

Minutes*

Senate Committee on Educational Policy
Wednesday, January 7, 1998
1:00 - 3:00
Room 300 Morrill Hall

Present: Laura Koch (chair), Avram Bar-Cohen, Elayne Donahue, Darwin Hendel, Gordon Hirsch, Robert Leik, Judith Martin, Adam Miller, Kathleen Newell, Palmer Rogers, Jessie Jo Roos, Tina Rovick, William Van Essendelft, Gayle Graham Yates

Regrets: Thomas Johnson, Kevin Nicholson, Craig Swan

Absent: none

Guests: Kathryn Hanna (College of Biological Sciences), Roger Huss (Transportation)

[In these minutes: staggered class times, Minneapolis and St. Paul; class ending times; policy on missed class time; IMG subcommittee report]

1. Staggered Class Times

Professor Koch convened the meeting at 1:00 and welcomed Associate Dean Kathryn Hanna to discuss the report of the ad hoc subcommittee on staggered class times. Professor Koch recalled that SCEP had received complaints some time ago that with concurrent starting times on the Minneapolis and St. Paul campuses, students could not easily take back-to-back classes on the two campuses, and that those who did so either left one class early or arrived at the next class late. As a result, there were disruptions of class for faculty and missed class time for students. At the same time, concurrent start times were adopted because, with the staggered start times, and St. Paul beginning at 8:30, the St. Paul campus lost a full class period in the day; some on the St. Paul campus petitioned for a change to concurrent start times in order to regain that class period.

Professor Hanna affirmed that when the University moved to concurrent starting times for the two campuses, there was an increase class disruptions. She sampled faculty opinion in CBS, and found that not only did the faculty have problems, so did TAs who were trying to make it to class to teach.

The ad hoc committee considered various schemes for class start times, and looked at the schedules used for the last 40 years (the University has tried everything!). From the early 1960s to 1976, Mpls/St. Paul start times were concurrent; from 1976 to 1996, they were staggered; for the last year or so, they have again been concurrent. Starting times have ranged from 7:15 to 8:30.

*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.

The schedule recommended by the ad hoc committee is as follows:

Period	East Bank	West Bank/St. Paul
I	7:45 - 8:35	8:15 - 9:05
II	8:50 - 9:40	9:20 - 10:10
III	9:55 - 10:45	10:25 - 11:15
IV	11:00 - 11:50	11:30 - 12:20
V	12:05 - 12:55	12:35 - 13:25
VI	13:10 - 14:00	13:40 - 14:30
VII	14:15 - 15:05	14:45 - 15:35
VIII	15:20 - 16:10	15:50 - 16:40
IX	16:25 - 17:15	16:55 - 17:45

This schedule, or whatever one approved, would be implemented in the Fall of 1999 (and not mid-year, as was done before).

Committee members made a number of points in the ensuing discussion.

- This schedule does not take into account the longer Tuesday-Thursday classes. The Assembly-approved schedule does, however, and this one could easily be amended to accommodate longer classes on T-Th.
- This creates 45 minutes between classes for students who take a class on the East Bank and then have one on the West Bank or in St. Paul; if, however, the change time were made half an hour, it would work one way but not the other--it would eliminate (or make very late) a class period on one campus or the other. Reducing/lengthening the time of the change period has this effect in every case. Even though something more than 15 minutes, but less than 45 minutes would be desirable, such a period would work to the disadvantage of one campus.
- Will the registration system prohibit enrollment in overlapping courses? The Senate approved a policy that would bar such enrollment, subject to the technology permitting such a bar to be incorporated in the program.
- Perhaps retaining the same starting time for the East and West Banks would be better, with a 20-minute change period. That would add 45 minutes to the school day, but there would still be nine periods and classes would end at 6:00/1800.

Several Committee members expressed (vigorously) the view that the East and West Bank should be on the same schedule, and that a 15-minute change period was sufficient. It is possible to get from Blegen to Folwell (no one had tried to get from the new Carlson School building to Folwell). One example given was that if the two banks are the same, a student could take 5 back-to-back classes on the opposite banks and be done by 1:15; under the proposed schedule, that student could not be done until 3:05.

- In terms of the impact on semester conversion, there is a concern about the sufficiency of

classroom space. With more classes per term, there may not be enough classrooms of the right size. For example, a lab with 10 sections each quarter would require 15 sections under semesters, if it is to serve the same number of students during the full academic year. The issue is being studied now.

One way to alleviate the demand on classrooms would be to re-institute Saturday morning classes. This would also deal with a potential T-Th problem. If, however, classes were scheduled for Saturday morning to deal with a T-Th problem, EVERY class would promptly become M-W-F, said one Committee member. The other problem with Saturday classes is the entire University has to be kept open, to some extent, which would be both expensive and impracticable. Saturday classes would also subtract from the times that students could work.

Another way to alleviate a potential classroom problem would be to have 10 class periods. Adding a 10th period, however, would likely conflict with classes offered by UC, which will probably begin at 6:20.

