

Minutes*

Faculty Consultative Committee
Thursday, May 21, 1998
1:00 – 3:00
Room 238 Morrill Hall

Present: Victor Bloomfield (chair), Kent Bales, Carole Bland, Gary Gardner, Virginia Gray, David Hamilton, M. Janice Hogan, Laura Coffin Koch, Michael Korth, Leonard Kuhi, Marvin Marshak, Fred Morrison, V. Rama Murthy, Harvey Peterson, Matthew Tirrell

Absent: Gary Davis, Mary Dempsey, Russell Hobbie

Guests: President Mark Yudof

Others: Martha Kvanbeck (University Senate); Maureen Smith (University Relations)

[In these minutes: Communication with the regents; animal care policy; applied partnership degree programs; the libraries; informal discussion of the biennial request with President Yudof]

1. Various Items of Business

- Professor Bloomfield convened the meeting at 1:00 and asked for an off-the-record discussion of communication avenues with the Board of Regents. It was agreed that the Committee would seek to clarify what it is that it wished to achieve by establishing more formal and regular access to the Board.
- A vote will be taken by email on the animal care policy, although care must be taken on how to proceed, because this is also a Regents' policy. If the Senate Consultative Committee approves the revisions, and the Regents' then adopt the policy, but the Senate subsequently reverses Committee approval, then there is a procedural tangle. It is, however, in the interests of the Regents and the University to have the best policy in force, so the vote on the policy will proceed.
- Professor Koch commented on the Applied Partnership Degree Programs guidelines that had been prepared by the office of Academic Affairs. She said that the biggest concern is that there would be degree programs that distract from the primary activities of the University, and that they will be seen as a way to bring in money, which is not the normal way in which programs arise. University College, however, wants the degrees to have value and be accepted by the University as programs for which there is demand and a need. The guidelines propose careful limits on how these partnership degree programs will be set up, provide that the program is not offered anywhere else, and will involve faculty from the very beginning. The procedures appear to ensure that the proposals will be handled properly.

Committee members offered a number of comments.

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- The initiative for the programs is given to University College staff, but the proper people appear to be involved.
- The programs seem market-driven and open-ended; they could lead to a polytechnic university. That is not a remote possibility; the programs are supposed to be response to demand but recognize the limits to University involvement and the University's core missions.
- Based on experience, it appears that whether or not the faculty in a department or college favor a partnership program makes no difference; the program is established anyway. The program will use the department courses, plus offer others with their own faculty, and may end up competing with an established University program or department. No programs are to be offered if they already exist at the University, but there is nothing in the document that identifies where concerned units can object to a proposal. That must be added, so a department can say "no."
- The Twin Cities Curriculum Subcommittee should also review and comment on these proposals, and should hear objections as well as endorsements.
- University College is very creative and does well, but it does not have its own faculty and makes compromises with which most faculty would be uncomfortable.
- It might be useful to have a process parallel to that for new graduate programs, where the faculty put it together and then obtain the consent of the Policy and Review Councils before it is established.
- In one program, upper division courses at the University and Metro State were to be commingled, and the requirement that the last X number of credits be taken at the University would be waived. It appears there is no quality control mechanism for these programs.
- Do these programs imply a large number of adjunct faculty? They are not to; they imply identification of need and offerings by the University and by MNSCU, offerings that are within the mission and resources of the University.
- The idea is that the faculty must believe the degree is important to offer, and if they do not, it must be changed.
- The document suggests the impetus for these degree programs is to come from the community, from a need for people trained at the baccalaureate level who are currently unavailable. This does not mean a University department would have the program as a top priority, but the department should be willing to listen and help with the program if it fits the mission of the department. There is a built-in conflict of interest, however, in that University College is "drumming up" business.
- Any course to be offered should be offered by an existing academic department, and the college and department must support the program.

It was agreed that a response from the Committee would be prepared and sent to

Dr. Bruininks.

The libraries appear to becoming a major issue, and it is the center of scholarly work, Professor Bloomfield observed; faculty should think hard about what to do. It may be that cutting journals is the right thing to do, but it may not. The Committee discussed how the libraries make decisions on which journals to subscribe to and which to cut. Professor Bloomfield suggested a quality index: impact factor (average number of citations per journal) times pages/year divided by cost/year; it would be a measure of efficiency of a journal in a field. It was noted that there are fields where journals are not cited, and that accessibility should also be a criterion.

The Committee discussed briefly the meeting the day before on risk analysis. While it seemed to be more intended to clear up confusion about IMG than risk analysis, it did allow the Committee and the administrators present to understand why faculty wanted and needed more participation in the planning process. There was not much discussion of how to support faculty lines, and it was said, at that meeting, that the faculty are the ones who are always pressing to add more faculty. At the meeting with professional school Senators on Monday, however, it was reported that faculty in one college were surveyed, and ranked hiring new faculty the last of three priorities, behind increased salaries and increased support.

2. Discussion with President Yudof

Professor Bloomfield welcomed the President to the meeting.

President Yudof began by thanking the Committee for the celebratory event with the Governor and members of the Legislature the day before. He said it was very successful, he appreciated the certificate and recognition, and that legislators were effusive in their appreciation for the recognition as well. He also complimented Professor Marshak for his work in organizing the event.

The President then asked for an informal discussion of possible elements that might be included in the biennial request. He said that no decisions have been made, and that there will be more consultation on the request later. [Subsequent to the meeting, three sessions for review of the biennial request were set for the summer with the President, Dr. Bruininks, FCC and the Finance and Planning Committee.]

The Committee and the President conversed about the biennial request for approximately an hour, after which Professor Bloomfield adjourned the meeting.

-- Gary Engstrand

University of Minnesota