

Minutes*

Senate Committee on Educational Policy
Wednesday, October 20, 1993
2:30 - 4:30
Room 624 Campus Club

Present: Kenneth Heller (chair), Craig Bursch, Anita Cholewa, James Cotter, Sue Donaldson, Megan Gunnar, Robert Johnson, Manuel Kaplan, Carla Phillips, Gayle Graham Yates

Absent: Daniel Boler, Thomas Clayton, Darwin Hendel, William Van Essendelft

Guests: Professor Stanford Lehmberg

Others: None

[In these minutes: The U2000 plan; possible Twin Cities campus calendar changes; Morse-Alumni awards; more on U2000]

1. Discussion with Professor Stanford Lehmberg

Professor Heller convened the meeting at 2:30 and welcomed Professor Lehmberg to the meeting. He explained that he had asked recent chairs of SCEP to join it this year during the deliberations about strategic planning; Professor Lehmberg had been unable to join it as a member but agreed to attend a meeting and present his thoughts on the plan as it stands. Professor Lehmberg made the following statement to the Committee.

I am grateful for the opportunity to meet again with a committee which I have chaired twice, most recently two years ago, to share my thoughts on the President's vision for the University in the year 2000.

My chief concern lies in the fact that this plan, so far as I can see, does not say anything about the faculty. I am convinced that you cannot have a great university without a great faculty. I have always liked John Henry Newman's definition of a university as "a community of scholars," and I think we need to focus attention on that community.

When the President proceeds to draw up specific proposals and a financial plan, I hope that he will include, prominently, a plan to restore to the faculty the salary increments we have lost during our years without raises. I am concerned about this for two reasons. One is that merit increases operate as a system of incentives and rewards within the University, one that we have been accustomed to and cannot well do without. Vice President Infante was recently quoted as saying that University staff were putting forward only 80% of the necessary effort. I am not sure whether he included faculty members in that

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assessment. If he did mean to do so, I think he is wrong, for the faculty members I know continue to work very hard in an increasingly hostile environment. But we have been denied the recognition we usually receive when we publish major books or articles or devote our energies to major positions in scholarly associations or within the University itself. It would be understandable if there was some diminution of effort under these circumstances.

The issue affects not only present faculty members. A great many of us will be retiring around the magic year 2000--a survey conducted by the American Historical Association a few years ago found that a majority of positions within the profession would become vacant within a few years either side on the turn of the century. The AHA committee expressed concern that we would not be able to replace ourselves with scholars of equal quality. Perhaps we think we are better than we really are! But I am concerned that the brightest young men and women are no longer being attracted into the academic world, because they cannot see the prospect of adequate rewards there.

A further issue regarding faculty lies in the fact that Minnesota has relatively fewer endowed chairs and distinguished professor appointments than most comparable institutions. Much of the endowment raised in our recent campaign, and sometimes referred to as "the XYZ Chair in this or that," is in fact used to support visiting lecturers or professors or as an increment for persons rotated in academic slots. Within CLA, at any rate, there are few regular faculty members holding endowed chairs. Fewer than at many other Big Ten institutions, I think. A few senior scholars are honored as Regents' Professors, but there are many more whose achievements and scholarly distinction merit recognition. For many of us, such an honor might mean as much as a significant increase in salary. I think we should seriously consider the creation of a whole new group of University Professors or Distinguished Service Professors, to borrow the University of Chicago's terminology.

I also have concerns regarding the parts of the President's proposal which affect the compositions of the student body. I am afraid that I have very little confidence in our ability to reconstitute our group of students simply by manipulating terminology or administrative structures. It seems to me that the proposals for our full-time students are not very different from our present undergraduate colleges, mainly CLA and IT, and that the proposed University College, serving those who attend part-time, must necessarily be similar to our existing (and I think very good) Extension Program. It seems to me that we are stuck with the student body we have.

I would, of course, be delighted if we could attract more students of the highest intellectual quality to the University and provide circumstances in which they might graduate within four or even five years. To do so I think we need to be able to offer them something more than we now do. What we should do, I think, is to make them junior members of the community of scholars of which I spoke earlier.

