

Minutes\*

**Senate Committee on Educational Policy  
February 13, 1992**

Present: Stanford Lehmborg (chair), James Cotter, Michael Handberg, Kenneth Heller, Karen Karni, Clark Starr, Susan Wick

Guests: McKinley Boston (Men's Intercollegiate Athletics), Nicole Fisher

**1. Discussion with McKinley Boston**

Professor Lehmborg convened the meeting at 1:15 and welcomed Dr. Boston to the Committee; he expressed appreciation that the University now had a Director of Men's Athletics who WANTED to meet with SCEP. The Committee, he noted, has been more deeply involved in athletic matters than it wants to be because of scheduling issues, but that has now been resolved. The Committee, however, Professor Lehmborg told Dr. Boston, is not uninterested in athletics, but its interest lies more in the areas of academic advising for student-athletes and relationship between athletics and the educational process.

Dr. Boston thanked the Committee for providing him the opportunity to join it. [Note: Most of Dr. Boston's prepared remarks for SCEP were the same as those presented to the Senate Consultative Committee on February 6; points noted here will be those made IN ADDITION to those made at the SCC meeting.]

- Dr. Boston reported that by arrangement with Professor Elaine May, he will teach seminars in the Spring of 1993.
- He noted that there are questions of equal opportunity raised by the statistics of college athletics: Of the 301 Division I-A schools in the NCAA, 2 have Black athletic directors; of the 271 Division I football schools, none have a Black head coach and fewer than 4% of the assistant coaches are black. 92% of all athletic financial aid goes to non-whites. If one looks at football and basketball, they have significant numbers of Blacks but they do not reflect the totality of sport. Part of the problem is that there are no role models.
- Some say that the admission of students at risk to compete in athletics is prostitution of those student-athletes. And at large institutions, such students (athletes or not) are not typically well-served. When he attended the University, it clearly WAS prostitution; with the support systems that intercollegiate athletics and the University provide, that is significantly less true today.

Dr. Boston, in concluding his remarks, said he wished to forewarn the Committee that the football team may be invited to play the Minnesota-Michigan game in 1993 in Japan in the Coca-Cola Bowl. At this point there have ONLY been discussions, he said, but the individuals from Japan are an aggressive group who have already contacted the Governor. He said the department needs time to consider the

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benefits and drawbacks, but things appear to be moving faster than he wishes. In no event, he said, would any final decision be made prior to consultation with SCEP.

One Committee member inquired if Dr. Boston saw problems with the graduation rates in athletics; he responded that he thinks the TOTAL undergraduate graduation rate is an embarrassment--at 27%, it's more of an institutional problem than an athletic one. But he concurred nonetheless that there is also a graduation rate problem in athletics. Asked how it is that some schools boast of a 90% graduation rate, Dr. Boston pointed out that it all depends on how you calculate it. A number of those very high rates, examined closely, are graduation rates FOR THOSE STUDENTS WHO COMPETED FOR FOUR YEARS; it's a numbers game.

What is critical is the freshman year, Dr. Boston said--for all students. If the University or the program can have an impact on the transition from high school to college, graduation rates would be much higher. People don't do well their first year or year and a half; after that they are more comfortable and have learned how to study and take exams. Student-athletes can exhaust their eligibility before they are at the point of being able to graduate.

He agreed that red-shirting can help [i.e., holding back freshmen from varsity practice and competition] but that it isn't feasible economically. Athletic departments have all they can do to generate the revenues they need for the teams they now field; to add the expenses of a freshman team (coaches, some local travel and competition) is impossible. Freshman ineligibility for all might help, but no institution can take that step alone.

Professor Lehmborg thanked Dr. Boston for joining the Committee.

## **2. Future Agenda Items**

Professor Lehmborg noted that evaluation of teaching would be taken up in two weeks with Vice Provost Hopkins; he suggested that if the Committee is unable to reach closure on a policy to be presented to the Senate, it give up on the effort for the year and let Dr. Hopkins take whatever steps she can administratively.

Committee members discussed briefly a memorandum concerning grade inflation; it was strongly urged by one Committee member that SCEP should revisit the issue. It was agreed that the materials which had been considered last year would be distributed again and the Committee would decide later whether or not to take it up.

## **3. Bush Sabbatical Policy**

Professor Lehmborg next drew the attention of Committee members to the Bush Sabbatical policy and application form which had been distributed with the agenda. He said he has sensed that it is time to reconsider the criteria for the Bush Sabbaticals. He noted that originally the University had been seeking sabbatical supplement funds and had turned to the Bush Foundation; it said it would support the request if it fit the program they had in place for the improvement of undergraduate education. The University developed the proposal in such a way that it rode on the coattails of the Bush Foundation program for improving undergraduate education. The Bush funds were exhausted several years ago, however; inasmuch as the University funds the program out of its own resources, there is no longer any reason to

maintain the connection to undergraduate education.

