

Minutes*

**Senate Committee on Educational Policy
March 7, 1991**

Present: Thomas Clayton (chair), Michael Handberg, Ken Heller, Karen Karni, Marvin Mattson, Joanne DeMoss, J. Kim Munholland, Clark Starr, Susan Wick

Guest: Associate Vice Provost J. Peter Zetterberg

1. Report of the Chair

Professor Clayton distributed a number of handouts concerning a number of issues. He noted that several will need to be taken up by the Committee.

2. Morse-Alumni Award Eligibility

One Committee member raised a question about which faculty members are eligible for the Morse-Alumni award. Academic Affairs, on the basis of earlier SCEP discussion, has determined that faculty members holding "T" appointments are no longer eligible. It was not the intent of SCEP, in the view of this Committee member, that those faculty would not be eligible; had the disqualification of "T" appointees been explicitly discussed when eligibility was being considered, the change would not have been supported. A good-faith nomination made by the Committee member should be considered, it was said, because of the confusion about whether or not they were eligible.

The Committee discussed the history and prevalence of "T" appointments, noting that they seem to be most widespread in the Health Sciences and that for the most part individuals holding such appointments have all the prerogatives of faculty except that they do not have tenure. It was not clear whether or not such appointments are permissible under the terms of the Rajender consent decree.

Also noted by the Committee was the fact that at least three other individuals were not nominated when their departments were informed that "T" appointees were not eligible. The question of fairness to those individuals, and perhaps others who were not nominated, was of concern to several Committee members.

Committee members reviewed the minutes from their meeting of November 8, 1990, when the definition of eligible faculty was discussed. One Committee member said the minutes seemed to clearly suggest that only regular faculty would be eligible--individuals holding tenured or tenure-track appointments. It also seemed very clear at the time of the discussion, it was said. It may be that the Committee would be both legally liable and morally culpable if it decided to set aside the clear intent of its earlier discussion in order to consider the nomination of one or more "T" appointees who were nominated in good faith. A retroactive decision to consider these nominations might render invalid the entire nominating process for the year. The policy, however, should be reconsidered, in light of the misunderstanding which seems to be widespread.

*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.

It was contended by one Committee member, who had spoken with another faculty member who had known Horace Morse, that Morse would not have approved a decision to disqualify "T" appointees. Doing so runs contrary to the intent of the award, it was said.

The Committee also discussed the locus of authority for deciding the rules of eligibility for the award; the Committee was uncertain if it adopted a policy, which Academic Affairs then interprets, or if the Committee only advises Academic Affairs on eligibility. One Committee member said that if it disagrees with the interpretation made by Academic Affairs, the Committee should change the rules-- rather than trying to second-guess the interpretations made by Academic Affairs.

Committee members deliberated over a number of these points and probed the issues at considerable length.

It was moved and seconded that the nomination be accepted on the basis of the language in the November 8, 1990, minutes of SCEP referring to "permanent or potentially permanent" faculty members and because it was submitted in good faith. On vote taken, the motion was defeated 2 - 6 with one abstention.

The Committee agreed that the question of eligibility for the award should be taken up again at one of the early meetings of Spring Quarter.

3. Discussion of the Financial Implications of the Draft Report of the Task Force on Liberal Education

Professor Clayton next welcomed Associate Vice Provost Zetterberg to the meeting to discuss the financial analysis of the draft report. Dr. Zetterberg explained that he had been asked by Vice Provost Anne Hopkins and Professor Howe to develop at least rough cost estimates of the proposals developed by the Task Force. He said that the exercise was not one which could lead to a definite number but rather one which identifies various implementation strategies which could maximize or minimize the cost of the recommendations; it was his objective, in doing the analysis, to tease out those different strategies.

He did arrive at a "best guess" of approximately \$10 million in recurring expenses; he also indicated the extreme ranges. On one set of extreme and unrealistic assumptions, the Task Force proposals would actually save money. At the other extreme, based on equally unlikely assumptions, the proposals could cost over \$30 million annually.

There are two factors which will ultimately determine the cost of the proposals, he explained. One is the extent to which the courses to be developed are taught by redirected effort--the extent to which new courses replace old courses which would no longer be taught. The greater the redirected effort, of course, the less the cost of the recommendations. The other factor, which must be emphasized, is the extent to which courses satisfy more than one requirement. If there are few such courses, the Task Force recommendations will require students to take 90 credits to meet the requirements (compared to the current liberal education requirements, which can be satisfied with about 50 credits). Requiring students to complete 40 additional credits would be very expensive, both for the University and for the students.

Dr. Zetterberg then told the Committee that he made a number of assumptions, requirement by requirement, on the amount of redirected effort which could be expected and the number of courses which would serve dual purposes. These assumptions are, he readily acknowledged, open to scrutiny and question, but they provided the basis for the cost estimate of \$10 million. If those assumptions are to be changed, it would be easy to recalculate the projected costs. He also pointed out that he did not include every possible additional cost; if new faculty are to be hired, for instance, he did not also include the cost of additional clerical staff which might be required.

