

Minutes*

Faculty Consultative Committee
Thursday, January 8, 1998
11:00 - 1:00
Room 626 Campus Club

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

Absent: Leonard Kuhi

Guests: Executive Vice President Robert Bruininks

Others: Martha Kvanbeck (University Senate); Maureen Smith (University Relations); a DAILY reporter and photographer

[In these minutes: Budget report from Professor Morrison; (with Dr. Bruininks:) the Citizens' League report, IMG, post-tenure review, training, consultation; health sciences issues; implementation of the task force report on faculty consultation]

1. Budget Report

Professor Bloomfield convened the meeting at 11:00 and turned to Professor Morrison for a brief report.

Professor Morrison said that after the Finance and Planning Committee forwarded its letter (the statement in its minutes of January 6, slightly amended), the Governor endorsed the University's entire supplemental request, including use of the money for faculty salaries. That is a generous endorsement. The Finance and Planning Committee letter addressed the situation of a shortfall; if there is one, the Committee believes that two items must be protected: tuition must be held to a 2.5% increase, and the promised faculty salary increases must be delivered. The Finance and Planning Committee had discussed some of the "hard choices," but it is too early in the budget cycle to make any firm decisions on that point. But Professor Morrison emphasized that the University must not get itself into the box it has in the past, where faculty salaries are paid for with whatever money is left over.

2. Discussion with Executive Vice President Bruininks

Professor Bloomfield now welcomed Dr. Bruininks to the meeting, and asked him to address issues on his mind.

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Dr. Bruininks began by reporting on the same item to which Professor Morrison had spoken, that the Governor had endorsed the full University supplemental request and had, after discussion with President Yudof, removed contingency language that had originally been proposed (saying the endorsement was subject to change, depending on the February revenue forecast). Dr. Bruininks said that the University could be cautiously optimistic, and that it enjoys wide public support.

Dr. Bruininks then noted the Citizens' League report, and said there had been a lot of faculty involvement. He distributed copies of the President's statement about the report. Dr. Yudof believes the report is positive, affirming the central importance of the University to the state's economy and quality of life, and that the Citizens' League's analysis of the University's shortcomings is drawn from the University's own reports and is consistent with them. The President agrees that the University needs to do better in technology transfer, but does not agree with the mechanism recommended by the report, because the funding mechanism would set up competition with other University needs. Most at the University would not see the recommendation as positive.

Professor Bloomfield commented that there is reason to worry about the University's priorities in terms of the priorities set out by the Citizens' League; the latter reinforces economic growth and technology. There is also need for attention to the liberal arts core and its contributions to the state. There is a danger it will be forgotten. Dr. Bruininks responded that the report focused on the priorities of the supplemental request; he said that as thought is given to building the University for the long term, there must be investment in key departments and strengthening of the humanities. This will require broader discussion.

Asked later by Professor Bland what the President did not like about the report, Dr. Bruininks said that the President has acknowledged the University must do better in technology transfer, and in protecting the University's intellectual property--a lot of ideas are not translated well enough. Second, in sponsored programs, there has been a steady increase in funds from the private sector. This is an area of long-term growth. The President made a strong commitment to do better, to perhaps have a different structure, to do things faster, but also to protect academic values. This is an area that requires a lot of planning and conversation, he said. He agreed with Professor Bland's observation that some other universities seem to be doing much more.

Dr. Bruininks then turned to the report from Professor Catherine French on behalf of the IMG subcommittee. He said he had responded to the memo and wanted reactions to the report. IMG comes up in virtually all discussions, and this is the time to put issues out for open discussion. He agreed with the subcommittee that the conceptual statement of IMG and purposes and values of the University need to be improved. The CLA plan has done a good job of articulating IMG values, and they need more discussion.

In grants management, there has been great progress, but the effort must be revitalized and funds found to finish the project. It is extremely important to manage the University so it is responsible; it cannot be a first-rate university with a mediocre grants management system.

Committee discussion with Dr. Bruininks then touched on a number of subjects.

-- Dr. Bruininks promised to have his comments on the post-tenure review process proposal very shortly. It was suggested that he will have to ride herd on the matter with deans and departments,

because the latter will not find it easy to develop the required statements.

