

Minutes*

**Special Meeting
Senate Committee on Educational Policy
March 2, 1990**

Present: John Clark (chair), John Clausen, Karen Karni, Marvin Mattson, J. Kim Munholland, Julie Peterson, Aron Pilhofer, Jennifer Wesson

Professor Clark called the meeting to order and noted that the purpose of the meeting was to discuss the report of the Tuition Study Group and, if the Committee wished, to take action on it.

He began by noting that the Committee's knowledge about the report was "skimpy," which is a reflection of part of the problem--the very hurried schedule that the report has been following. He said he perhaps should have known that it was on a fast track; it was, however, almost an accident that the Committee even had the report in front of it. There appears, he said, to have been a sloppy process, even for a report on a time schedule. The Committee ought not, he said, feel embarrassed by a lack of knowledge. That speed notwithstanding, Professor Clark said, he sensed there was generalized support for the thrust of the report, with perhaps one Committee member dissenting.

It was reported that the CLA Assembly had voted the previous day to object to the speed of the report; Assembly members apparently felt they should be briefed on the report before it is acted on by the Board of Regents.

Professor Clark said he had trouble with one of the points of the report: One of its prime rationales is that it is better educational policy. If that is the basic selling point, not to have brought it to SCEP "is a monument to our invisibility or to their insensitivity." Another Committee member pointed out that the information in the report suggests that the process has been going on since February of 1989--but the only presentation to SCEP was at its previous meeting; the Board of Regents should not be led to believe that there has been continuing consultation on the development of this report. Committee members appeared to concur that a failure to discuss the report with SCEP was a breach of the consultative process.

Professor Clark noted that the report had been presented the previous day to the Senate Consultative Committee, where it had received positive comments. The Senate Committee on Finance and Planning had voted to adopt two recommendations to change the report slightly, but not on issues of immediate importance to SCEP.

Professor Clark reported that after the last meeting there had been continued discussion by a rump group, after which a resolution had been drafted to try to capture the sentiments expressed during that conversation. As the draft resolution suggested, the sentiments were strongly felt.

What, Professor Clark inquired, does the Committee wish to do? One Committee member said that given the direction of the President's statement on undergraduate education, the objectives of the single point of entry, and that because it takes so long to get anything changed at the University, he would

*These minutes reflect discussion and debate at a meeting of a committee of the University of Minnesota Senate or Twin Cities Campus Assembly; none of the comments, conclusions, or actions reported in these minutes represent the views of, nor are they binding on, the Senate or Assembly, the Administration, or the Board of Regents.

support the report rather than have one more committee look at it for another year or two.

Two members of the Committee said, however, that the draft resolution did reflect their concerns. They do "not necessarily" object to the proposal for uniform undergraduate tuition--although they do not necessarily agree to it, either. One said that he had been doing some research on the report; there is concern, for instance, in the School of Management about what will occur to their 3-XXX and 5-XXX courses. The report, in an example, suggests that CLA students do not have access to Management classes, "which is true and untrue." Access is open to all the 1-XXX classes; at the 3-XXX and 5-XXX level there are restrictions. There is concern that increased CLA access to the upper level courses will lead to undesirable results: the number of sections will have to be increased, which will require additional faculty (and those faculty are "more expensive" than additional faculty in CLA). There might be a one-to-one trade of students--from CLA into Management and from Management into CLA--but there will not be a one-to-one ratio in the cost of educating those students because it is more expensive to provide education in Management.

CLA students who have majors which relate to business, it was also pointed out, are treated as Management students for the purpose of advising and registering for classes. For the remainder of CLA students, they must wait until open registration, they must be upper division, and must have at least a 2.8 GPA; if there is space left, they are allowed in. This seems to be fair; a student majoring in business ought not be denied access to a class because a CLA student wants to take the course for fun.

This raises a question of what is meant in the report by "access." Will CLA students be able to register at the same time as Management students? How will the classes be paid for? Will the CLA students displace Management majors? If the number of sections at the 3-XXX and 5-XXX level will be increased, where will the funds come from? What will this do to CLA--will funds be shuffled away from it and other lower cost schools into Management? These are the types of questions which should be addressed. This change, it was argued, where CLA students will be asked to pay up to \$8 per credit more, is an awful lot to ask be paid without anything tangible in return. The report does not address these questions.

