

Minutes\*

**Senate Committee on Educational Policy  
May 7, 1992**

Present: Stanford Lehmberg (chair), Thomas Clayton, Joanne DeMoss, Michael Handberg, Kenneth Heller, Karen Karni, Clark Starr, Susan Wick

Guest: Vice Provost Anne Hopkins

**1. Revision of the Bush Sabbaticals**

Professor Lehmberg convened the meeting at 1:15 and suggested the Committee consider first a revision of the former Bush Sabbatical program. A proposal was distributed to Committee members. Professor Lehmberg pointed out that this is not an issue which needs to be sent to the Senate; the Committee's suggestions will be forwarded to Academic Affairs.

The principal change is from the original focus (on undergraduate education, required by the grant from the Bush Foundation), to a broader set of criteria (inasmuch as the Bush funds have run out and the program is being funded entirely by the University). The selection criteria would be changed to reflect the recommendations of the Committee.

One point which requires attention is the appointment of the selection committee; it was the view of some SCEP members that the process should parallel that of the appointment of the selection committee for the Morse-Alumni awards.

It was agreed to postpone consideration of the Bush Sabbaticals until the next meeting.

**2. Change in Policy on Credit Hours**

Professor Lehmberg next turned to Professor Heller, who distributed a re-drafted statement on class hours and credits. This draft, he explained, incorporates revisions suggested by Professor Karni.

The policy calls for a review of how much student effort a course requires, in order that the appropriate number of credits can be assigned to it. Such reviews are not currently conducted; the policy suggests that they would be appropriate on a periodic basis. One way to assess course effort would be to survey students on the amount of time they spend studying out of class; one might suspect the accuracy of the information, especially if the results are to be provided to the faculty member, but other ways of collecting the information might be identified. Nor would the survey results necessarily be dispositive in assigning course credit, but would be one piece of information that could be used.

Each department, as at present, would be responsible for determining the credits assigned to each course. The guideline that now exists, which the proposed policy reaffirms, is that students are expected

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\*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.

to spend two hours out of class for every hour in class. The proposed policy would "unlink" class or contact hours from credits for the course, recognizing that the amount of out-of-class time required varies enormously from course to course and department to department. The total work required of the student would be the measure of credits rather than the amount of time spent in class.

It was pointed out that in the "comment" following the language of the policy adopted by the Senate two years ago (which requires a general correspondence between class hours and credits awarded), there is recognition that there can be considerable variance from the policy on sound pedagogical grounds.

In response to a query from Vice Provost Hopkins, it was affirmed that this proposed policy would supersede the one adopted by the Senate in 1990. No action can be taken this year, however, so any final proposal will have to be acted on by SCEP next year. This could, however, provide guidance to Dr. Hopkins, if she chose to rely on it, and doubtless something similar to it will be presented to the Senate next year.

Apropos student effort, Dr. Hopkins commented that she knew of no systematic way--at Minnesota or elsewhere--to assess it. Some caution may be necessary when calling for assessment of student effort; a giant bureaucracy needs to be avoided. The intent, she confirmed, is to grant discretion to appropriate authorities, so the mandatory provisions of the proposal should be softened. If review of the decisions about the number of course credits is what is sought, the policy should say so. But this policy also reflects a distrust of departments, observed one Committee member, so review by the deans is called for--which then requires an increased bureaucracy.

Another Committee member argued that there should remain a correspondence between credits and classroom hours, on the grounds that it is important for faculty to explain and discuss the information being read outside of class. Students are in class rather than taking independent study for that reason. Contact hours are a key part of education, it was said, and the time required of faculty is important. It was noted, in response, that earlier Committee discussion revealed that a majority of members believed it appropriate to have varying portions of a student's time spent in class and in preparation--and that those proportions vary considerably among disciplines. Flexibility is seen as very important.

Such deviation, it was argued further, should nonetheless be the exception rather than the rule, and the proposed policy would make it the rule. The current policy, in theory, would make deviations the exception. Another Committee member responded that the current policy is quantitative, making it easy to count, but is also meaningless--and almost impossible to enforce.

