

Minutes\*

**Senate Committee on Educational Policy  
December 13, 1990**

Present: Thomas Clayton (chair), Edward Foster, Roland Guyotte, Michael Handberg, Robert Jones, Karen Karni, Karen Seashore Louis, Marvin Mattson, Clark Starr, JoAnne Stenberg, Susan Wick

Guests: Geoff Gorvin (Footnote)

**1. Statement on Hate Crimes**

Professor Clayton explained to the Committee that the Senate Consultative Committee had drafted a statement on hate crimes and would be asking all faculty to read it in their first classes of Winter Quarter.

The Committee discussed several aspects of the statement and agreed on suggestions that should be passed to Professor Ibele. To begin with, however, Professor Clayton will pursue the matter with the Student Scholastic Conduct Committee.

**2. Policy on Plagiarism**

It appeared to the Committee, on the basis of information available to it, that there is no University rule or policy which prohibits plagiarism and which would give a faculty member authority to fail a student for plagiarizing. The Committee agreed that this problem should be explored.

**3. Review of Undergraduate Programs**

Professor Clayton next turned to Professor Starr for a report of the ad hoc subcommittee which had been asked to develop a statement on reviews of undergraduate programs. Professor Starr told the Committee that the ad hoc group had, in response to its charge, developed a set of questions to be directed to internal and external review committees that participate in program reviews of academic departments.

The Committee spent considerable time discussing the questions and possible additions and revisions which might be made. Topics included:

- The need to evaluate the number and percentage of courses taught by TAs;
- Means of reviewing curricula between program reviews and site visits;
- Whether or not a department offers majors an opportunity to reflect on and integrate what they have learned;
- Whether or not service courses are being handled well;
- The extent to which students use the advising offered by a department and the extent to which "mentoring" is available;

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- The extent to which faculty members are available outside the classroom;
- Does the department ensure that faculty can be "approached" or are otherwise accessible?

One of the student members of the Committee inquired about the effect of program reviews on departments. Are they taken seriously? Are changes made? One individual commented that the most important part of the review may be that the department goes through the process; it does things it would not otherwise do and tries to get its house in order. What effect does the report have when it is turned into the dean and the central administration? That is harder to gauge. Another Committee member opined that the general effect of the report is negligible--not because no one wants to do anything but rather because, especially in units like CLA, there are no funds to make the improvements that an excellent review may call for. The benefits of the internal process can be obtained but the major changes a review may recommend often cannot be implemented for lack of funding.

Professor Starr agreed to revise the questions in light of the comments of the Committee members.

The Committee commended Professor Starr for the work of his subcommittee. Several individuals expressed the view that this series of questions, when in final form, would serve as a very useful tool in the conduct of program reviews.

#### **4. Discussion of Teaching Evaluation**

Professor Clayton next turned to teaching evaluation. The Committee cannot review the research on teaching evaluation, he observed, but there may be a few things it can do which would be of use to the University. The Committee might, he suggested, develop five or so core questions which could be used by virtually every department and recommend a policy that would call for their use.

Given a form with 25 questions, he observed, most people look at the results on one or two. There should be a core of questions the answers to which everyone would want to know. They should be evaluative questions; one of them ought to be a frank "how much did you like this instructor" because the answer to that question is central and can be usefully correlated with other responses.

Whether or not there are any policies which SCEP can recommend needs further consideration; there are already in place a number of policies on teaching evaluation and it would not be especially useful to duplicate them.

Something may actually happen, one Committee member agreed, if SCEP can recommend something fairly simple, uniform, and not too onerous; the notion of five core questions is on that ground attractive. There is also a need to have something that is implemented consistently across the University. Whatever it is the Committee devises should fit on one page.

The more controversial part of what the Committee is trying to do, it was suggested, is development of a University-wide process and ensuring that the process is taken seriously. These will be the points of resistance; people do not want the evaluations available to anyone simply on request. The critical question will be access to the information; another will be the number of courses to be evaluated. There was agreement that the considerable time and expense necessary to evaluate courses--some or all--should not be expended simply in order to provide information to the faculty member. Another agreed

that considerations of academic freedom and individual privacy need to be taken into account. The data should be gathered, however--and must be available immediately to the instructor.

The policy on administration should be simple, it was argued; a student should collect the evaluations and deliver them to the department office. They could be returned to the instructor after final grades have been turned in.

Concern was expressed about whether or not the Senate would adopt such a policy. Several said, however, that it would not be desirable to ask the administration to impose it.

Professor Clayton asked that Committee members develop questions which could be considered for inclusion as ones to be included in a set of core five. He suggested that the scale for each question might be a 7-point range. [After the meeting Professor Clayton consulted with Professor P. W. Fox in Psychology on core questions and has asked for volunteers for a SCEP subcommittee.]

#### **5. Additional Discussion, Program Evaluation**

The Committee returned to Professor Starr's subcommittee draft of questions for program evaluation. Several suggestions were made; Professor Clayton asked that Committee members consider the document at further length after the meeting and send changes or additional questions to Professor Starr.

The Committee adjourned at 3:00.

-- Gary Engstrand

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