

Minutes*

Faculty Consultative Committee
Thursday, February 19, 1998
11:00 - 1:30
Room 626 Campus Club

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

Absent: Gary Davis, Fred Morrison

Guests: Professor Charles Speaks (representing the Finance and Planning Committee)

Others: Maureen Smith (University Relations)

[In these minutes: Legislative update; assessment of degrees of financial risk in colleges; recording of student grades; sabbaticals/professional development leaves, and professional expenses; committee reports]

Professor Bloomfield convened the meeting at 11:00 and noted that there was a list of items upon which Committee discussion would be useful. He turned first to Professor Marshak, who had to leave shortly for a session at the Capital.

1. Legislative Update

Professor Marshak provided an update on the legislative request; he reviewed the status and prospects of the capital and supplemental requests in both the House and the Senate. He said the situation was VERY positive, and urged his colleagues to contact the House and Senate leadership to request support for the University's request.

Professor Bloomfield said the Committee owed Professor Marshak a great deal of thanks for his enthusiastic and energetic work as faculty legislative liaison.

2. Finance and Planning Committee

Professor Bloomfield asked Professor Speaks to report for the Finance and Planning Committee (Professor Speaks was standing in for Professor Morrison, who was out of the country).

Professor Speaks told FCC that the Finance and Planning Committee [hereinafter F&P] had met with Professor Carolyn Williams (School of Public Health) and Senior Vice President Frank Cerra

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(Academic Health Center). Professor Williams provided the faculty perspective on various issues related to IMG, funding, faculty positions, salaries, and the like, but was not there to deliver specific information. Professor Speaks said the committee heard about two issues. First, it was told that \$24 million (or \$18 million) from the sale of the hospital was to be set aside for the School of Public Health. Professor Speaks said F&P declined to become involved in that issue, because it would have involved some kind of mediation, a role inappropriate for the committee.

Professor Bland inquired if F&P knew what had happened to ANY of the money from the sale of the hospital; Professor Speaks said he believed it did not, and agreed that this should be a topic at an upcoming F&P meeting.

The second issue is the degree of (financial) risk facing colleges. This is related to the sources of funding they use for various purposes, how faculty positions are funded (i.e., from "hard" or from "soft" funds), the role of IMG in the risk colleges face and the risks they can take, the leverage that should be incurred, the likelihood of events that might reduce revenues, and so on. The questions have arisen in connection with the School of Public Health, but Dr. Cerra opined that while the risks may be greater for some AHC units, there are risks in colleges across the University. Professor Speaks said the committee is not ready to frame recommendations; it needs to obtain information about the level of risk for the colleges and the University. That information is being provided in the very near future.

Several points were made in the discussion.

- The greatest risk is in the Medical School, which receives only 17.7% of its funding from the state.
- Other universities need to be asked what policies they have, and on the specific question of faculty appointments, there are AAUP policies.
- Professors Bales and Morrison should make sure that their two committees are not duplicating each others' efforts (inasmuch as Professor Bales's committee has a task force on faculty appointments).
- Per Professor Bales, one question is whether the problem of appointing faculty on non-recurring funds is susceptible of policy resolution; given the history at the University, and the recurring problem, it appears that academic administrators are not the best people to supervise the hiring and identification of salary funds for faculty lines. There should be a central faculty body to review appointments (both for quality and for funding plans). At California schools, there were very tight controls over lines, and a department could not create a position just because it had the dollars; the central faculty budget committee had to review appointments, and the budget process includes arguing for positions. Professor Gray endorsed the need for a faculty budget committee, to review funding for faculty lines, but maintained that such a committee should have no role in deciding on who would be appointed; that process is already too lengthy, and there must be no more hurdles.
- What is needed is a risk assessment model, Professor Marshak said; historical data should be compiled which permit calculation of a risk level associated with each college. History may not repeat itself, but there would be baseline data. The policy should be that there are levels of risk, between which units may operate; there has to be flexibility, but with levels of risk units would not be permitted to exceed. The perception is that Public Health is beyond the acceptable level. A

higher risk means there could be more leverage in a unit, but there needs to be an institutional policy that if a catastrophe happens, there will be a way to fund the unit.