One also knows the number of hours a course meets--that datum is in the schedules--and can serve as a measure of whether or not faculty members are doing their jobs. But there is no reason that class hours should be related to the number of credits a student receives for the course. Credit should be related to student effort. Admittedly, student effort will vary and is not an exact measure, but the "average" amount of effort required should be the standard.

Dr. Hopkins expressed disagreement with the proposed policy. Normally, she said, equating of class hours and credits works. A preferable policy would be one that calls for equivalence, with a proviso that colleges could depart from the ratio when they deem it appropriate.

One Committee member inquired about the practice at other institutions. The normal practice, Dr. Hopkins said, is to have credits equal contact hours. SCEP should certainly question academic policies, she said.

This discussion recalls the conversation the Committee held previously: What are credits for? There are many uses, and different policies will stress different uses. One problem the University has is its graduation rate, and some departments are discovering that the curricula they have constructed make it impossible for students to graduate in four years. Students may need a better assessment of how much effort is required, and that is one reasonable use of credits: permitting students to plan their time. A similar use is for transfer students; the credit can indicate how much work was required for the course. The thought, in drafting the policy, was to make the credit a useful tool; the number of times a class meets per week is written down elsewhere and to link it to credits is not a new piece of information. This policy tries to make credits new and useful information.

The general consensus of the earlier discussion, Professor Lehmberg concluded, was that credits ought to be a measure of student effort, even if that effort might be difficult to measure precisely. Except for the policy adopted by the Senate in 1990, that had been the measure, and Committee members appeared to believe it was a mistake to move away from the standard of student effort.

It was agreed to take up the issue again at the next meeting.

### **3. Discussion of the Budget**

Professor Lehmberg then drew the attention of the Committee to the budget and turned to Dr. Hopkins to lead the discussion. [For amplification on some of the points made in this discussion, one can read the 4/28/92 minutes of the Committee on Finance and Planning and the 4/30/92 minutes of FCC and SCC.]

Dr. Hopkins began by explaining that the central administration works in a collegial manner in developing the budget. There were a series of vice presidential meetings, meetings with deans, and considerable consultation at and between the meetings.

This is a very complicated budget document, Dr. Hopkins said, and requires careful attention. She noted the proposed calendar for adopting the budget and pointed out the enormous variety of funds in it. It is often unclear which piece of the budget people are talking about when they refer to "the budget"; it must be understood that the total institutional budget is very complex. The first discussions, by the Board of Regents in May, will cover the budget principles, the O&M and State Special budgets, and student fees. The principles will be acted on in June, and all items of the budget will also be discussed. Final action will come in July.

Vice Provost Hopkins next turned to the budget figures for 1992-93. Last Fall, when budget discussions began, the University was minus \$23 million in vetoed State Specials but faced no other cuts. It was at that time that a decision was made to provide increases in salaries and SEE budgets, and a budget plan was prepared accordingly. Units were instructed to set aside internally 3% of their budgets for that purpose. The Board of Regents approved this plan.

Next, the legislature and Governor restored the vetoed State Specials, but the University's appropriation was reduced by \$15.7 million. At the same time, other expenses increased (such as the capital costs for the new steam plant). There is also a contingency of \$2 million in the budget, for HECB student financial aid. (One change in HECB financial aid is that students receive aid per credit, rather than in bands of credits; HECB was worried it would not have sufficient funds as a result of this change.) If the funds are not required for student aid, they remain in the base budgets of higher education.

Dr. Hopkins then reviewed appropriations, tuition, and other income sources as well as budgeted expenditures for the 1992-93 academic year. She noted that the 3% set aside by departments for salary increases is about half of the amount that will be required; the cut by the legislature, ironically, is about equal the other half of the funds that will be needed. The original intent was that the units would generate 3% and central administration would provide the other 3% (for a total of 6%, 5% in salary increases and 1% in fringe benefit increases). As a result of the cuts, however, the administration does not have the funds, so each unit must fully fund the salary increases.