One Committee member contended, however, that "it is time that the barriers come down between colleges." The institution should be opened up as much as possible and the encouragement to "play games" with college of enrollment be halted--and the games do occur. Even so, whether or not there should be a single undergraduate rate was a question.

Another Committee member maintained that the report should have made it manifest that a significant amount of data were considered in the development of the recommendations. Studies which address the issues raised by Committee members should have been conducted--but there is no evidence that they were. Where are the data? It may be, another commented, that it is difficult to predict what undergraduate students or departments will do, but the promise in the document that "things are going to work out OK, folks" is unsettling.

This is a tax, said one member, imposed on lower division, CLA, and General College students. But this, another responded, would more readily permit cross-college course enrollments and thus perhaps provide a better education for all. That may be true, it was observed in reply, but the argument in the report is that there will be greater accessibility for CLA and GC students and that no one will be "gypped

out of anything." But that rationale doesn't hold up. A single undergraduate tuition may be a good idea but the report provides no proof--and without some evidence the report should not be acted on.

If there is the Committee consensus that options should be opened, the question then is whether or not the recommendations of the report accomplish that end. Questions have been raised about whether or not it does. A second question is cost. There must, it was commented, be a way to measure flows: If there were a uniform rate, would there be students in CLA enrolling in IT from the beginning, as many perhaps should have? We should know roughly how many students that would involve and what the cost will be to IT to take care of those students. After knowing that, one could ask if the cost could be covered by a single tuition rate.

Another philosophy floating around the University, it was added, is one which says that each college or unit is supposed to come close to paying their own costs--and yet CLA is going to be subsidizing other units. The result of all this, it was argued, is that "we are in a kind of cuckoo-land."

There was an idle inquiry if any of the administrators who had served on the Tuition Study Group knew anything about what is required to take courses and obtain a degree in IT. There is no way a student can take a course in IT unless they have a lot of prerequisites--and that is more or less true of Management as well. A student doesn't just jump into those courses. There won't be many students in any professional school taking upper division courses who aren't in the school.

Another point which has apparently been ignored, in the view of some, is that General College is not a degree-granting college. Students in it are there for two years, taking almost exclusively GC and CLA work; this proposal won't do anything for them because they have neither the prerequisites nor the skills, for the most part, to take Carlson School courses. They are having their tuition raised and getting "absolutely nothing" in return, because they eventually transfer out of GC.

A query was posed about what barriers would come down. Courses, presumably. The report also mentions advising and other student services; does that mean a CLA student interested in something in IT could come to IT advisors? That option, it was reported, is already being developed. What of placement services? That would not be available. One Committee member said he had learned that a CLA student who is in a major that has a relation to business can use all services of the Carlson School, including the placement service. If just a CLA major, one can use everything except the placement service. And CLA has its own placement service as well.

Another element, perhaps particular to CLA, is that it has so long been trained to be so "efficient" or so poverty-stricken that indeed its costs are lower. Approval of the department chair, for instance, has to be obtained in one department to show a movie--because there is no budget for movies. Usually permission must be obtained to do any xeroxing beyond a very small amount. One Committee member said that because of that poverty he was offended when he sees any curriculum that includes a laboratory--because in the social sciences there are no laboratories provided at all. CLA has low instructional costs--and when this report says the University should charge those students more it "is morally reprehensible." At the same time one wants to be in favor of what the report recommends--simplicity, no barriers between colleges. But if there is no recognition of the poverty-stricken instructional cost areas of the University then one must be "absolutely, totally against" it. Part of the responsibility, it was added, rests with the CLA faculty, which has not insisted on proper funding--

although it is hard to identify the point at which they should have acted. They have always said "we can do it, we know there isn't money." One point which SCEP must make explicitly, it was argued, is that funding be provided for those units where instructional costs should be higher--because the students in those units are "being enormously ripped off and have been for 25 years." Another Committee member commented that that statement is probably true for almost all of lower division, not just for CLA.

Another Committee member inquired what, if CLA students' tuition is to be increased this much, is CLA going to get out of it? One response was that this proposal is tied to the improvement of undergraduate education; the Committee must accept the fact that there is an understanding, in principle, that classes will get smaller, that professors will teach rather than TAs--unless we are being led down a path that will never lead to anything. Instructional costs in CLA will come up and class sizes, for instance, will go down.