- The burden of risk cannot be put all on the faculty, nor can those responsible for risk management at the University pass all risk to the units. There should be a firm rule on faculty appointments, Professor Gardner said; his view is that tenure-track faculty must all be on state funds. One can disagree about that, but there needs to be a firm rule that every unit follows. On the other hand, Professor Bland observed, there was a rule for the health sciences after the decline in federal funding in the 1970s, when clinical income was more stable than state funds; this led Professor Kuhi to inquire how useful such a rule would be.

- Different risk levels for different colleges makes sense, Professor Kuhi said; the University cannot buck professional practices and patterns. There must be a scheme to back up the risk, such as central administrative provision of insurance. In addition to risk, Professor Bland said, there must be assessment of what a unit needs for a stable environment, such as a critical mass of faculty; if funds for tenured faculty are limited, most will be adjunct. Finally, Professor Gardner said, there must be a judgment about what size is needed to have a world-class department; size is not the sole determinant, nor is ability to obtain grant funds.

Any policy proposal from the Finance and Planning Committee will have to go beyond derivative ratios from data to be provided by the Office of Planning and Analysis, Professor Speaks said. A college might say that it is at too high a risk level, and will need new funds if it loses grants; the vice president might have a different interpretation, believing the risk could be managed and that many things other than faculty lines would have to be cut if revenues were to drop. F&P will have to consider more than risk, but also the consequences when the risks come to pass.

Before any agreement about risk might be reached in the compact process, Professor Bloomfield said, the faculty must decide what risk should be assumed to advance their discipline; faculty entrepreneurship is a deeply held faculty value, he said. The faculty need also be sure that THEY link finance and planning; Professor Bales's task force on the use of non-tenure-track faculty to be sure that fiscal and personnel values come together.

3. Status of FCC Email Exchanges

Professor Bloomfield reported that Professor Gray and Dr. Engstrand had raised a question about the status (public or not) of email exchanges among FCC members.

Following brief discussion, it was agreed that messages are to be considered private, and that the sender "owns" the message. If senders chose to distribute a message of their own, they may do so, recognizing they must be sensitive to the implications for others, depending on the content.

Professor Marshak pointed out that the canons of civil discourse provide that such email exchanges are private, but one is also seeing that email back-ups are the subject of subpoenas. If something is really sensitive, he said, it should not be put in an email.

4. Recording of Grades and Exam Scores

Professor Korth expressed a concern that the new PeopleSoft computing system for student records would dictate how faculty record and keep grades, as well as how they submit them. Another concern, Professor Gray reported, is that students would have access to the electronic grade book to see what grades have been recorded for them in a course, and could dispute them. Professor Koch said that there will be much consultation with faculty on how to set up the grade books; she had heard that students could be provided reports, but not that access was mandatory.

Professor Hamilton suggested that the Committee talk with Roberta Armstrong, the project leader for the Student 2000 project; it was agreed that SCEP should do so. He noted that a number of changes having to be made in PeopleSoft because it doesn't always fit the way the University does business. This might complicate upgrades in the future.

Another major concern, Professor Bland said, is faculty training to use the new systems.

5. Meeting with Senior Vice President Cerra

Professor Bloomfield noted that the task force on faculty consultation recommended a periodic meeting with the senior vice president for the health sciences; what issues should be raised in a meeting with Dr. Cerra? The Committee agreed on a list of topics (faculty hiring policy, biology reorganization, faculty consultation within the AHC, and how the hospital is working).

6. Discussions with Administrators

Committee members turned next to the need to meet informally with administrators, so that the Committee can be seen as a group to help them think through problems, something that has not been done very well.

There was also review of the discussion the Twin Cities FCC members had had with Provost Bruininks the evening before. Points of view expressed included the following.

- There are a number of issues of faculty values. There are trade-offs; investments in some efforts (e.g., professional development) will mean there will not be funds to invest elsewhere. The University tends not to put investment in human development as a high priority; new faculty are hired, but retraining for older faculty would be a change.
- The Committee should resist tradeoffs such as salaries for sabbaticals. These are programs that should be budgeted, and other professionals do not have to make these kinds of tradeoffs. The administration could start to plan for building these expenses in the budget, even if it takes several years to get them funded.
- The real cost involved in sabbaticals is the salary savings that departments use to pay bills; those funds are needed. If funding for a leave program is obtained, that will put money back into departments so they can do what they need to. The problem is that departments are under-funded.