- There are no data on student movement; obtaining it would require a great deal of work and expense.
- The reason there is not 30" between all classes is that for some campuses, the loss of time would be too great (there would be a loss of a full class period).
- Ms. Hanna emphasized, in response to questions, that one CANNOT make the trip from Minneapolis to St. Paul in 15 minutes; even with the transitway operational, it still takes time to go from the terminus of the transitway to classes. Committee members tried to do so, and could not.
- To the surprise of some, no one on the Committee objected to the proposed 7:45 start time for East Bank classes.
- If students take 5 3-credit classes (as is hoped), rather than 3 5-credit classes, the question of change time between them will be a greater problem; the University does not want to make the situation more difficult than it already is.
- West Bank students are largely on campus from 8:00 to noon, and then disappear; this schedule would make things more difficult for them.
- Many of the hypothetical problems that have been posed for students assume they are shuttling back and forth; in fact, most appear to take temporally-contiguous classes on one campus, and then go to another campus for other classes. They do classes in blocks.
- The question of which units will occupy the Management and Economics tower on the West Bank could affect the number of students who are on the East/West banks. But it is a topic subject to rumors; to bring it up opens a can of worms, so will not be dealt with, Professor Koch ruled.
- If there are particular back-to-back combinations (Minneapolis/St. Paul) that cause problems for identifiable groups of students, one solution would be to move THE COURSE from one campus to

the other. Some classes are portable; this would better serve students. (Other classes, such as biology labs, are not portable.) This, in turn, raises the more general question of how decisions are made on class scheduling; right now, it is based on when and where the faculty member (or department) wants to teach; there is no campus-wide decision.

- With the change to semesters, academic planning is more critical and students will be in more of a lock-step progression; time between classes will be important. Students generally liked the staggered starting times between Minneapolis and St. Paul.

Professor Koch said the Committee would revisit this issue at its next meeting.

2. Class Ending Time

Professor Koch reported that a question had been raised about whether there is, or should be, a policy requiring that classes end by a certain time in the evening (e.g., 9:00 or 10:00).

Most classes are scheduled to end at 8:50, it was noted; if there is a shortage of space, there will be a concern. The Committee would need to be very careful in setting a rule. There have been complaints about the lack of bus service between the two campuses, especially for classes that end after 9:00; there is a residence hall circulating bus that runs once per hour that people could take between the campuses.

The Committee concluded it did not wish to adopt a policy stipulating a time by which classes must be ended.

3. Policy on Missed Classes

Professor Koch then reported that the Assembly Committee on Intercollegiate Athletics had inquired if it--ACIA--might resume responsibility for administering the policy governing the number of class days student-athletes might miss for events. She also said that ACIA is considering a request that the number of missed class days permitted be raised from 6 (per quarter) to 9 (per semester).

Committee members were not inclined to relinquish authority for policy administration to ACIA, and so voted. One Committee member suggested that 6 class days missed is too many; others expressed nodding endorsement of this view.

4. Report from the IMG Subcommittee

Professor Koch now welcomed Professor Catherine French, chair of the IMG subcommittee, to discuss the recent report of the subcommittee. [Note: there was a discussion of the report in the 1/6/98 minutes of the Finance and Planning Committee; only points that varied from that discussion will be reported here.]

Professor French said the subcommittee had identified six issues of concern; the memo summarized where they stand. She suggested that SCEP might be particularly interested in the effect of IMG on interdisciplinary activities, and the mechanisms that create incentives and disincentives.

With respect to incentives, the semesters coordinating group is considering recommending establishing a tuition band, rather than charging exclusively by the credit, in order to encourage students to take more courses. Dr. Zetterberg is looking at a model of total tuition income by campus. There would be an incentive for students to take more classes, but there would be no loss of income if student credit hours dropped some. She noted that few institutions charge per credit tuition; most charge a flat fee. Banding, however, is a problem for IMG, because tuition is not then credit-based.

Professor French affirmed that the Graduate School's views were important. There is deep concern about interdisciplinary programs.

It was suggested that if SCEP is to have a good discussion of IMG, and understand its impact, SCEP must see data on the total cash flow through the units. For those units highly dependent on tuition, IMG could be a disaster.

It was also said that the cost of services (one of the six issues identified by the subcommittee) should indeed be an issue; it is a concern to many academic units. It was noted that the Finance and Planning Committee would look into this.

Professor Koch reported that she had had calls about the makeup of the subcommittee, concerned about representation. She commented that the intent of the two parent committees was not REPRESENTATION (except from identified administrative offices); the intent had been to represent UNIVERSITY concerns. Professor French affirmed that the subcommittee has tried to do precisely that. Other Committee members pointed out that the issues Professor French had enumerated were not college-specific.

The Committee discussed with Professor French how far "down" IMG should go; in its application, it was structured with colleges as the principal financial units. Some colleges have chosen to carry the application to departments. Professor French observed that this can make some units look costly, even though the University values them (e.g., they may have high costs and low tuition income), which can affect morale. There is also the problem of the motivation to offer large classes, something the University does not value. Professor French agreed that there is a need to monitor and investigate the impact of IMG when imposed on individual departments.

A key recommendation of the subcommittee is communication, and communication about what the University values, Professor French reported. The compacts will provide an opportunity to decide on investments, which will follow from those values and from University goals.

Unfortunately, said one Committee member, IMG may provide an incentive to pursue the best deal, not what reflects University values. Other problems include the potential loss of students to the University when those students confront only large classes, and who then choose to go elsewhere, and the instances where the administration could play games with units that have enrollment caps. There is also the problem of a push to lower standards in order to increase enrollment, clearly evidenced at one institution that has moved to IMG.

There was discussion in the past about the need for the University to articulate the value of the core; that reminder needs repeating. In addition, the data suggest it is the core that is extremely tuition-

dependent, and with revenue fluctuations, there must be the highest administrative commitment possible to the core.

Professor Koch thanked Professor French for joining the meeting; Professor French invited questions or issues.

5. Ongoing Work

Professor Koch then noted ongoing issues: the campus curriculum committee, the graduate/professional award (and whether to implement it this year, even without funds, something SCEP is averse to doing, even though the Senate asked that that happen), the academy of distinguished teachers (there are about 135 active Morse-Alumni winners; is that too large for an academy?), and recommendations for uniform policies across the Twin Cities campus.

Professor Koch adjourned the meeting at 3:00.

-- Gary Engstrand

University of Minnesota