Other members of the Committee expressed doubt about the likelihood of this coming about. It can only be accomplished by investing in those areas--the lower division large courses--which subsidize the upper division courses. Those courses are most prevalent in CLA, although it was pointed out that math and physics classes are over 100 students as well. CLA, however, has psychology classes of 1500, taught on video--"there are people who are dead who are teaching those courses." Amid considerable laughter, it was commented that "we use dead professors to keep our costs down in CLA."

A question was asked about the impact of the report on such areas in the health sciences as Medical Technology, Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, and the School of Nursing, which are not mentioned in the discussion of the health sciences professional schools. Would the tuition in those professional schools be lowered at the expense of CLA students? It was reported that there would be no immediate impact on the tuition of the health science professional schools because most are not at the third place now. In response, however, it was said that the Medical School tuition is second in the nation among public institutions; to get it to third place in the Big Ten will require lowering the rate. If that occurs, where will the money come from? This information was contrary to what had been reported to the Committee by Mr. LaFontaine.

There appeared to be agreement that the general principle in the report was acceptable and equal agreement that the Committee was uncomfortable with the process--the speed--and with some of the specific items.

One Committee member said he agreed in principle with a tuition policy which would guarantee broad access across colleges. These recommendations might be a way to accomplish that goal. One can also argue on grounds of simplicity in favor of a uniform undergraduate tuition--if it can be assured that the barriers would be reduced and the result of simplification would be cost savings. Other Committee members objected to the argument of simplicity--"simplicity for whom? The computers?" No one at the meeting knew if the administration of many different tuition rates cost more than would a single rate. Students, it was said, are not bothered by the "complexity" of the existing rates.

The burden of responsibility for this recommendation should be on the back of those who are advocating improvement of undergraduate education, it was suggested. The Committee would accept the recommendations but only providing the broad goals being promulgated about undergraduate education are implemented. This should mean, for example, that CLA and IT lower division classes will be smaller.

But the report standing alone is unacceptable.

It was suggested that SCEP say it accepts the general principle and that students should not make educational choices based on the cost of individual programs; if a unified undergraduate tuition rate accomplishes that goal, the Committee then believes it is a good idea. This would imply that there might be other ways to accomplish the same end.

While agreeing that the proposal should not be sent back to ground zero, if SCEP is to be the Committee which reviews it then, in the views of one, the action taken should be enabling--allowing students to make choices based on their preferences at a given moment and not based on economics. An alternative which reduces the need to play games with tuition is desirable. But if it can be done other ways then those alternatives should be explored.

The Committee, it was asserted, must insist on knowing how this proposal will lead to improvement of undergraduate education. Although access appears to be one advantage, one Committee member disputed that "access" meant anything. (It was noted that "access" does not mean access to the institution but rather access to courses and services for those students already enrolled.) The language in the report, on page five, says that students in low cost programs, on grounds of equity, should be provided access to courses in other collegiate programs; the example is CLA students getting into Management courses which they need because, due to enrollment limits, they are unable to enroll in the School of Management. This demand is almost non-existent, according to one Committee member. Even if there is a large number of students who want to be Management majors, that is not the issue here--if they want to be in Management, they should be in the School of Management, not CLA. Those who have business-related majors can now obtain services and courses from Management, and the 1-XXX courses are now open to everyone. The only ones who benefit, in the example in the report, are upper division students who have majors unrelated to business, who do not need any courses in business, but who simply want to take a 3-XXX or 5-XXX course in Management. How big is that population? It seems likely this is a small group. The Committee should know the answer to this. One of the student members reported he had been able to find out--in a week--that in a heavy quarter there are about 40 students in CLA who seek access to the upper division Management classes, 20 of whom want an exception to the rules governing access and 20 of whom want an override.

One Committee member recalled that after first hearing the presentation on the report he had thought "oh yeah, sure, it will simplify everything" but that the more he had thought about it he had begun to wonder "simplifies what?" and "is this for educational policy or is it for management convenience?" If the latter, it should be sold on that ground. If there are good educational reasons, however, then he could sign on. Another interpreted that as meaning that there may be sound educational reasons--but they have not been demonstrated in the report. There are no data presented--data which might be available--in order to draw conclusions. There is no information available which says that this will lead to a significant improvement in the quality of education for students.

It was agreed that the goals in the report are appealing, on their face, but that there is no way to tell how many students will be affected by the purported improvements. And in the one example used, access to Management courses, the implication that access is currently unavailable is simply untrue.

