

Minutes*

Faculty Consultative Committee
Thursday, September 25, 1996
1:00 - 4:00
Room 238 Morrill Hall

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

Absent: Gary Gardner, Fred Morrison

Guests: Executive Vice President Robert Bruininks

Others: Martha Kvanbeck (University Senate); Maureen Smith (University Relations)

[In these minutes: Health care; consultation; post-tenure reviews; discussion of the capital and supplemental requests with Executive Vice President Bruininks]

1. Health Care

Professor Bloomfield convened the meeting at 1:10, ascertained there were no committee reports, and asked Professor Hamilton to report on health care matters.

Professor Hamilton reported that he is getting a group together to work on the issue; that there is possible legislative interest in the issue; that it was a business decision by Medica Premier, which was predicting a \$20 million loss this year; the only access to University physicians by University employees is through the State Health Plan; and members of HealthPartners who had access to the University Family Practice Clinic will retain that access, and thus to University physicians by referral, but HealthPartners cannot expand that option (because of a decision by the University's Family Practice Clinic, concerned that the former Medica Premier clients would all switch to the Family Practice Clinic). Those enrolled in Medica Premier had access to other University clinics as well as Family Practice, but no longer.

2. Task Force on Consultation

Professor Dempsey reported on the work of the task force, and reported she was pleased with a meeting with President Yudof and Provost Bruininks. They are, however, concerned about the time commitments and possible redundancy of meetings on the same subject. The President also very much wanted an FCC, composed of individuals who would not represent a particular constituency, to advise him. The problem is what structures should be recommended for the colleges and deans, where faculty could have significant impact.

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Professor Bloomfield drew the attention of Committee members to articles he had distributed, excerpts from ACADEME on post-tenure reviews and governance.

3. Miscellany

It was agreed that the Committee should speak with a representative from the Alumni Association about reforming the process for selecting regents. Professor Bloomfield reported that the Association wished to speak with the Committee, and that it is sympathetic to the idea of ex officio faculty representation on the Board of Regents and is willing to help on the proposal.

The Committee discussed the locus of the post-tenure review process, especially as it applied to the coordinate campuses. Professor Dempsey said that the initial review will be in the department, except in those colleges that only have divisions, such as Crookston--the same place the initial promotion and tenure votes are taken. That is where the post-tenure review process should be located. She said it should not be complicated, and should rely on the same criteria used for tenure and promotion but take into account that faculty are in a different place in their careers; whatever is used for annual salary increases should be used for the review. Professor Bloomfield said there should not be an intensive annual post-tenure; at the time of decision about salary, there should be a mechanism that involves faculty. If the procedure adopted is right, at that point a committee of faculty looking at faculty performance will have set department standards and if someone falls markedly below the standard, a more intensive examination would be triggered. If an individual falls below the standards for two or three years, something might happen.

Professor Dempsey noted that the faculty are to vote on the standards being used. Professor Bloomfield pointed out that faculty performance is to be gauged against those standards. Professor Dempsey also said that if it is a department's practice to review faculty every two years, that would be acceptable. She also said that the Tenure Subcommittee will work with Dr. Bruininks on development of the procedures.

4. Discussion with Executive Vice President Bruininks

Professor Bloomfield at this point welcomed Dr. Bruininks to the meeting. He responded to the last items of the discussion by saying he had sent out instructions about the new tenure code, but had said nothing official about post-tenure review. In response to a query from Professor Dempsey, he said that file reviews would occur as they had in the past, with involvement of the Graduate School. All of the vice-provosts would be involved; the process would not be centralized in one or two people. How review of files from the Academic Health Center would be conducted is not yet clear, because they go from Dr. Cerra to the President. Professor Dempsey reported that the Tenure Subcommittee wanted his office involved as much as possible in review of files from the AHC; Professor Bland added that such involvement is appropriate, since these are University appointments.

Professor Bloomfield then asked Dr. Bruininks about his plans and priorities for the year. Dr. Bruininks said there were several academic issues he must address this year, on which he wished the advice of the Committee. The major administrative activity now is devoted to the capital and supplemental request, on which there has not been the opportunity for broad consultation internally.

Dr. Bruininks described the major elements of the capital request. The President feels strongly that this is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to obtain greater support, the Governor is interested, supportive, and wants to leave a legacy of strong investment in the University, the economy is doing very well, and there should be a new approach to the capital plan by linking it to academic programs, with an internal coherence, rather than presenting a list of X number of projects. It is an ambitious request to improve the Mall on the Twin Cities, to improve 40% of the classrooms, and it is tied to academic arguments about the future of the University in critical areas, in addition to ADA and safety improvements.

There are two major academic areas emphasized in the capital request, Dr. Bruininks said: computer science and digital technology, and molecular and cellular biology. Although there are five programmatic elements, they can be seen as falling into one of those two areas.

Dr. Bruininks outlined the items in the supplemental request (additional funds for faculty salaries, non-recurring funds for classroom improvement--in addition to the capital request--and academic investments tied to the capital request. It was agreed that the Committee should have a fuller presentation of the request at a meeting in the near future.

