

Minutes *

Senate Committee on Educational Policy
Tuesday, October 4, 1994
1:45 - 3:30
Room 606 Campus Club

Present: Kenneth Heller (chair), Jeff Bauer, Rachel Brand, Anita Cholewa, James Cotter, Elayne Donahue, Megan Gunnar, Robert Johnson, Manuel Kaplan, Laura Coffin Koch, William Van Essendelft, Darren Walhof

Regrets: Ryan Nilsen, Gayle Graham Yates

Absent: Darwin Hendel, Sara Hornstra, Judith Martin

Guests: none

Others: Karen Linqvist, Pat Snodgrass (Academic Affairs)

[In these minutes: Morse-Alumni award guidelines & possible revisions; Bush Sabbaticals]

1. Morse-Alumni Award Guidelines and Proposals

Professor Heller convened the first regular meeting of the year at 1:50, welcomed everyone, and called for introductions. He then drew the attention of Committee members to a sheet containing five proposals to change the Morse-Alumni award, noting that this Committee has the authority to set the criteria and rules for the award. The proposals came from Professor Gayle Graham Yates, who has served as chair of the Morse-Alumni nominating committee for the past two years. The point of the proposals is to make the award more meaningful and to give them increased visibility, as part of the larger University effort to improve undergraduate education.

Ms. Snodgrass pointed out that the deadline for college committee nominations for the award is February, so it would be helpful if the Committee would act as quickly as possible to make whatever changes it wished in order to approve the guidelines.

The first proposal was to change the financial award (now \$2500 for three years to the recipient, \$2500 for three years to the recipient's department for use by the recipient for undergraduate education) to an award added to the faculty member's base salary (the department portion of the award would continue to be for a three-year period only). Committee members discussed the amount of money that would be required for such a change; several suggested that in the context of the University's salary pool, the amount involved would be negligible. It would, however, need to come from existing funds, so would have to be drawn from elsewhere in the budget (or reduce the general salary pool).

*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 reflect the views of, nor are they binding on, the Senate or Assembly, the Administration, or the Board of Regents.

A base salary increase is troublesome, said one Committee member; the individual could make important contributions to undergraduate education early in their career, receive the award, and then make fewer and fewer contributions over a career. Another noted the distinction between this proposal and the Regents Professorships, which are granted after a lifetime of accomplishment. The intent of the proposal, it was said, is to emphasize contributions made over time; there COULD be a one-time contribution that warrants an award, but most of the awards are for accumulated performance. Over the past few years, the award-winning contributions have been made over perhaps a six to ten year period.

It was agreed that the language of the proposals, however adopted, should reflect the existing language in the description of the award. It was agreed that the award is for excellence in undergraduate education, however accomplished and wherever found, not only or especially for teaching.

Discussion turned to the entire set of five proposals. It was understood that were the proposal for a base salary increase to be approved by the Committee, there would have to be negotiations with the administration about the possibility of funding it. The other four proposals, aimed at enhancing and publicizing the existing awards, also have costs, but far lower ones. Adoption of the salary increase would indicate firmly that contributions to undergraduate education are not on the periphery of University activities but rather a part of the fabric of the institution. It would affect the way the University does business.

There was also brief deliberation about the possibility of creating a separate award, more parallel to the Regents Professorships, and leaving the existing Morse-Alumni award alone, except for improvements in the recognition process. It was agreed that the Committee would decide at its next meeting whether or not to pursue the issue with Vice President Hopkins.

The second through fifth proposals were then taken up. (They were: to have a large annual award ceremony in addition to the event at Eastcliff, to which students and colleagues could be invited; that there be a well-publicized lecture or other event for each recipient, perhaps including a lecture by the winner on his or her specialty; that there be a special 30th anniversary recognition event, to include all present and previous winners; and creation of a permanent group of award winners to serve as a resource and advisory group to the University about excellence in undergraduate education.)

Committee members recognized there would be costs associated with these proposals and agreed they would take action on them at the next meeting.

The Committee then reviewed the existing award guidelines. One significant and recurring concern was the extent to which departments or small colleges or campuses might feel overwhelmed by the requirements for preparing dossiers, and thus conclude they could not make any nominations. To meet that concern, the Committee made a number of revisions in the guidelines in an attempt to reduce the burden of preparing dossiers. Among the points they agreed on were these:

- Inclusion of photographs and videos and the like should be discouraged, if not prohibited.
- There should be a uniform presentation style required (e.g., in a loose-leaf three-ring binder or a plain brown envelop), in order to avoid the impression that the dossiers need to be "slick and professional." As one Committee member noted, the nominating committee

"wants substance, not glitz."

- Brevity should be emphasized; where a number of pages is specified, it should be made clear that the maximum is not required. (The letters, however, and especially those from undergraduate students, are important.)
- Additional materials beyond those specifically required (limited in existing guidelines to ten pages) should be made an appendix; it should be made clear that such materials should be discouraged except in unusual circumstances.
- There should be a statement at the beginning emphasizing the prestige of the award and encouraging strong candidates, but units should not be discouraged.
- It needs to be clarified that one need not be a full professor to be nominated and win.
- The dossiers of the award winners should be made public, in part to assist departments or units that may not have made nominations because they are uncertain about what successful dossiers look like and what successful candidates have accomplished. It was agreed that the letters from students and others, however, should not be made public, inasmuch as they may recount personal experiences. It was also agreed that in order to avoid conflict with data privacy statutes, a waiver should be obtained from each nominee. (The Committee took the view that this is a record of professional accomplishment that individuals should not be reluctant to have known; the dossiers do NOT--should not--consist of private or personal materials.)
- The number of nominations allotted to IT should be reconsidered.
- Professional and graduate programs, if they offer education to undergraduates, should be encouraged to nominate candidates.

It was agreed that these revisions to the guidelines would be acted on at the next meeting.

2. Bush Sabbatical Changes

The Committee took up two proposed changes in the Bush Sabbatical Supplement program proposed by the selection committee.

One proposal called for limiting the supplemental income to be paid to a recipient. At present, the policy provides for a supplement of \$15,000 or 30% of the B-based (9-month) salary, whichever is greater. In order to preserve the amount of funding available, the selection committee proposed that there be a \$25,000 cap on the 30%-of-salary provision. The Committee approved this change.

The second proposal called for apportioning the supplement to reflect the recipient's actual salary, not the base salary, for those who have appointments of less than 100% time. The Committee concluded that the supplement, for part-time faculty, should consist of a proportionate part of the \$15,000 (proportionate, that is, to the actual percentage of appointment, e.g., 67% or 75%) or 30% of the actual

salary, whichever is greater. The selection committee had not recommended inclusion of the link to the \$15,000, but SCEP believed that more appropriate. The recommendation, as revised by SCEP, was then approved.

Professor Heller adjourned the meeting at 3:30.

-- Gary Engstrand

University of Minnesota