

Minutes*

Senate Committee on Finance and Planning
Tuesday, September 26, 1995
3:15 - 5:00
Room 238 Morrill Hall

Present: Virginia Gray (chair pro tem), Thora Cartlidge, Craig Dexheimer, Kathy James, Karen Karni, David Kittelson, Gerald Klement, Patrice Morrow, Roger Paschke, Peter Robinson, Charles Speaks, Craig Swan, Steven Thelen, Ryan Thrun, James VanAlstine

Regrets: Doris Rubenstein

Absent: Allen Goldman, Richard Pfutzenreuter

Guests: Bob Baker (Parking Services); Peter Zetterberg (Academic Affairs)

Others: none

[In these minutes: Semester conversion issues; parking]

Professor Gray convened the meeting at 3:15 and explained that she has continued to serve as chair while Professor Morrison is out of the country; he will resume the chair at the next meeting. She then called for introductions.

1. Discussion of Semesters

Professor Gray then welcomed Dr. Peter Zetterberg to the meeting. She noted that while the Committee on Educational Policy is the lead committee on dealing with issues associated with the change to semesters, there are many financial and planning implications associated with the change, so it is important that the subject be aired in a number of venues.

Dr. Zetterberg said he welcomed the opportunity to talk with the Committee at a time, he emphasized, BEFORE any decisions have been made. Some believe decisions have been made; they have not.

The decision to change the University to semesters was made last spring, when the legislature required the other public colleges and universities to make the change. The University has considered making this switch for 20 years or more; it is a once-in-a-lifetime change for most institutions.

Very little was done over the summer. A presentation was made to the Board of Regents in July, and in September they adopted a resolution authorizing the change. The resolution made no decisions

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about how it was to be accomplished.

In August and September, Dr. Zetterberg related, he developed the materials that were sent to the Committee. They were also used in discussions with the deans and others to elicit suggestions. He has met with a number of administrative groups. The one decision that has been made but not publicly announced, he said, is that the change will take place over four years, not three, and will be effective for Fall Quarter, 1999.

Senior Vice President Infante has been speaking with Professor Adams about appointment of a semester oversight committee. The administration wishes to use the existing administrative offices and governance system, but believes that the project requires an oversight committee. The group would consist of 15-20 people, mostly faculty but also with some administrative and student representation; it will be established by the first of October and will be a four-year commitment for those who serve.

Dr. Zetterberg said he thought there would be two phases of work for the Committee. First, this Fall Quarter, it will need to make major recommendations about important issues (e.g., the specifics of the semester calendar) and the objectives to be achieved as the change is made. This is an opportunity to clean up a lot with respect to curriculum and academic programs and policies; student systems need to be revised, the great variation in grading systems on the Twin Cities campus can be rethought, and as all college bulletins need to be reprinted at once there can be thought given to a common undergraduate bulletin. The oversight committee will make the first decisions.

After the first flurry of decisions, the oversight committee will be responsible for keeping the project on track.

One Committee member reported meeting with department heads in related disciplines to try to coordinate course offerings. That needs to be accomplished, but other issues must be cleared up first. Responsibility Center Management (RCM) could destroy the effort; what will happen with tuition and academic fees needs to be known. Courses and credits cannot be coordinated until there are basic decisions made.

Dr. Zetterberg said he appreciated the implications of RCM but could not say very much about it. No one intends that RCM remove the incentives for cooperation; the people working on it understand that that has happened elsewhere. He is not himself involved in the issue, he noted.

Dr. Zetterberg related that he has had continuing conversations about the adoption of a standard course module with one of the faculty most interested in the issues associated with semesters. His opinion is that the University will not adopt a standard module; no college, he surmised, will be told that all its courses must be four (or three or five) credits; there will continue to be a curriculum with varied numbers of credits per course

The most difficult change in adopting semesters is the faculty work required for the curriculum. The number of courses must be reduced by one-third or faculty workload will increase and students will find many courses are not offered or their load may be adversely affected.