- Professor Bloomfield recalled that the Committee sent a statement on the need for training faculty and administrators in University policies; FCC believes it important. Dr. Bruininks said he liked the recommendation, that he and Dr. Carrier have worked on it, and that there will be a response. The recommendation goes to the heart of grants management and other issues: if one looks at all the University must do in order to do well, everything requires investment in training and development. There is a need to be more thoughtful about investment in human resources as well as a need to invest more.

One problem is the silos that exist in the University, Professor Hamilton said; much falls between the cracks and the University does not get the bang for its buck. Dr. Bruininks agreed. He noted the need to bring together training strategies in development of the enterprise systems as well as in teaching and learning, so there is a coherent plan rather than 12 plans. Independent activity is a source of creativity, but not a way to improve the University in a systematic and continuing fashion. A basic training package for all employees has been developed and is being piloted. Most problems that crop up arise because people are not trained properly.

This may require a culture change, Professor Bloomfield observed; there are individuals who do not like regulations, and "we must convince each other this is important."

- The task force on faculty consultation has recommended there be meetings with Dr. Bruininks (as provost) with the Twin Cities members of FCC (the Assembly Steering Committee) to deal with Twin Cities issues, Professor Bloomfield noted; what is his view of this recommendation, and should it be during FCC meetings with him, or separate times? Dr. Bruininks endorsed the recommendation, said he wanted more consultation, and suggested the time with FCC was already too short, so that separate meetings might be preferable.

Professor Bloomfield thanked Dr. Bruininks for joining the meeting.

3. The Health Sciences

Professor Bloomfield next brought up for discussion a memo that he and Professor Bland had sent by email to FCC members concerning the health sciences. His broad concern, he said, was support for tenured faculty in the School of Public Health and the Academic Health Center (AHC) more generally. There are task forces at work on health insurance and on tenure/tenure-track versus term appointments. There are at least two more issues that could merit FCC attention, probably at its meeting next week: (1) are there things in the AHC about faculty support that the Committee would find objectionable if it existed in the rest of the University (Professor Hamilton averred that there are), and if so, FCC should raise its voice (in concert with the AHC Faculty Consultative Committee), and (2) the AHC is an important part of the University that carries forward much of the academic mission; the AHC is also in danger, and since the Committee would worry if CLA or IT were at risk of collapse, it needs also to worry about that possibility in the AHC.

Professor Gray inquired what recent financial evidence exists to suggest there is a problem; she has seen nothing that indicates an urgent concern. This is not new, Professor Bloomfield said.

Professor Morrison noted that the Finance and Planning Committee has not looked at AHC issues for over a year. His impression is that it still has major problems that must be dealt with, that dollars from the sale of the hospital are being used to address them but that those will run out, and that when they are gone, there will be problems that affect the entire University. It is a problem of years of over-commitment.

Professor Hamilton reported that a faculty assembly has been established in the AHC, as have two committees that parallel Senate committees (on faculty affairs, chaired by Professor Bland, and on finance and planning, chaired by Professor Feeney), that will also try to address these issues. He said he wished to be sure that the AHC faculty structure is not marginalized in the Senate governance structure.

Professor Bloomfield put off further discussion until the next meeting.

4. Task Force on Faculty Consultation

The Committee now turned to the report of the task force on faculty consultation; Professor Bloomfield solicited comments. A number of points were raised in the ensuing discussion.

- Apropos the recommendation that Senators be more involved in governance and given priority on committee assignments, there is a disconnect between faculty and the governance system, a lack of credibility, that should be strengthened; there should be an obligation, if one runs for the Senate, to be more involved in governance. That was the intent; that Senators would be more involved in the work of committees.

Several points were made: that the Senate used to have a rule requiring committee appointments be Senators, which the Committee on Committees found very restrictive; if one knew what committees Senate candidates served on, it would affect votes; there are interested faculty who will serve on a committee but not more actively in the governance structure.

The task force will consider the issues.

- In terms of circulation of draft policies to the Senate, use of the web site would work, and discussion/action at two sequential meetings of the Senate might work if there is time, but may not always be possible because of crowded agendas or a need for prompt action.