I suggest, specifically, that we consider the establishment honors residential colleges for outstanding students who will make the commitment to full-time participation in the life of the University. Initially we might have a CLA honors college and another for students in IT. The resources required could be minimal. I can imagine designating an existing

dormitory, perhaps Middlebrook on the West Bank, as a CLA residential college and another, perhaps Pioneer Hall, as a parallel place for the Institute of Technology. Students in these halls could share their interests outside of the usual classroom settings. I am convinced they would learn as much from each other as from the faculty. Living on campus, they would be free to attend the many wonderful lectures, concerts, and other events which we provide in the afternoons or evenings, generally for depressingly small audiences. Faculty members could be designated as fellows of the colleges and could mingle with like-minded students over lunch or perhaps at weekly dinners. Appropriate faculty members could serve as masters of the colleges. I think we all know the model, for it operates well at many institutions. My own son's life was significantly shaped, I think, by his years in a residential college at Northwestern. That, of course, is not a land-grant institution, but I see no reason why we cannot foster something similar here. Ultimately, I should like to see a college for the humanities and arts, another for social sciences, one for the hard sciences, and perhaps an international college where students from many different parts of the world could share their traditions and cultures.

If I were to suggest a single area in which outside funding should be sought, it would be the provision of scholarship support specifically targeted to students in such residential colleges. I think that concept might have a strong appeal to donors and that we might even find a whole residential college endowed by (and named for) a generous friend or former student.

The single thread lying behind these comments regarding both faculty and students is the a desire, shared by the President if I hear him correctly, to enhance the sense of community at the University of Minnesota. No doubt other programs can be devised to help us attain this end. It seems to me that the policies I have suggested would set us in the right direction.

In response to a question from a Committee member, Professor Lehmborg explained endowed chairs, distinguished professorships, and fellows. While he was President, Ken Keller led a fund-raising campaign that raised millions of dollars for the University, much of which was used for endowed chairs; the chair usually has the name of the donor attached to it. Most universities have more such chairs than does Minnesota. Also, at most universities, the chair is held permanently by a single individual--it permits the institution to pay the person more and also usually means a department can add a position without requiring additional funds. Endowed chairs also usually have funds paid out from the principal that cover expenses as well as salary.

The University has 20 Regents' Professors, individuals deemed to be the most distinguished faculty at the University, Professor Lehmborg then noted. But there are a great deal more than 20 distinguished professors at the University and the Regents' Professorship has almost become an invidious distinction. The University of Chicago, for example, has the category of Distinguished Professor; several hundred individuals hold the title. Typically, he pointed out, an individual becomes a full professor at age 35 or 40--and after that there is nothing else. Distinguished professorships would help offer recognition to senior faculty; the recognition need not cost a great deal, and even the recognition with no additional recompense would be desirable.

Fellows, such as those at Oxford, Cambridge, and Harvard, are faculty who live in a residential college with students and who may have an office there as well as in their department. Students can drop in to see and become acquainted with the individual. A residential college is a way to get faculty and students together outside the classroom and office hours. Only rarely does any sense of community develop in those cases and even students in honors seminars disperse after the class meeting.

Professor Heller recalled that the issue of residential colleges has been raised earlier in the planning process; this may be the right time for the University to develop them--and they need not cost a lot of money if existing dorm spaces were used. Professor Lehmberg's model, it was noted, consists of homogeneous (by college) residential colleges; one could also envision a model that puts students from different units together. Professor Lehmberg agreed that one could use either--it is conceivable there would be more community and more intellectual sparks when students share academic interests--but ideally a university would have both kinds.

Professor Heller thanked Professor Lehmberg for joining the meeting.

2. Report of the Chair

Professor Heller distributed several handouts and noted the items of business for the day: designation of the Morse-Alumni Award Nominating Committee, consideration of a possible change in the academic calendar, the SCEP meeting schedule for next quarter, and further discussion of the strategic plan.

In terms of a meeting schedule, Professor Heller said it is his sense that the sense of frantic necessity with respect to the strategic plan has dissipated somewhat; the administration seems to have reformulated what it is doing and the pace at which events will take place.