The net result of the changes is that the budget of the University will be changed very little from this fiscal year to the next.

Dr. Hopkins next reviewed where the total cuts of \$17.5 million will be made. By vice presidential area and campus, the cuts (in percentages) are very different. In those instances where a college or unit shows a flat budget from this year to next, the unit is actually sustaining a 6% cut because it must pay for salary and fringe benefit increases from the (same amount of) funds.

In discussion, it was confirmed that O&M money includes both state-appropriated dollars as well as tuition income. These two sources are considered as one fund and pay for the "common" goods required by the University (including such items as the library and administrative expenses, but excluding those activities which are exclusively research or non-instructional).

Some of the units, Dr. Hopkins reminded the Committee, are receiving increases because of the targeted tuition increases (Law, Public Affairs, Management, Morris, etc.). The "most favored" units, otherwise, are those units which have the largest number of students, especially CLA and IT. CLA was the most favored units among Arts, Sciences, and Engineering, followed by IT. In part this was possible, she said, because she had discretionary funds in her office--and it is those funds which were cut, rather than the colleges.

The Reallocation plan will continue to be implemented, she told the Committee; she also reviewed those State Specials which were exempted from cuts.

The Morris campus received a 6.5% increase, primarily because of targeted tuition increases and the fact that it received all of its Reallocation money at once.

Asked about the proposal to change the educational mission of the Crookston campus, Dr. Hopkins noted that it lost some funds, just as did most other units. If the changes are made, those funds will have to be returned, because the proposal to change to a baccalaureate degree-granting institution was made on the basis of level funding. There would not be additional funds.

Professor Lehmborg commented that it has been suggested that SCEP review the proposed changes in the Crookston curriculum; there is some concern about the quality of the upper division courses that would be introduced. SCC has been told that the campus cannot continue as it is; it is not cost-effective, but it would also be unacceptable to close it. Crookston was designed for 1500 students, Dr. Hopkins said, and at present has significantly fewer than that. Its enrollment has been declining, in large part due to competition. It is believed that if a subset of those who now attend were to stay to complete four-year programs, the campus would better use resources.

Discussion turned briefly to the College of Liberal Arts and the outcome of the decisions about Humanities and Linguistics. Dr. Hopkins pointed out that any changes such as those are very long term, and must be made on the basis of a vision of what the unit should look like later. The dilemma is that when budgets must be cut, the reductions must be made by a certain date--but contractual obligations prevent immediate cuts. The units must have a plan in place, and then find the money where they can for the immediate financial circumstances.

Dr. Hopkins assured the Committee that students would not notice the reduction in the funds for the Undergraduate Initiative (in part because the item in the budget is not accurately labelled and not all of the cuts entitled "Undergraduate Initiative" will in fact be from it). She also said there would be no reduction in the number of courses offered on the Twin Cities campus. The colleges have told her they will do everything possible to avoid cuts which affect undergraduates--so cuts are being made VERY carefully. If another round of cuts comes next year, however, she said there will be cause for worry. Whether or not there are cuts, she said, will depend on the state of the economy, whether or not taxes are increased, and how much of any cut the University would have to absorb.

The reserves are not part of the budget, Dr. Hopkins said, but \$8 million has been set aside for bridge funds for units that cannot make the required cuts by July 1. Those units may borrow from the reserves--but must repay the funds, with interest. Dr. Hopkins said she is encouraging the units that report to her NOT to borrow; she is providing some bridge funds that do not need to be repaid. Different vice presidents will handle this issue in different ways, she said, and "for once my conservativeness about money is paying off."

Last year, it was recalled by one Committee member, Dr. Hopkins spoke about improving the physical climate and making better use of space; is that question addressed in the budget? She said that these improvements are continuing; the bonding bill included \$3 million for life and health/safety. She also pointed out that there have been a large number of classrooms renovated on the East Bank of the Minneapolis campus; several additional projects are scheduled for the West Bank in the near future. It is also hoped that additional computer classrooms can be created, especially for students in the social sciences.