The present policy, it was speculated, has probably led to some contorted applications; faculty who need sabbaticals to complete research efforts must declare that the time will be spent developing a new course or improving an old one or make some other doubtful connection to undergraduate education.

At a time the University is engaged in the Initiative for Excellence in Undergraduate Education, however, it would send the wrong message to adopt a policy whereby the Bush Sabbaticals had no link to undergraduate education. Proposals other than those based exclusively on improving undergraduate education, however, should be considered.

There appears to be a divergence between the language of the Bush Sabbatical policy (which, interpreted strictly, would require that the time be spent on undergraduate education) and the practice (if one teaches undergraduate courses, and the project is sound, one can be awarded a Bush, on the theory that there will be "fallout" for undergraduate education if there is any professional improvement from the sabbatical).

Several points were made in the ensuing discussion:

- The Bush name should be dropped--because there are no Bush funds involved any more--and a new name be attached to the program.
- The research component of the University receives incredible support; teachers, although a vital part of the institution, do not get the same recognition. Even if the ties are strained, the connection to undergraduate education should be retained.
- Most faculty probably do not want to see the sabbaticals restricted to undergraduate education. But support for anyone who wishes to devote a sabbatical to undergraduate education should be part of the program. The examples used in the policy itself should be used to make clear the diversity of purposes for which a sabbatical could be used--so that they do not gravitate to being used exclusively for research.
- These sabbaticals are not what is needed for curricular reform; the amount of money needed is much greater, and such reform requires more than one faculty member taking a year to think about it.

Asked what was available without the Bush, Professor Lehmberg said only the basic sabbatical plan, unless one can obtain outside grants. With a semester system, one can usually obtain a year off at half salary or a semester off at full salary; with the quarter system, that doesn't work as well. And few faculty can afford to be without half their salary, so they must find outside support. Finding that support is probably easier in the sciences than in the liberal arts.

It was agreed that Professors Clayton and Karni would work on revising the language of the Bush sabbatical policy and application form and would bring the revisions back to the Committee early in Spring Quarter.

#### 4. Changes in Sabbatical Support

Professor Lehmborg distributed a proposed change in sabbatical support that was approved last year by the Senate Committee on Faculty Affairs, the Faculty Consultative Committee, and Academic Affairs--the latter of which, when approving it, also said it had no funds for it. The changes are: a two-quarter leave with 75% of salary or a one-year leave with 2/3 of salary.

With changes in the Bush proposed, one Committee member inquired, what is the difference between the SCFA proposal and the Bush? It is expected that competition for the Bush funds would be more competitive, and it would be desirable that faculty in fields where outside funding is less available be given preference for Bush sabbaticals. Under the SCFA proposal, a faculty member with a regular and a Bush sabbatical, for a year, would receive 97% of base salary.

The problem of small departments was discussed, where an application for a sabbatical may be opposed by a department chair because of the impact it will have on the teaching schedule and the inability of the department to hire someone to substitute with the funds remaining in the salary item after the sabbatical funds have been paid. Presumably, the amounts of funds available to the departments will be less if the sabbatical support is increased--the amount left in the line item will be smaller. The SCFA policy calls on the administration to assist departments in meeting financial obligations when leaves cause replacement problems.

The reason this proposal is before SCEP, Professor Lehmborg explained, is because it seems to have gotten bogged down since being acted upon earlier and it was thought it might be useful to have SCEP's imprimatur and prodding to nudge the administration along. At a time when faculty morale is low, and when there have been no salary increases, it would be appropriate for the administration to introduce a new program that costs very little money. The time is auspicious to be generous to the faculty.

One Committee member inquired about the effect the proposed changes would have on courses departments would offer; Committee members expressed doubt there would be much impact at all, primarily because so few faculty members take sabbaticals.

One impact, given the reduced dollars that will be available to departments, might be to change chairs from encouraging sabbaticals to discouraging them. It is to be hoped that Academic Affairs would have at least a small pool of funds to help departments out, although the current situation may not be the best time to expect such a pool of funds. It is also to be hoped that chairs and heads will be broad-minded enough to recognized that sabbaticals are good for faculty and for the department; there are issues besides those which are crassly financial.

**The Committee voted unanimously to endorse the sabbatical plans.** Professor Lehmborg will write to Professor Scott transmitting the action of the Committee.

The Committee adjourned at 3:00.

-- Gary Engstrand