

Minutes*

**Senate Committee on Educational Policy
May 10, 1990**

Present: John Clark (chair), Jean Congdon, John Clausen, Tom Clayton, Robert Jones, Karen Karni, Marvin Mattson, J. Kim Munholland, Gary Nelsestuen

Guests: Assistant Vice President Carol Carrier, Associate Vice President Dolores Cross

1. Report of the Chair

Professor Clark began the meeting by reporting on several items.

- SCEP members should plan on attending the Morse-Alumni award luncheon.
- The meetings next year will be held Tuesdays 1:15 - 3:00.
- Several of the action items are on the agendas of the Senate and Assembly.
- There appears to be little need for a June meeting.
- The minutes of the April 12 meeting were amended to list Professor Karni as present and were then approved as written.

2. Resolution

Professor Munholland read the following resolution to the Committee, which was adopted by acclaim:

Whereas, Professor John Clark has served actively and faithfully for three years as chair of the Senate Committee on Educational Policy, and

Whereas, the members of SCEP have appreciated Professor Clark's warmth, good humor, and devotion to the advancement of the best interests of the University of Minnesota, and

Whereas, the members of SCEP are saddened at the news that Professors John and Shirley Clark will be leaving the University of Minnesota to take up new duties and responsibilities at the University of Oregon system,

Therefore Be It Resolved that the Senate Committee on Educational Policy extends its deep appreciation to Professor John Clark for his

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outstanding service with SCEP and the University governance system and to both John and Shirley Clark for their long and devoted service to the University of Minnesota in countless ways, and

Be It Further Resolved that the Senate Committee on Educational Policy extends its hearty congratulations and best wishes to the Clarks as they embark on their new responsibilities, sentiments which are tinged with regret only because of their departure from the University of Minnesota.

Professor Clark thanked the Committee for its support and kind words.

3. Revision of Policy on Study Day and Finals Week

Professor Munholland reported that the Consultative Committee had decided to return to SCEP the proposed policy prohibiting required events during study days and finals weeks. The discussion centered on two points: First, whether or not the policy singled out athletes; the Consultative Committee, he said, was assured that it did not. Second, they wanted some language which would provide protection to students who are granted an exemption from the policy--that there be some guarantee that they would be allowed to take a make-up exam, for example.

One underlying question is whether or not the Committee, or the Senate, has the authority to tell faculty members that a make-up must be offered to students granted excuses to participate in events. It was suggested that the language could only urge faculty to make allowances, or perhaps create an expectation that such exemptions would be honored by the faculty and students would be granted an opportunity to make up missed work.

It was agreed that the Committee would develop language at its next meeting for recommendation to the Consultative Committee and eventual submission to the Senate next Fall.

4. Procedures and Criteria for Selection of Morse-Alumni Award Winners

The issue at hand, Professor Clark told the Committee, is whether or not the criteria as now used adequately reflect what the University is interested in when it honors excellence in undergraduate education; the uncertain term is "undergraduate education." The criteria identify the elements of undergraduate education used now; they are the product of a long history.

There has been a delicate dance, he continued, to make sure that the award is not captured by those who are interested more in research than in teaching; others argue that the award must be explicitly for outstanding performance in undergraduate education. The distinction is largely a false one, he observed, but it is held in some quarters. The Alumni Association contends, vigorously, that the award should be based on classroom performance alone--rather than include the other criteria which are used. Reconciliation of the varying views on the award can be difficult but has been accomplished--and it would be inaccurate to characterize those who have administered the program as inept. It is also unnecessary, he said, to completely revise the standards; to do so would simply make them serve some different constituency.

One question is whether or not the criteria should be weighted equally; the nominating committee at present does so. Another Committee member contended that instructors are frequently put in positions where they cannot perform well as teachers (e.g., insufficient lab equipment to do a good job); classroom performance should not be the sole criterion. Working within a program to deliver a better program to undergraduates should qualify, for instance, in addition to teaching.

5. Discussion with Associate Vice President Cross

Professor Clark turned to Dr. Cross for a discussion of the programs in which her office has been involved. She distributed a number of documents to Committee members and explained the activities in which her office has been engaged.

The first item was a new "Guide to Services, Programs, and Resources for Students and Faculty of Color" at the University of Minnesota. Dr. Cross then walked the Committee through the "Executive Summary for 1988-89" for her office and the "Blueprint for Action for 1989 and Beyond," including a review of the status of college and institutional plans for recruitment and retention of students and faculty of color. She reported that her office has \$400,000 in bridge funding for the hiring of minority faculty but that departments are reluctant to make use of the money because they must then provide full funding for the positions after the third year.