The Committee agreed it would return to an every-other-week meeting schedule, at least for the time being.

3. Calendar Revision

Professor Heller drew the attention of Committee members to several draft calendars for 1996-97 prepared by Elizabeth Grundner at his request. He said that in his view starting on Thursday in Fall Quarter was very user-unfriendly and educationally unsound. Often students do not come to campus and class until the following Monday; from an educational point of view, starting on Thursday is unsound because of the disruption courses with sections that meet once per week that meet on different days, such as laboratories. The versions Ms. Grundner prepared have classes starting on Mondays during Fall Quarter and making all of Thanksgiving week a break that could be used for department retreats and other faculty activities.

The sample calendars Ms. Grundner prepared have either one or two weeks of class after the Thanksgiving week break, depending on the starting date. A problem with the earlier starting date is that for three years in a row it conflicts, by coincidence of the calendar, with the Jewish holidays of Yom Kippur and/or Rosh Hashanah. Starting later would avoid the problems but would mean finals week would run through December 21 (Winter Quarter classes would then start on January 6).

How big a problem is the conflict with the Jewish holidays? inquired one Committee member. This is a state institution that is not supposed to recognize religious holidays; they can be respected without controlling the calendar. To schedule the start of classes on the Jewish holidays, however, can make one uncomfortable--it is not a religious institution but the University does want to be user-friendly. But if those holidays are recognized, what about Good Friday or Ramadan or other holidays? (Ramadan, it was said, is a month of fasting, not suspension of activity.) Perhaps, it was said, but three successive years of starting on the Jewish holidays should make one consider another option. For students and faculty who observe the holidays, it was said, they can be relieved of responsibilities; students can be permitted to make the work up later. That is the present practice now.

Committee members touched on a number of points:

- Labs are very much affected by Thursday (or other mid-week) start dates; in most cases one lab session is lost so they become 9-lab quarters rather than 10-lab quarters. Three days at one end of the week does not equal three days at the other end.
- Students could be expected to write papers during the proposed Thanksgiving week break; they could also use the time to catch up or prepare for finals--the current "study day" arrangements "are a joke." Faculty could also use the time to catch up. It would also be a convenient time for holding departmental retreats.
- The option of starting late and running finals until December 21 is not attractive.
- There are problems with the 1996-97 calendar with respect to classes in St. Paul and the State Fair, although conversation in prior years has indicated this may be less of a problem than meets the eye. It may be that the few classes offered Summer Session II could be moved to Minneapolis.
- Being off Thanksgiving week and then back two weeks would make more sense than being off one week and then back for only one week--two weeks after the break would give faculty a chance to pull things together; one week off/one week left would "herky-jerky." A late start to create a two-week period after the Thanksgiving week break would also mean the conflict with the Jewish holidays would be avoided. It would also mean a shortened winter break, which could affect the research or other activities of some faculty; the long break in December, it was said, is one of the FEW advantages of the quarter system and faculty would be loathe to give it up. Graduate students also use the long break for research.
- Students, with a later start, would get one more week to make money for school. Some get jobs at the break, but nowhere near the number who get summer jobs, it was speculated.

The quarter is short, summarized one Committee member, and with the Thursday start and Thanksgiving week, two weeks are wiped out during Fall Quarter. Committee members generally appeared to agree that the Thursday start in Fall Quarter was undesirable; they were uncertain about a resolution.

It was agreed that Ms. Grundner would be invited to the next meeting of the Committee, on November 3, to discuss the calendar.

4. Morse-Alumni Award Committee

Professor Yates, last year's chair of the Morse-Alumni Nominating Committee, provided a brief overview of the committee and the awards (award winners are given a stipend of \$2500 for three years and their departments are also provided \$2500 for the support of that individual's efforts in undergraduate education). She noted that the process of notification and assembling of nominations from the colleges is handled by Associate Vice President Carrier's office; it would be helpful, she said, if SCEP were take a more active role, early in the process, in calling attention to the award and when faculty can nominate individuals.