On the uncertainty about what would happen when the recommendations are implemented, one

Committee member cautioned that one must occasionally take an action and have some faith that as things come up they can be dealt with; is the Committee being too conservative? If in favor of the goal, should it support the report and have some confidence that the University can adjust to problems as they arise? Two of the Committee members responded that they could not say they were for the general principle that tuition should be the same for all undergraduates. One student member commented that after having taken courses in both CLA and IT, the education delivered was not of the same quality [that is, IT was better].

The result is not different, it was expounded, even if the quality of education among the units were uniform. A CLA student who graduates with the same debt burden as IT or Management graduates will probably make less money than the other two--and will be less able to pay off the loans. Which is apart from the complete lack of guarantees in the plan that the educational quality for CLA students will be improved. The onus should be on those who promote the report, for example, to show that access is now being denied and how that access will be provided in the future. The report does not do that now.

It was suggested that the Committee could say it supports opening access and if a single tuition could do so the Committee would support it. The Committee would be opposed, though, to any revenue system which unfairly burdens students or fails to produce the resources to improve the quality of undergraduate education. Right now the Committee has no way to judge whether students will get "a better educational deal" as a result of implementing the report.

It was pointed out that on the question of management convenience, no one arguing for the report has suggested that any such convenience results. One of the Committee members replied that "we are paranoid, and we should be. We are paranoid because we have been sold bills of goods in the past." This statement continued: "I am willing to take whatever comes along, but I want to be a consumer who can say 'this is what you told me it is,' it's not just some sort of medicine show where they sold me alcohol and told me it was the elixir of life." There is no "elixir of life" in this report, it was concluded.

There was also support expressed for the debt burden problem: If students see that they will have the same loans irrespective of college, but learn that Management students on average can pay it off in five years while a CLA student will take ten, then the choices will be made on economic grounds--not on what one wants to do with their education--the very effect that the report is trying to avoid. So is the result that the report will create a "whole series of professional schools about which people make bottom-line decisions" of the choice we want to avoid.

Although perhaps not quite paranoia, one Committee member commented, if one looks at how this report has been reviewed at every level on the faculty and student governance side of things and at the University Senate level--the report has not been talked about or reviewed by anybody. Another Committee member suggested it may be a matter of tactics: Take quick action and then steel yourself for the flak you're going to get. If you advertise the plan in advance, it will not be accomplished.

The Committee seemed to concur that it would agree on the principle but that the document leads to a number of reservations about whether or not the result would be accomplished. Where would SCEP's comments go, however? Normally to the Consultative Committee, but they will not meet again. Who will present the Committee's views to the Regents?

It may be, it was noted, that the increased cost at the lower division level will deter some students from even attending the University. At no time, it was pointed out, has any statement been made which addresses the question of initial matriculation at the University. The report, however, one Committee member pointed out, does contain language saying that the current tuition structure "discourages enrollment in Agriculture, Natural Resources, the biological sciences, engineering and natural sciences, areas on which the State's future depends"--an assertion that not all agree with. One result could be that there will be fewer CLA students and more in these other majors, something which the report appears to be encouraging. And irrespective of whether or not the point has been presented by the promoters of the report, a decline in the number of students seems inevitable.

It was jokingly suggested that if there are 500 fewer students, and large numbers of CLA students enroll in other colleges because of the change in tuition policy, classes in CLA would be smaller; other Committee members noted, however, that resources would follow those students and CLA would lose faculty.

A memorandum from Craig Swan, Acting Dean of CLA, was provided to Committee members; the memo suggested that high-cost programs which offer substantial economic benefits to its graduates should have higher tuition and that any increase in subsidization should be accompanied by an investment in the programs of CLA. One suggestion was that perhaps lab fees should be considered in high cost programs, although others responded that such fees would defeat the entire purpose of the report.

One example of a financial transfer which does benefit undergraduate education, and primarily CLA students, is the money being provided to improve large introductory classes. If this kind of support were made a part of the report then perhaps desirable results can be achieved. It was agreed that this would serve as a useful example of how the increased subsidization by CLA might be offset, of how the funds could be reallocated back to the college to improve quality.

The Committee agreed that it would draft a letter to Warren Ibele, chair of the Senate Consultative Committee, and ask that he bring it to the Board of Regents.

The Committee also agreed on the date and time for another special meeting to act on the nominations for the Morse-Alumni award; it was set for **7:30, Wednesday, April 4, in Room 405 Campus Club.**

The Committee adjourned at 4:30.

-- Gary Engstrand

University of Minnesota