- FCC members did not know of institutions that routinely paid full salary for sabbaticals, although one could earn a full-salary-leave at Berkeley with nine years of service (most opted for a sabbatical at 2/3 pay after six years). One possibility might be to allow accumulation of credit for automatic entitlement to a leave at 2/3 pay, and allow full-salary leaves only by competitive review. Another step that would help ease the pain for departments would be for the administration to offer departments a beginning associate professor's salary for faculty on leave, thus buffering the impact of sabbaticals. The distribution of leaves, however, might be skewed, because faculty largely funded by external sources must have progress on their research and cannot leave readily.
- There have been Bush funds for education and teaching, but not for research. Who makes the presentations to foundations such as Pew and Kellogg and Bush, and how is it decided what will be sought? Should the Senate be involved?
- Committee members generally reacted negatively to the idea of on-campus sabbaticals.
- With the advent of post-tenure reviews, thought will have to be given to what the administration can provide in support of retraining for faculty members who need it. The new policy requires that work proposals be found worthy; there is to be full discussion of the work to be done and the benefits to the department and the individual.

It was agreed that these were issues SCFA should raise.

Professor Gray raised the issue of professional expenses, for which there is very little money. Compared to the support provided to professionals in industry or the private sector, what faculty receive is almost nothing. Professionals need support to do their work, and making those funds available could have a big impact. The MNSCU faculty are provided funds for professional expenses. Related to this, Professor Hamilton commented, is the use to which direct funding from grants can be used; professional support is generally not chargeable to grants. Professor Hogan reported that in a recent year of small non-recurring raises, faculty preferred that the money be made available for professional development rather than in salaries. She also pointed out that with IMG, faculty values need to be discussed in the colleges, because that is where decisions will be made.

This is a subject that should be brought up with senators and consultative committee chairs, Professor Gray suggested.

7. Coordination between Governance and Administration

Professor Bloomfield recalled that one item from the discussion with Dr. Bruininks was how the administration is to be kept in touch with what faculty governance is doing. One suggestion is a monthly or quarterly summary of issues from the committees and task forces: who, what, and a timetable.

8. Committee Reports

Professor Kuhi reported that the first item of business at the next Senate Research Committee meeting would be key issues facing the research university.

Another issue of concern is to whom those responsible for the use of human subjects and use of animal subjects in research would report; there have been two reporting lines, but now it is to be changed to one, to Dr. Cerra. The committee agrees there should be one reporting line, but to the Vice President for Research. It was agreed that the Committee should talk with President Yudof about this matter.

Important issues for the new Vice President for Research are where the University is going as a research university and what will be done to bring up its quality. There is a concern about the office of the vice president; with more outside responsibilities, the role of the Dean of the Graduate School has dwindled and it is not clear where it is going. There are mixed views on whether there should be two positions.

Professor Koch reported for the Senate Committee on Educational Policy. One issue before them is how long exams and papers must be kept. Another is whether faculty may move exams (not finals) to another time (potentially creating conflicts for students).

SCEP is also continuing to grapple with the Academy issue, which is complicated by how to treat those who have already won the Morse-Alumni award. SCEP does not want a two-tiered system. There was discussion of the need to get the graduate/professional teaching award in place, concern about how long it was taking to get the Academy in place, the importance of the awards and of not devaluing them with the Academy, and how to integrate past winners into the Academy.

Professor Bales reported that the Committee on Faculty Affairs has "a lot of planes circling." There are several policies up in the air, including Conflict of Interest, Academic Misconduct, and Intellectual Property. He observed that the University has invented the most time-consuming way possible to write such policies, if these three are any example.

Professor Dempsey is working on post-tenure review. The procedure has been given to Dr. Bruininks and the General Counsel, and then will go to the deans, who have worries about it; Professor Dempsey said she was concerned whether the procedure would be implemented this year. She said she hoped the concerns could be dealt with.

Professor Bland then told the Committee that the Academic Health Center will ask that the consultation task force recommendations severing the connection between the Senate governance system and the AHC be sent back for reconsideration.

Professor Bloomfield then adjourned the meeting at 1:30.

-- Gary Engstrand