All of these space improvements, she reported, are coordinated through the Space Advisory Committee, chaired by Associate Vice President Kvavik. He is also working with the student body president, Jennifer Alstad, and a student group that is advising him on priorities for improving student-use spaces on campuses.

Attention turned next to tuition rates. One Committee member expressed dismay that tuition in

CLA and IT is increasing by 12%, when the average increase is 9%. Those are units that are already subsidizing students in other parts of the University, and a superficial reading of the rate increases suggests this subsidization will be increased. Is this accurate?

There have been lively and healthy administrative discussions of tuition and how it should be allocated, Dr. Hopkins responded, and they involved fundamental questions about who should be paying for what and under what circumstances. The discussions touched on different campus rates, lower and upper division rates, and differential rates by program.

Just prior to her arrival at the University, Dr. Hopkins recalled, the Board of Regents adopted a tuition policy which is being followed in this budget. That policy is the one that calls for uniform undergraduate tuition rates on each campus--no difference among programs or between upper and lower division. The administration felt bound by that policy, and did not want to increase the gap between upper and lower division tuition; it also felt there should be continued movement toward uniform upper division costs. The only way to accomplish those two objectives was through the proposed rate increases.

Part of the result is attractive. There is uniform lower division rate and there are essentially two rates at the upper division level on the Twin Cities campus (a reduction from five rates). The administration is planning to bring to the Board of Regents in the Fall a new tuition policy on a wide range of subjects, including the uniform rate question. This is a very complicated policy, she said, and it would be worth the attention of the Committee.

The general direction of the central discussions have been that uniformity between lower and upper division rates is not necessary. One can justify lower rates in lower division because the education is less costly, and higher rates at upper division (although questions remain about how much the differential should be). No agreement has been reached on whether or not there should be a uniform UPPER division rate.

On this latter question, Dr. Hopkins said, she is an advocate of a single upper division rate, although there are two legitimate positions. It is her judgment that it becomes a question of access; it is inappropriate, she said, for students to come to the University wishing to major in engineering--and choosing to major in English instead because they cannot afford the engineering tuition. That is a serious question. The other side, also serious, is the issue of how fair it is for the students of one college to support the students of another college. Universities throughout history, she suggested, have long been subsidizing some programs at the expense of others. The trend has accelerated as the costs of some technical programs have risen significantly. There is no easy answer to the problem.

If one wishes to view the University as a community, the issue of tuition should not be permitted to divide it. She has been accused of being too idealistic, Dr. Hopkins said; that may be true. Some, alternatively, have argued for two upper division rates. There have also been those who believe that the practice of targeted tuition rate increases in the Twin Cities professional schools should be extended to undergraduate programs: let the tuition rates be geared to the market. Dr. Hopkins said she is personally uncomfortable with that view--but repeated that the several views on this issue are all legitimate.

One Committee member argued that if CLA students are to pay 12% more in tuition, then additional funds should be reallocated to CLA--as a matter of fairness to the students. Some of that is

already occurring, it was acknowledged. If units were funded to provide programs of approximately equal quality across the University, differential rates should not matter very much, Dr. Hopkins responded. But the logic of the position does suggest there should be additional reallocation, she agreed.

One factor that complicates tuition policy, it was noted by another Committee member, is when a significant majority of the students being provided instruction by a college are not students IN that college (as is the case in the College of Biological Sciences). In part that is because CBS only admits to upper division; it is also because students remain registered in colleges with lower tuition rates as long as possible in order to avoid the higher CBS rates. Why should student who will both be biology majors, and perhaps sitting in the same class, be paying different tuition? Dr. Hopkins agreed that this is an important point. Another Committee member observed that inasmuch as tuition income does not (directly or generally) flow to the unit in which the course is offered, and when service courses in a department have students from many colleges, differential tuition "doesn't make any sense."

As an exercise, Dr. Hopkins commented, the administration looked at the budget of each unit in relation to the amount of tuition income it generated. It was very illuminating.