Committee members took issue with this assumption. One noted that in some departments, faculty

teach four courses per year; they would do the same in a semester system. If courses are reduced by one-third, then the faculty has nothing left to teach. The statement assume the University has the right number of courses now and that reducing it by one-third will also be the right number. At the graduate level, this could be a disaster and could affect accreditation. It is appropriate to say that courses should be reviewed and some cut, but it is silly to make a rule saying that one-third must be cut.

An example, Dr. Zetterberg pointed out, is that a faculty member teaches two courses per quarter, all six different courses. If all six are retained, and all should be offered each year, then the faculty member will be doing three courses per semester.

The number of hours and credits is also important, said one Committee member. Turning a three-quarter sequence into a two-semester sequence is the easy case; there are the same number of hours in teaching. The more difficult will be specialized seminars or courses; if all are kept and meet the same, the faculty will have to do 50% more work and student workloads would also have to increase. But faculty may decide to combine courses; if there is consistency in workload, the problem should work itself out. Another Committee member concurred that a required reduction in courses by one-third would do great harm to some departments.

Dr. Zetterberg pointed out that those who have made the conversion from quarters to semesters insist it is important to reduce the number of courses by one-third. They also warn against reducing the typical student credit load. If students are accustomed to taking four 4-credit courses, it should not be assumed that changing to a 3-credit module will mean students will begin enrolling for five courses each semester.

Why not, queried one Committee member? They SHOULD take five courses. Who is going to be dictating this, asked another? Will the colleges and campuses be told what to do? The oversight committee will establish the principles, Dr. Zetterberg said. Morehead State devalued the curriculum, and will have problems for the next several years as they do what they should have done in the first place.

The notion of "devaluing" should be dropped, maintained one Committee member; it implies the content of courses has declined. Many or most semester systems use a 3-credit module. (Dr. Zetterberg took issue with this last statement, but several Committee members concurred in the observation about the prevalence of the 3-credit module in semester systems.) Courses will not be devalued nor will the number be cut by one-third, it was said; some combination will be reasonable. A four-credit course is supposed to offer 40 instructional hours in a quarter; it is easy to do a swap, reducing it to three semester credits and making a minor adjustment in teaching. It is to be hoped that the oversight committee tolerates some instances of a straightforward swap in the number of credits.

Dr. Zetterberg said he imagined it would, but if such a swap is common, faculty now teaching two courses will be teaching three under the semester system.

One Committee member expressed concern about the blanket assumptions being made, that one-third of the courses must be eliminated (some should be) and that students will take four 3-credit courses (it is unfortunate to assume that with the work that will go into the change, the University will have no influence on a student load).

Another Committee member, recalling experiences under a variety of systems, argued that students will not take five courses per semester between Labor Day and Christmas--and especially not at this university, where so many work. They cannot be expected to divide their efforts between five courses; if that is what is planned, it will be asking more of them than they can give. If students should not be asked to take five courses to be full time, then the credit module should be adjusted to fit their needs. What is a full-time student? The legislature says someone who is taking 15 credits, but CLA has predominantly 4-credit courses. This issue affects graduation rates as well.

Dr. Zetterberg said the suggestion was useful, and repeated that no decisions have been made. He offered to obtain literature from other institutions that have made the change and encouraged departments to call peer institutions on semesters to obtain their bulletins in order to review the number of courses that are offered.

In response to a query, Dr. Zetterberg affirmed that all campuses of the University will make the change at the same time; the need to change the students systems prohibits a change by one campus but not others.

Much of this conversation is related to traditional day students, observed one Committee member, but many departments have huge graduate and outreach programs and may have more 8-XXX than lower level courses. The University cannot lose its uniqueness as a research institution as a result of the change, or it will look like any other teaching college.

Dr. Zetterberg agreed and said the University will want to retain flexibility, especially for units such as CEE and Education, which offer courses on different schedules because of their clientele. Any calendar must have the flexibility that now exists, and there are many options for summer. It could be shorter, and start after the public schools are out, or be in two sessions, or a full semester beginning in May.