Professor Yates also reported that at least one college uses the same dossier for the Morse-Alumni award and for its own teaching awards; the nominating committee last year recommended to SCEP that the Morse-Alumni award dossier be assembled specifically for this award. The problem is that the college awards for teaching excellence also typically include graduate education.

Asked if there should be more Morse-Alumni awards given, Professor Yates said it would be a good idea but the funding could be a problem. If the number were to be increased, the number of nominees permitted by the colleges would also have to be increased; at present there are usually 20 - 22 nominations, of whom 10 win the award.

It is important that all units of the University are made aware of the award; some units clearly do a better job in preparing and forwarding nominees.

The award is not necessarily given to people who are well along in their careers, Professor Yates said in response to a question. In some cases, the award is a result of cumulative effort; in other cases it has been provided to star young faculty. The nominating committee looks at different features of the nominees. That, it was said, is not the impression held by the units; they tend not to forward younger nominees.

It is also folklore that one must be nominated two or three times before winning. Professor Yates responded that the nominating committee does not agree and wants that impression banished--this is an award, not a fellowship. It may be that some individuals have received the award after the second or third nomination, but this is not true in most cases. The nominating committee decided not to ask for a policy decision on the question but did indicate informally to SCEP that it discourages renomination; it is unlikely an individual who did not make it one year will win the next year. This does not mean, added another individual, that there are not cases where a file could not be redone; Professor Yates agreed, saying that the single most important individual in the process is the nominator.

Consider the parallel process for the Regents' professorships, suggested one Committee member; once nominated, one remains a nominee until one retires or dies. It sends a bad message to say that one can only be nominated once--that one is not a good teacher if he or she doesn't win the award the first time. Second, when one realizes the importance of the nominator, what about when a deserving

individual doesn't happen to get along with the department chair or with some colleagues in the department? Is there any safeguard for those situations?

On the last point, Professor Yates said that theoretically there is; colleges can nominate across colleges and student groups can forward nominations. But candidates do need a promoter and that is usually best a faculty member. The chair of a department, however, does NOT sign off on the nomination.

There is also always a question, observed another Committee member, whether or not enough of the awards go to those who teach in "mainline" or core courses that affect many students. It is easier to teach well within one's field, but what about those who teach the introductory courses in math, psychology, the social and physical sciences? The University should try to encourage better teaching in those courses; is there any way to offer awards for that work? The current mechanism for selecting award winners is silent on that point, Professor Yates said. SCEP could encourage such nominations, she pointed out; the nominating committee doesn't consider nominees in categories--it can't; it has to deal with the nominees it has. Nor can it decide that some courses are marginal.

The Committee then deliberated about who might be asked to serve on the nominating committee; following discussion, Professor Heller was asked to contact the individuals who the Committee concluded should be asked.

5. Strategic Planning

Professor Heller then reported on a meeting with Vice President Allen to discuss University College planning. It is his impression, he said, that the structure of UC is very nebulous right now and that various ideas are being considered. It seems, however, to be nothing like the hypothesis that was presented in the second strategic planning newsletter. The discussion at the meeting he attended was free-ranging, Professor Heller said, and some current thinking about UC is that General College may NOT be a part of it but rather as part of a developmental educational effort within the research university. (This comment elicited several gasps of disapproval.) This raises the question of what IS in UC; this is not clear at the moment.

This Committee has had a lot of discussions about types of students, it was pointed out. Most now recognize that part-time students are NOT necessarily candidates for UC rather than the research university; they can be well-prepared, able, and motivated students who for a variety of legitimate reasons cannot attend college full-time. But it now may also be the case that UNprepared students will be in the research university--so it's not clear what is left for UC.

There was also discussion about making the University an all-year, all-day operation. The research university could run for 4 quarters; the current calendar was established so that students could work on the farm in the summer and that certainly does not fit our society now--many jobs are not season-oriented. If the University wants to serve students, it could run 4 quarters, giving part-time students the opportunity to take fewer courses per quarter but continue to progress at the same pace--or to take a more concentrated program with a quarter off.