The Committee complimented Dr. Zetterberg on the usefulness and clarity of his analysis. He cautioned, in reply, that these are, in a way, "back of the envelope" calculations and they should be treated accordingly.

One Committee member observed that although the numbers may appear large at first glance, taken in the context of the University's total budget they are very reasonable amounts. Given the importance of delivering an undergraduate education of quality, it was said, the numbers presented mean "there are no financial considerations here." Changing the budget by this small amount is not important; what the Committee must do is examine the requirements themselves to determine if they are sensible. "This is peanuts." If this is an important function, even given the pain of the current reallocation plan, the University must make the effort to improve undergraduate education.

Another Committee member agreed that in the abstract the amount is a small price to pay for solutions to many problems--but the University had better be certain that the reinvestment of a lot of money would be in changes that would lead to improvement. It is not certain that the recommendations will accomplish this objective. Dr. Zetterberg agreed with the sentiment that the amounts involved are not large, relatively speaking, and expressed hope that the Task Force recommendations are debated on the merits; the cost analysis he has done, he said, should not be used as an excuse for rejecting the report. If there are good reasons for rejecting it, so be it, but the cost should not be among them.

Dr. Zetterberg said that one thing should be included in the report: It would be wise for the Task Force to attach priorities to its recommendations. If the report is adopted, someone will have to implement it. Whoever has that responsibility will have finite resources available; if those resources are insufficient to implement all of the recommendations, the implementing authority will have to pick and choose. One Committee member observed, in reply, that the Task Force could attach whatever priorities it wished to the recommendations; it will be up to the University community to make the decisions. Such priorities, it was observed by another, would in any event only provide guidance rather than be controlling.

One Committee member inquired about "double- and triple-dipping." Some students have inquired what this would mean; it has been argued that students should not be permitted to "triple-dip" to the extent that they could meet the Cultural Diversity (CD) and International Perspective (IP) requirements with, for example, one Humanities course. If that alternative is eliminated, would the cost increase? Dr. Zetterberg said that it would. Members of the Task Force present disagreed, to some extent; the "double-dipping" would primarily occur between the breadth courses and the "emphasis" courses; courses in the major could also meet the CD or IP or Citizen Ethics requirements. One of the student members of the Committee reported that every student he has spoken with have told him that "there is no way they would take any course in the core curriculum which does not satisfy two or three requirements." Every student,

it was said, will look at the class schedule to determine which courses will meet the maximum number of requirements.

Dr. Zetterberg clarified one point about which there has been some confusion. The additional money that has been proposed for CLA and IT, in the reallocation plan, is for things which have nothing to do with the Task Force recommendations. No one should believe that the \$7.5 million reallocated to CLA and IT could be used to pay for any of the recommendations. There is, however, money proposed for the system-wide initiatives, in the reallocation plan, which could be used for some of the Task Force recommendations. He also observed that the funding for the recommendations would not have to come exclusively from reallocation; he noted that "this report is the most poorly-timed report in the history of the University; it could not have come at a worse time." The financial situation, for the next couple of years, will be difficult--but the situation will improve and it will not be out of the question for the University to request additional funding to help to implement the recommendations. One should not assume that the \$10 million would require another reallocation.

One Committee member, in response, suggested that the budget of the University should be considered a constant and that implementation of the recommendations will require a trade-off; if they are worth doing, then the University will have to give up something else. Some of the others present concurred. Dr. Zetterberg said that the extent of redirected effort will raise the same question in the departments; will they give up doing some things in order to offer the new courses, or will they conclude they need to continue their present activities and require new funds for implementation of the Task Force recommendations.

There is another cost involved, it was observed by one Committee member, and that is the psychological cost to the faculty--which cannot be factored into the calculations.

On the matter of "double- and triple-dipping," one Committee inquired, will departments try to set up their courses so they can be "double dipped" in order to make them more attractive to students? Dr. Zetterberg said he thought they would certainly be thinking about that possibility. The University cannot adopt any change, he opined, which will increase the amount of time it takes a student to complete a degree; it already has serious difficulties in this vein. If the package is to hold together, there must be "double-dipping." Whoever implements the report will have to think carefully about this issue or the result could be a disaster.

Will this "hurt" certain units, such as the professional schools, Dr. Zetterberg was asked. He speculated that it might; he agreed that it might be make it more difficult for students in professional fields, such as engineering and music. One cannot take that implication lightly, he added; it would be irresponsible to simply add requirements for students. It was pointed out, in addition, that the accrediting association minimum requirements for engineering students are significantly less stringent than the requirements imposed by the departments on their majors. It is the local requirements which could be in conflict with the Task Force recommendations, not the national professional requirements.

One Committee member asked about making it easier for students to understand how they can graduate in four years. Dr. Zetterberg noted that there are a variety of reasons why students take longer; it could be poor advising or poor choices on the part of the students, among other reasons. If students are not conscious of the choices available to them each time they choose a course, or simply too casual about

satisfying the requirements only one course at a time, they would end up taking a lot of additional courses. That, however, might not mean additional time to obtain a degree; lack of care in course selection could reduce the number of electives available to them. The point is that what is being proposed, depending on how it is implemented, could lead to an increase in time required to obtain a degree.