Questions that have been asked include whether there has been sufficient consultation with the deans; there has not, Dr. Bruininks said, because the process has moved so fast. Another is about the source of the proposals; they are not spontaneous, but are grounded in the long-range planning efforts. The President's sense is that these initiatives have substantial implications for the research and teaching for the University's future, and will pay dividends to the state's economy over the long term.

Dr. Bruininks said he wished advice from the Committee on the internal and external communications strategies that should be developed around the initiatives in order to build support for the request in the University community.

Professor Gray said that she supported the request for faculty salary funds, but the last administration promised and President Yudof has affirmed that salaries would be raised to the median of the peer group, and that the first dollars out of the budget would be used to honor this promise before all others. It is fine to seek additional funding, but the legislature may say it has already provided the money. Will the promise be honored even if the legislature does not appropriate the funds?

Dr. Bruininks said he would do all in his power to honor the commitment; nothing about it has changed in the transition to the new administration. Faculty salaries are the number one priority; the worry is how to pay for them. The last minute change of funding by the legislature, switching about \$20 million from recurring to non-recurring funding, changed the University's economic realities.

In terms of communication, and about the requests generally:

- Professor Bloomfield noted that Dr. Bruininks' question ties into efforts by FCC to get faculty more involved in public relations and into the review of Institutional Relations. There is need for a coordinated campaign that uses resources wisely. Dr. Bruininks agreed there should be a united effort, and said that the numbers in the request(s) may change.

- Professor Bland suggested that a special issue of KIOSK be devoted to the requests, so all faculty would know about them. Dr. Bruininks agreed.
- Professor Tirrell said the information must convey that these are not the only priorities, but that the University is moving quickly on these because they have been identified in planning and it must move fast, but other priorities will also be considered.
- Professor Marshak said the five elements of the request are different. Biology and digital technology are not new; they have been talked about and are important for the University. Agriculture has been a long-term University activity. The newer elements of the request are the design and media proposals; it is not obvious what their history is or how they fit. There has also been talk of a sixth item, the need to upgrade the humanities (which the NRC rankings make clear are suffering); this would be a relatively inexpensive item. As for the last, Dr. Bruininks said the humanities problems would be addressed through reallocation and are not in the request. He also agreed that the design and media proposals have not been as visible as the others, but have been identified in interdisciplinary planning. They are not as dominant a part of the request as the other items, and the request is a tall order for the off-year legislative session. If the University can talk honestly about the link to the capital request, there is a good chance that they will be received well in St. Paul.
- There was discussion of relationships with MNSCU and about metropolitan higher education. Dr. Bruininks reported that the relationships with MNSCU are as good as they have ever been and there is agreement on mission differentiation and on studies of the transition to work. It appears that the expected number of college students in the metropolitan area may be fewer than once was thought.
- Professor Bland said that she was amazed to learn of the amount of money going to (the bottomless pit of) deferred maintenance, when first she learned about the capital request and capital spending; faculty must be informed that handling the problem will free money that can be used in creative ways in the future. Dr. Bruininks agreed, said that not all deferred maintenance is vitally important, and that the University has also not put money into its human resources, either.
- Dr. Bruininks pointed out that traditionally, about 70% of the capital expenditures have been on new construction and about 30% on renovation; this request almost reverses those proportions, with 63% for renovation (70% on the Twin Cities) and the remainder for new construction. This is a dramatic shift to preserving the University's heritage.

Dr. Bruininks asked for additional ideas on engaging the campus community, and said he would involve the deans, alumni, and Foundation as well. He concluded by saying the University had gone through a tough year, had pulled together, and that the feelings and meetings were now very different and very positive.

Dr. Bruininks reported that Regent Spence has been given a special assignment to explore opening faculty-regent cooperation, and that she would welcome comments and help.

Dr. Bruininks then told the Committee the University has been invited to participate in events

similar to the Pew Roundtables about the issues facing higher education; he has suggested the University do so. The discussion would be framed around major issues the University sees important, and the faculty could work together with the administration and come out with long-term help.

Professor Koch inquired about hiring the vice provost for undergraduate education and the all-campus writing program. Dr. Bruininks said he hoped to fill the position in a week or so. On the writing program, he has sent a memo to Dean Rosenstone. He noted that some of the activities of the undergraduate initiative were funded with non-recurring money but the activities should continue. In his view, programs such as the teaching calculus initiative and the residential college should not be started without recurring money, but he is committed to continuing them; the administration will reallocate money to them, but he wants to be sure they are on the right track. He said that if the review of programs leads to the conclusion they are doing well, he will raise the additional long-term funds needed.

Professor Gray inquired if the new grading policy REQUIRED faculty to use pluses and minuses; the memo recently sent out appears to require them. Professor Koch recalled she had told the Senate that no faculty is required to give an "A," but they must be available for students if they meet the criteria. The criteria for pluses and minuses may be so narrow that few are given; the faculty determine those criteria.

Professor Bloomfield then thanked Dr. Bruininks and adjourned the meeting at 2:30.

-- Gary Engstrand

University of Minnesota