One faculty Committee member inquired about the modal number of credits taken by CLA students (about 12-13, and it has risen slightly). The problem with the calendar built around the period Labor Day to Christmas, it was then said, is the loss of instructional days. Is there any reason there must be five-day weeks? They are in essence four-and-one-half-day weeks since many departments do not offer classes on Friday afternoon. There are two things that could be done to increase instructional time: hold classes on Saturday mornings and increase the ratio between class hours and credits. Dr. Zetterberg said there is no reason that courses could not be taught on Saturday mornings, if that is what the University wanted to do.

Another possibility, said one faculty Committee member, would be to lengthen the period that faculty have to turn in grades, rather than requiring they be in within three days. Exams could be run closer to Christmas if faculty had two weeks to turn in grades--which is the practice at some other institutions. Students do not need their grades so immediately. The idea of having one shorter semester and one longer one is also unattractive, it was said. Dr. Zetterberg said that the University would never have semesters of unequal length.

Another factor affecting the change is the State Fair. It was observed that the University's agreements with the Fair predated the legislative action. Has the University talked to the Fair or asked for legislative help? Why is the Fair accepted as a fait accompli, forcing the University to jerry-rig its

semesters? "I don't know any other university that makes an important educational decision based on the time of the State Fair."

Dr. Zetterberg said that need not happen, and even if the semester were to start immediately after Labor Day, there would be adjustments needed in the agreements with the Fair. He said it is his view that attempting to change the Fair would be a waste of time. It is a private corporation not controlled by the legislature. Some have suggested the Fair buy land outside the Twin Cities and sell their valuable land in St. Paul, but that is very unlikely. The University does not want to get into a public battle with the Fair, but it could approach the Fair quietly. Mr. Tschida has pointed out that the University is less dependent on State Fair parking than it has been in the past, and it would be possible to make the University entirely independent. There is no chance the Fair will change its schedule, given the timing of county fairs in the state.

One Committee member heard from a colleague that having classes on the St. Paul campus during the State Fair should not be difficult for students, who could arrive on the transitway. Everyone has been conned into believing classes can't be offered on the St. Paul campus during the Fair, which may not be true. Another Committee member disagreed, saying classes during the Fair would be terrible. Dr. Zetterberg said that situation has been monitored; the concern is not parking but the ability to get back and forth between the two campuses. This needs to be looked at more closely. It may also be the case that St. Paul students tend to be upper division, with less need to go back and forth between the campuses. It would be difficult for one week, observed one Committee member, and then normal; the University should be able to plan around that week. Even when classes start after Labor Day, Dr. Zetterberg observed, there could be 72-day semesters five years out of seven. Which assumes no Saturday classes or exams, which could change, added one Committee member.

Michigan has had a 14-week semester for years; the important element in the change is contact time (within limits; one cannot cram 40 hours of contact time into one week). Another important item is when classes resume; if immediately after the New Year holiday, the semester ends in May and can leave four months for additional instruction periods. Adding five minutes to each class would also help. (Dr. Zetterberg reported that Michigan, Michigan State, and Wisconsin had not lengthened their class periods, even though they have semesters of fewer than 75 days.)

He has the Authorized Course Data Base, Dr. Zetterberg told the Committee, and will get the information from it to the colleges as soon as he can. As there is discussion of 3-4-5 credits, people must understand what now exists and the variations across colleges. There are 30,000 courses on the list, only 16,000 of which have been offered in the last three years; one-third could be antiques.

Dr. Zetterberg agreed with a suggestion that it might be possible to move some catalogue information to the World Wide Web. It will be important to make sure that students and advisors know curricular and degree requirements two quarters ahead of the change date so that they can make the transition.

Discussion of the use of bulletins in recruiting came up. Dr. Zetterberg said they need not be used that way; the University could have a common undergraduate bulletin and use other materials for recruiting. At some places there is a common course guide and a separate publication with degree requirements; one needs two books, but they contain the information for every college. One Committee

member said the use of bulletins in recruiting should not be underestimated; if they were consolidated, they would have more value, because the answers to questions about colleges other than one's own would be included. And students typically need three or four to make a decision, Dr. Zetterberg noted.