Another factor is the differential financial aid available to students; as tuition rates go up, the doors are being closed to certain individuals. Dr. Hopkins concurred. Tuition rate increases have been steep, and so have budget cuts. The size of the cuts, and of the tuition increases, is a judgment call by the administration, she noted; the University has been confronted with both large cuts AND large tuition increases. One wishes that increases in tuition could be offset by proportional increases in financial aid; central administration has been giving a great deal of attention to aid, and raising private funds for financial aid is the number one development priority of the President. Every increase in tuition, of course, devalues the amount of money raised for financial aid. At the same time, however, there are countervailing forces. The student payroll at the University is \$100 million (a number that includes graduate students). There is a task force looking at the nature of student employment as it relates to academic programs; those two considerations have not been integrated.

One issue not addressed in the tables, one Committee member noted, is salary increases for those who teach in CEE. Dr. Hopkins pointed out that there is no salary increase for OVERLOAD extension teaching; there are on INLOADED teaching. It is not the case that overload teaching makes up the vast majority of CEE teaching, she added. It was important to provide the salary increases on inloaded teaching, she said, because that is how a number of departments pay full-time faculty. NOT increasing the overload teaching rates saved several hundred thousand dollars, which the administration felt was preferable to cutting by that much more.

This raises the question of funding for CEE. If inloaded teaching is funded, CEE is actually be subsidized by the Day School program, it was said. Dr. Hopkins demurred; every department that has inloaded teaching has an agreement that CEE will pay them for it. These are questions that need to be addressed further, she said.

It was also suggested that there should not be differential funding or tuition rates for courses which are taught both in Day School and CEE. Dr. Hopkins said that the major difference, from a student perspective, is that if one takes classes through CEE, student fees do not have to be paid. If one takes 6 or more credits in Day School, one must pay the student fees--so many students will avoid that 6-credit

threshold. That is bothersome, she said.

New data available to central administration demonstrate that many Day School students take CEE courses. One positive aspect of this practice is that since CEE is a "cash flow system," they can add sections--something that cannot be done in Day School. It serves as a safety and overflow mechanism when the University has been unable to fund all the courses needed in Day School.

Another change being made this year, Dr. Hopkins told the Committee, is that students who are degree-seeking pay one rate in CEE; those who are not will pay a rate that is substantially higher. The University's main business is degree-seeking students, she said, welcomed from all quarters and into all programs. She also clarified that CEE itself grants no degrees; students obtain degrees from the colleges, who provide sufficient faculty to teach in CEE courses to award the degree. (One is admitted to CLA, for example, but may take one's courses through CEE.) The rates for degree-seeking students, Dr. Hopkins also confirmed, will be approximately the same whether one takes courses through CEE or Day School; the only difference is in the student fees. The administration, she acknowledged, has not figured out a way to discourage students from taking their courses through CEE; these are not simple issues.

Also complicating the discussion are state funding policies and reciprocity. The State subsidizes reciprocity students but not non-reciprocity out-of-state students. There has been much discussion in the legislature about the so-called "casual" student, someone who takes a course "for fun" but who already has a baccalaureate degree. Some, of course, are preparing for an advanced degree program. Although not a settled issue, there is sentiment for charging higher rates to students who already have degrees than to those who do not. This is related to the more fundamental question of who should be subsidized and who should not--and the issues are not settled. The primary function of the University, however, is clear, and that is to offer courses for the purpose of granting degrees. People can come in through CEE, and it is desirable to offer courses that people want to take, but that activity is not as central to the University.

The question is whether or not a higher rate will discourage students who want to explore the possibility of obtaining a degree, something the University does not want to see happen.

Dr. Hopkins was asked if there has been any consideration given to reducing or retrenching student service fees, in line with the reductions the University itself has faced. She noted that the student fees committees make the recommendations to the Board of Regents and could decide to reduce the fees; if the administration were to make the determinations, she said, it might suggest that some of the money should not be spent.

The meeting adjourned at 3:00.

-- Gary Engstrand