One of the Committee member said the report would definitely have an impact on students in professional fields. If they are to continue to graduate in four years, these recommendations will require that students take fewer technical courses because they will be told to take more courses in non-technical fields. Those students could be "less prepared" for their profession--and the trade-off in depth versus breadth may be a legitimate one. The recommendations would redirect resources in the University away from professional fields and towards "liberal arts" departments. That is what the report is all about; if the University implements the recommendations it will be because that redirection is perceived as a needed change. The students may be too technically-oriented; that is what the Task Force may be saying.

On the question of depth versus breadth, one Committee member said, many seem to see the choice as either retaining the present system or adopting the Task Force recommendations. Many will also not look at the document but will see its ideological thrust and agree that "this is the liberal arts, let's have these, we've had too much vocationalism heretofore." That is not what the University should do, it was argued; the document must be reviewed item-by-item. It is not a homogeneous whole but rather a collection of different recommendations, some of which may be useful and desirable and some of which may not--but most of them are capable of standing or falling on their own (despite language in the report to the contrary).

Professor Clayton drew the attention of the Committee members to the statement adopted by the Finance and Planning Committee and asked if SCEP wished to endorse the sentiments expressed. One Committee member thought it a hostile statement; others disagreed, and it was reported that the Finance and Planning Committee had not intended it to be hostile, only to insist that funding be identified to implement the recommendations before they are established as requirements for students to meet. Members of the Task Force who had read the Finance Committee statement said it did not vary from the sentiments held by most members of the Task Force itself; the Task Force does not believe that requirements should be established without adequate resources. The Committee concluded by indirection that it would take no action on the Finance and Planning statement.

The discussion turned to the substance of the Task Force report and the timing of subsequent deliberations. Professor Clayton urged that the Committee make statements of evaluation about the report--recommending adoption in its entirety or making specific comments about each of the recommendations. There was some uncertainty about whom the recommendations should be made to, the Task Force or the Assembly, and about the timing of future Task Force deliberations; it was suggested that recommendations could be made to both groups (if the timing of Task Force meetings permitted)--and if the Task Force did not make changes seen desirable by SCEP, the Committee could then address a statement to the Assembly. It was argued by one Committee member that the Chambers report was adopted wholesale for CLA some years ago, cost a lot of money, and did a great deal of harm. This report, it was said, could do a great deal more harm if it is not thought about carefully. If SCEP does not ponder the report carefully, and declare its opinions, it will not have done its job.

One Committee member expressed regret that SCEP will apparently be unable to express its views on the specific recommendations in the report directly to the Task Force, given the timing of events. Another Committee member proposed that SCEP tell the Task Force, in an official way, that it has deep concerns about the report and its structure and implications--warn the Task Force that SCEP will have comments rather than just spring unexpectedly on the Task Force the concerns about the serious problems that SCEP sees. Another Committee member observed that it takes a while to generate debate in the University; there is a need for additional time.

It was moved and seconded that the Senate Committee on Educational Policy express its thanks to the Task Force for its work and that the Committee has serious concerns about the structure and implications, and some of the individual recommendations, in the report and expects to report more specifically in due course.

Asked about the nature of the concerns, one Committee member noted the reservations about the failure to deal with a technological society and the implications in the report which emphasize "right thinking" rather than content or substance. There are other things as well, although this Committee member also said he was very impressed with the report and noted that he was not opposed to it. Have these concerns been expressed to the Task Force, it was asked; one Task Force member said the comments and reservations should be sent to Professor Howe. If there are opinions from students now coming into focus, they should also be provided to Professor Howe.

On vote taken, the Committee voted 5 in favor, none opposed, with three abstentions.

The agenda for the meeting of March 28 will be devoted entirely to the draft report of the Task Force on Liberal Education.

4. Exceptions to the Finals Week Policy

Problems have arisen with the policy, Professor Clayton reported. The Committee has assumed that the policy has been disseminated. If units choose to ignore it, and not seek exemptions, what will be the result? Both a large CLA committee as well as the SCEP Morse-Alumni Awards subcommittee have scheduled meetings during Finals Week. There is, moreover, correspondence (distributed to the Committee) requesting exemptions; the requesting units may have decided to ignore the policy.

These violations are unacceptable, Professor Clayton said, but inasmuch as the policy is a new one, and people are learning, he suggested that a letter of warning be sent reminding people of the policy. The Committee agreed that he should write to the offenders, including the SCEP subcommittee. It was also suggested that copies should be sent to the Provost, or a separate letter should be written to him, on the ground that his office is responsible for enforcing academic policy. The students involved must be protected, it was agreed. It was also suggested that a box be placed in the Daily early in Spring Quarter reminding the University community of the policy adopted by the Senate.

5. Thanks

Professor Clayton noted that he will be gone Spring Quarter and expressed his appreciation for the work of the Committee as well as his pleasure in working with the Committee members. Professor

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Munholland will serve as chair during Spring Quarter.

The Committee adjourned at 3:10.

-- Gary Engstrand

University of Minnesota