Faculty who have a 9-month appointment would take off the one quarter that best fits their and

their department's schedule. Many faculty rely on summer session income, it was noted. That would not be precluded, it was said; those faculty who wished to do so could teach all four quarters assuming student demand and department needs. This would NOT be an attempt to foist a 12-month schedule on 9-month faculty for the same salary. And this is, Professor Heller cautioned, just one thought being considered. Relatedly, courses could be offered from 8:00 in the morning until 9:00 in the evening; why the artificial barrier such that courses offered after 5:00 become CEE courses? Such a change would add flexibility, make the University more user-friendly, and make better use of the physical facilities of the campus.

On the other hand, it was pointed out, there are cost-savings achieved when labs and offices can be closed in the evenings.

In any event, it is clear that a lot of ideas are being considered, Professor Heller observed, and there appears to be no concrete plan for UC. Originally one might have feared that part-time students would be defined as part of UC in order to improve the graduation rate statistic--but the people working on developing UC are, it is to be hoped, well beyond that concern and are trying to come to sensible conclusions.

What is the role of this Committee, it was asked? Not only window-dressing, it is to be hoped. It is more like shadow boxing, said another; ideas are floated and the Committee "shoots at them." Who is doing the planning, one Committee member inquired--the President and Senior Vice President Infante? Professor Heller referred to the memorandum from Dr. Infante, which identified the senior planning staff (Associate Vice President Kvavik, David Berg in MPIS, Professor Tom Scott, Roger Paschke, and Richard Pfitzenreuter). Are any tenured faculty members, it was asked? Most are central administrative types, it was pointed out.

This institution is being run by non-academics and it is a mistake not to have tenured faculty involved, argued one Committee member vehemently. They should be told to stop. The proposed Advisory Committee, it was pointed out, includes some of the faculty leadership--to include, presumably, Professor Heller; this Committee, noted another, is as close to the process as one can get. Even the vice presidents feel uninformed; all of the people involved are trying to become better informed--and in a university such as this one, it is difficult NOT to have that sense about things. In contrast, what would the faculty think if the administration had come forward with a fully-developed plan? inquired one Committee member.

One might prefer the administration to develop a plan--and then send it through the governance councils. Faculty are uneasy with only principles; they favor trying to address student needs but are alarmed that the details seem to change daily.

One can be alarmed for a different reason, asserted another Committee member. Faculty are busy. The problem to be fixed is one of student progress and the quality of the students--both of which are clearly faculty matters. No planning group should be doing business without key faculty on the team when the plan is being pulled together. This is a pattern at the University--non-faculty do the planning and faculty react to it. It may be that the faculty are now comfortable with that process, but they will lose control of the decisions. SCEP should object.

Does that mean one should suspect there is a "planning juggernaut"? Several Committee members expressed doubt. One Committee member in response demanded to know who wrote the second strategic planning newsletter--that, it was said, should never have been sent out before this and other faculty governance Committee saw it. And if one thinks the University cannot plan without academics, all one has to do is look at the Health Sciences--planning has gone on without faculty participation. Supposedly the restructuring involves just the Hospital, but it affects all of the Health Science academic programs.

A practical problem with SCEP trying to write something is that it would have to meet far more often than once a week. Others said, however, that if given topics, they could write on them. It would be better, it was said, that something be brought to the Committee before being sent out (and to the faculty before being provided to the news media).

The media have given the University positive coverage on the plan, it was noted--but one can ask if the Committee wants to jump on it in the way the newspapers have when it appears that the planning process is in disarray. That is why, it was said, one asks who is doing the planning--it appears to be the President and a few of his lieutenants; if they want support, there must be faculty participation from the very beginning. Nothing should go out prior to faculty governance review, it was contended. The faculty hold Committee members responsible for participating. Faculty should not be reduced to looking in a crystal ball; they should have some sense of what is going on.

One senses that the administration feels that the faculty are too busy to be involved in planning. It is likely, however, that when the "goals" portion of the process is finished and understood, the faculty will start on its own accord to work on the details.

Does the Committee wish, inquired Professor Heller, that a resolution be provided to FCC calling for Senate committees to be involved in the formulation of plans before they are made public? It clearly did, so Professor Heller agreed to draft one.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:35.

-- Gary Engstrand

University of Minnesota