During the tenure review, non-voting meetings were helpful to obtain a sense of the body, and the Regents have review at one meeting and action at the next; this does help to avoid problems. In addition, when drafts are sent to Senators, they should be asked to discuss the drafts with colleagues and administrators. Threaded website discussions would be helpful, but many people are not in the habit of going to websites, so at the least occasional reminders to people may be necessary. Such discussions would only be preliminary to Senate discussion, not replace it.

- A draft (hypothetical) schedule of meetings will be developed to incorporate separate meetings with the provost about Twin Cities matters.

- In terms of increased joint meetings, the intent was to encourage meetings of subsets of committees. Generally, joint meetings of full committees is unsatisfactory, because they do not permit discussion and the different foci of interest of different committees on a topic; joint meetings might be useful for presentations.
- The task force considered, but discarded, the possibility of representation on FCC by different areas of the University, and concluded that FCC members should continue to represent the interests of the University as a whole. With 26 or so colleges but 10 representatives, not all could be represented.
- In terms of enhancing collegiate governance, Professor Gray explained that the task force hoped it could be achieved by incorporating consultation in the decanal performance reviews, by asking deans to begin attending Senate meetings (as ex officio members, which they are), and by having FCC sponsor workshops for collegiate consultative committees to help to ensure effective consultation. With respect to the first point, it is intended that the criterion of consulting effectively be added to all administrative reviews, not just those of deans, so the President and Executive Vice President would also be included.

The task force also believed that any college consultative group had to be elected; an appointed group does not past muster.

- In terms of articulating the recommendations of the report with the practices of the administration, Professor Bloomfield reported that President Yudof and Executive Vice President Bruininks have expressed satisfaction with the report; the question is whether or not the deans will concur. Another question is how to maintain the independence of faculty governance while at the same time getting people to work together; one need not ASSUME faculty governance will be adverse to the administration--although that may occur on issues--but the goal is to advance the interests of the University. The document identifies ways the faculty can assert their political responsibilities, but it also needs to be accepted by the administration (central and collegiate) so it cooperates with the governance system.

One central point is to educate administrators to avoid post-facto consultation, to consult before decisions are made.

In the governance system, consultation has a bigger role than legislative responsibility. The governance system could take the initiative to set up task forces, invite administrative participation, and write the first drafts of policies. This would require thinking more about the legislative role, rather than just the consultative role.

The governance system does more than the administration in terms of joint effort; administrators are included on faculty committees, but the reverse is not true. Could that be changed? Professor Bloomfield commented that he has raised with the President the possibility of the FCC chair sitting on the President's Executive Council; it was the Committee's view that he should pursue this option. Professor Marshak, who sat on the Executive Council, agreed that FCC membership on it would be a good idea; there are no great secrets at those meetings, he said; the main point is that there are a lot of things going on, and the meetings serve as a way to exchange information. The

possibility of having FCC at the weekly meetings of the vice presidents was also suggested.

- Support should be provided to the chair of the AHC FCC, parallel to that provided to other committee chairs. Moreover, the AHC governance structure CANNOT be disconnected from the Senate governance structure. Dr. Cerra agreed to support the AHC governance structure, but that support was put on hold pending this report; the budget for the AHC governance operation should be in the Senate.

There is a fine balance between recognizing the AHC as an important part of the University that has big issues, Professor Bloomfield observed, and not according it a different status from Agriculture or CLA; the task force report balances those two concerns well. The concern is that the AHC not be FORGOTTEN, Professor Bland said; Professor Hamilton said the AHC does not want different treatment, but that things can move very fast, and the rest of the University must know about events--in real time.

- There should be an exchange of agendas between the various consultative groups, so that all are informed.

It was agreed that the task force would revise its recommendations in light of this discussion and return them to the Committee.

Professor Bales then commented that the University would not have some of the problems it does if it had a University faculty hiring committee, which could consider not only how units would pay for a faculty line, but also consider the quality of the hires. Hiring and promotion is where faculty have the most legitimate claim to being central actors, not the deans and vice presidents. A simple mechanism could do much to improve the University.

Professor Bloomfield adjourned the meeting at 1:30.

-- Gary Engstrand