market will bear.

The Graduate School is not an IMG unit, it was noted; would that affect how tuition was set? It would not, Dr. Maziar said; the programs can set their own rates, and there would not be restrictions on responding to the public demands for them. The proposal is to ensure there is consistency in the process across the University for administrative review of new programs. This would also not necessarily be an all-or-nothing proposal; when a program would not be under the aegis of the Graduate School is one of the questions on the table.

In response to queries, Dr. Maziar said that they would recognize that these are very different programs in terms of admissions, student populations, and the meaning of grades, and for some there may be a window of opportunity or utility to meet a need. There may be a need for departments to be more adept at shutting down programs; since these are intended to be self-supporting, the inclination to disestablish a program may be strong when it cannot support itself.

It is not expected that these programs will provide a back-door admission to traditional graduate programs, Dr. Maziar assured the Committee. Her own view--which is not policy--is that students admitted to a professional masters program would need to compete with all others who seek admission to a more traditional or Ph.D.-directed graduate program. Participation in a professional masters program would not preclude admission to another graduate program, but neither would it give a student a leg up in admission.

Another possibility, said one Committee member, is that students will go from the traditional graduate program into the professional masters program. Dr. Maziar agreed that could happen, but also pointed out that admissions criteria for the professional masters programs should not be set so high that the department could not offer the public service and respond to the market. Such a transfer would also raise the interesting question of how the professional masters program would treat credits earned in a more traditional--and state-subsidized--graduate program, and the tuition that should be charged when a student transfers.

Dr. Maziar said she did not expect there to be any significant competition between the University and MnSCU in offering professional masters programs. These are programs that serve primarily the Twin Cities. The competition comes from the private institutions, and the University sometimes is criticized because people have to go to the private institutions to obtain a professional masters degree, rather than being able to attend the public institution. She itemized some of the programs that are offered by the University and by the private institutions.

One issue to be addressed is the demand on programs. In some cases, the demand on day school programs will make it difficult to staff an evening program. She said she wants to be sure that traditional graduate students are not short-changed in favor of programs that

generate revenue. The revenue, she added in response to a question, would be used to pay for the instruction offered in the program, and then for other needs in the college. If these programs become large, another Committee member observed, new faculty could be hired-- but then there are all the costs of labs, faculty support, and so on.

One Committee member inquired whether, if these programs are outside the Graduate School, there would be any criteria or guidelines for establishing these programs or determining what would be offered. Dr. Maziar responded that that is part of the reason for the proposal; the only oversight would be in the colleges.

These programs could affect accreditation, said another; there would be no Graduate School quality control over who is teaching. Dr. Maziar added that as data are collected for evaluation by the National Research Council, she is concerned that the professional masters programs not harm traditional graduate programs even while they are providing this public service.

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Discussion now turned to applied doctoral programs. Dr. Maziar recalled that the legislature required the production of a report on identifying the opportunities to establish applied doctoral programs around the state. Dr. Hendel reported that the intent was to look at costs, needs, and benefits of providing these programs, and the report was to come from the University and MnSCU. The two took different approaches. The University tried to consider what data were available that suggested the need, within broad fields (especially education and psychology) and to identify a framework for deciding if there were such needs without engaging in costly analysis. It appears that there is little evidence for a strong need for applied doctoral programs. Dr. Maziar added that there is a perception that the advanced degree may be needed for professional advancement in education, but it is, however, difficult to see what the job market for other applied doctoral programs would be.

At the point the University and MnSCU have reported to the legislature; the two reports need to be put together and evaluated. The two reports are complementary, but offer quite different perspectives. It was agreed that Drs. Hendel and Maziar would keep the Committee posted.

3. Classrooms and Semesters

Professor Martin next asked Ms. VanVoorhis about the impact of semesters on the availability of classrooms. Ms. VanVoorhis said that she had wanted to bring a report on where the University would be short on classrooms and where it would not, but that the data she has accumulated thus far are not reliable. She said she hoped to have the data by the end of the week, and would prepare a report shortly thereafter.

Ms. VanVoorhis said that there is always a problem with classrooms for the 9:00, 10:00, 11:00, and 1:00 hours. There is a lack of large classrooms and classrooms for classes of less than 20 students. These problems will not go away. In addition, she is losing 21 classrooms on the East Bank, but does not know if she will be gaining any back.

Dr. Swan commented that Ms. VanVoorhis has responsibility for 253 classrooms (20,388 seats); colleges and departments have control over another 202 (6,056 seats). Many believe that if there is a class, the Registrar's office has to find a room, but there is in fact significant space under the control of departments. It may be, during the transition to semesters and during a period of many construction projects, that departments will have to make more extensive use of their classrooms. All must understand the collective responsibility of the University to students, he concluded. There are other issues related to scheduling, he reported, that must also be dealt with.

One Committee member said that it has not been clear in the past, when new buildings were built, that campus classroom needs were considered. In addition, said another Committee member, it has been said that the way the federal government calculates ICR rates may be a disincentive to include classrooms in facilities that will be funded heavily by ICR funds.

4. 2001-02 and 2002-03 Calendars

Ms. VanVoorhis also reported on progress in developing academic calendars for two upcoming years. She distributed a sheet laying out the calendar for 2000-01 in the various units and campuses. None of the 4 campuses have identical calendars, and on the Twin Cities, there are 4 different calendars as well (Twin Cities in general, Law, Medicine, and Dentistry). There is no uniform calendar, she and the members of the Committee concluded.

In addition, the setting of spring break is a question, because it has an effect on units which offer half-semester courses. Unless spring break is in the middle of Spring Semester, those courses cannot readily be accommodated.

Ms. VanVoorhis said she would get back to the Committee with recommendations for 2001-02 and 2002-03 in time for presentation of the calendar to the Senate this spring.

5. Teaching Award Questions

Professor Martin next informed the Committee that a number of questions have arisen now that the Academy of Distinguished Teachers and the graduate/professional teaching award are in place.

One question is eligibility for the graduate/professional award if a faculty member has already won the Morse-Alumni award. Previous discussions on SCEP have been generally of

the view that if someone is good enough to be considered for it, why should they not be? Another question is eligibility of previous Morse-Alumni winners to win again. At present, the rules bar anyone from being considered until 20 years after he or she first won it. There is no such limitation in the graduate/professional award; should there be? Should there be a shorter period required to elapse before re-eligibility, especially given the new financial rewards that attach to the award? (All those who won the award more than three years ago--before the increased augmentation--will receive an augmentation of \$1000 per year). Should the rules in this respect be the same for both awards? Yet another question is whether, should one win both awards or one award twice, the winner should receive the salary augmentation twice.

Professor Martin said she wished only to raise these questions, and that they will need discussion later in the year.

As there was no other business prepared for discussion, Professor Martin adjourned the meeting at 2:45.

-- Gary Engstrand

University of Minnesota