The plans for recruitment of minority students will require extensive interaction with several units in Student Affairs; among other activities will be increased recruiting staff and implementation of pre-college programs.

Dr. Cross also mentioned briefly the work of the Task Force on Strengthening Excellence through Diversity and projects funded by the Incentive Grants Program for 1990-91 for recruitment and retention of students of color. The latter program distributed about \$57,000.

Her office budget includes bridge money (about \$400,000), money for incentive grants and for stabilizing and expanding programs (about \$155,000), for pre-college programs (about \$57,000), for support of community meetings and advisory committees (about \$30,000); they have looked for ways to increase external funding, especially for programs which will not be run by her office.

Dr. Cross also handed out copies of a statement entitled "Minnesota's Commitment to Educational Excellence," a statement developed by an ad hoc committee of the Task Force on Diversity. She also called the attention of Committee members to a report by the Retention Subcommittee, chaired by Professor Vern Ruttan, on the various college plans which had been submitted.

Committee members discussed a number of points, including University sensitivity to differences in cultural and economic background of students of color (e.g., the economic and cultural background of migrant workers might not be the same as that of others classed as Hispanic). One inquired whether or not a term other than "diversity" could be used.

Dr. Cross observed that minority programs have been surviving "on the edge" for 20 years; the question is how to get them into the center. The one major way is to obtain active involvement of the faculty.

One Committee member said that the effort to use bridge money for minority faculty hiring is undermined by the recurring 2% retrenchments; retirements are the first place that departments will look to provide the 2%, so those positions will not be freed up to takeover the position funding provided by bridge monies from Dr. Cross's office. This will not, it was argued, be an effective way to recruit minority faculty. Dr. Cross concurred and said that some alternative plan would have to be developed.

Committee members also discussed the recruitment of minority students and the possible impact of the tuition increases, especially given that there is no student financial aid plan in place to respond to the increases. Minnesota, Dr. Cross pointed out, has the highest amount of unmet need among its students when compared to its peer institutions.

Professor Clark thanked Dr. Cross for the information and for her presentation.

6. Discussion of TA Training with Assistant Vice President Carrier

Professor Clark welcomed Dr. Carrier to the meeting to discuss TA training.

Dr. Carrier began by recalling that the legislature had provided a \$129,000 (to be matched by the University), for two years, for TA development. The primary motivation for appropriating the money was to address "international TA" issues although the legislation was more general. This really is not very much money, she commented, because the University is already spending a great deal of money on TA development, the biggest amount of which is for the TA English program (testing, training, and re-testing of all non-native English speaking TAs who come to the University as graduate assistants).

The program not only provides language training, it also provides training in instruction. Part of the legislative money went to increase the language training of the TAs.

Dr. Carrier distributed a set of materials outlining the various activities in which her office is involved, including TA development seminars, classroom consulting, small grants, and departmental and collegiate activities. The institution-wide seminars have been open to all and have dealt with a variety of issues and were well-received; the seminars will be repeated next year. A consultant was hired to work with TAs on a confidential basis; her services have been used by an increasing number of the TAs.

Dr. Carrier expressed concern about the lack of training afforded to TAs. Some departments are interested in supporting them and do so; others do nothing. The worst case is when the TA is handed the textbook two days before classes start and told to teach the class--without assistance or supervision. The University must be concerned about what occurs in the classroom; it would also be appropriate to provide training to these people who will become faculty members. One Committee member suggested this reflects departmental attitudes toward teaching.

One Committee member noted that assistantships are primarily a means to support graduate students--as opposed to a method of recruiting assistants on the basis of teaching ability. Another possibility that departments seem to ignore is undergraduate assistants, some of whom are superior to graduate assistants.

Her office, Dr. Carrier said, intends to continue the programs but said that it is the departments which must carry the primary responsibility for addressing the problem. Most schools, she added, have some mandatory training, even if only for a day; this is something which the University might consider.

Dr. Carrier reported that several faculty members have called her to inquire if they could make use of the confidential classroom consultant; part of the money being sought from the Bush Foundation for faculty development would be for a classroom consultant to work with junior faculty.

One Committee member wondered if the faculty knew how best to use the TAs; it was suggested that some training along that line might be useful. Dr. Carrier agreed; she also reported that they are conducting a "module" at freshman orientation on how to interact with TAs. Many students, she said, are surprised to learn they can ask questions and say that they didn't understand.

There was brief discussion of TA compensation; Dr. Carrier reported that the deans have been told that most of the salary increase money for 1990-91 must go into a pool to pay for funding for health care benefits for TAs.

Professor Clark thanked Dr. Carrier for her presentation.

The Committee adjourned at 5:00.

-- Gary Engstrand