In response to a question about the impact on students entering in 1997 or 1998, Dr. Zetterberg said the change will be made in such a way that it does not increase a student's time to graduation. There will be materials explaining the change--which will be different for each year students enter--and how what they have taken will apply to degree requirements under a semester. The important objective is not to add time or courses to what students need for a degree.

One Committee member noted that there had been a report to the Regents on the cost of the change but that faculty time is not included, apparently considered free. That means it comes out of faculty hides. It would be better if one person in each department could be identified as being in charge of redoing the curriculum and given one course off to do the work. If the entire matter is records conversion, not a lot will be done. Dr. Zetterberg agreed but said it would be best left up to the colleges to work out these arrangements. In most departments, he agreed, it would be wisest to identify someone to have the major responsibility for semesters, and reduce the workload accordingly. That, objected one Committee member, still passes the costs on to departments.

Asked about personnel matters, such as single quarter leaves, Dr. Zetterberg said it is a very important issue; so too is the issue of student appointments, because students will probably be here three to four fewer weeks per year, and they may thus be paid less (if, for example, graduate students are on hourly rather than per-class appointments). The Committee on Faculty Affairs and others will be working on these issues.

One thing that concerns him, Dr. Zetterberg said, is that much attention is being paid to undergraduate education and not enough to the large number of interdisciplinary graduate programs; redoing them will require a lot of coordination since more than one department is involved in many of these programs.

In response to a question, Dr. Zetterberg affirmed that unionized and civil service staff would be consulted about the change. He pointed out that it will affect EVERYONE at the University, whether faculty, staff, or student.

One Committee member said that faculty in his unit have long wanted to go to semesters and will not find it difficult to plan to do so; perhaps it is unusual in this respect. Dr. Zetterberg said he was glad to hear that, but wanted no one to underestimate the amount of work that would be required. Some departments have systematically reviewed their curriculum and know what they will do; others will find the change a challenge. It is easier to think in isolation about the change, said another Committee member, what one faculty member or department will do; coordination with other programs and colleges will be the bigger problem.

One question is how to articulate, for example, CLA requirements and the liberal education requirements--that could be overlooked in the departments. The process could strain collegiality, Dr. Zetterberg agreed.

One Committee member inquired about the possibility of increasing to a 55-minute class hour. Dr. Zetterberg said it has been mentioned by many people. If there is a 70-day semester, class time could be increased to 55 minutes. The norm is 75 class days with a daily 50-minute classes (for a five-credit course). It was then clarified that there had been a Senate policy calling for a general 1:1 correspondence between class/contact hours per week and credits for the course, but the policy was subsequently repealed by the Senate, largely at the insistence of CLA; the current policy is the one adopted in 1922, calling for three hours of academic work per week for each credit. The only existing policy about the calendar is that there will be a 50-day quarter; it says nothing about the number of credits for courses.

There is a need for a new policy, said one Committee member. The conversion will be horrendous, not a minor adjustment from ten to fifteen weeks, when the instructional hours are less than the credits granted for a course; if a policy were enforced, it would be a huge change. There are many 4-credit courses that have three (or fewer) instructional hours. Most colleges except for CLA largely observe the 1:1 correspondence, pointed out one Committee member.

Dr. Zetterberg urged that Committee members who have concerns put them in writing for the oversight committee so they have a record. Asked who will make decisions, he said the oversight committee will make recommendations to Dr. Infante and the President; in the case of educational policy issues, the Committee on Educational Policy will make recommendations. He noted that while many of the decisions will be educational policy, some will not (e.g., the personnel issues). Whether or not the changes will be brought to the Senate will have to be discussed by Drs. Adams, Hasselmo, and Infante, he said.

The question of what will be educational policy is an important one, said one Committee member. In an earlier meeting that day, it was reported, some faculty members learned--much to their surprise--that there is a new rule requiring that 40% of all credit hours be offered in the afternoon. This is clearly an educational policy, but has never been mentioned or presented to the Committee on Educational Policy; to make this kind of decision in this fashion is something that must be taken up with the administration.

Professor Gray thanked Dr. Zetterberg for joining the Committee; he said he would be glad to return to the Committee whenever appropriate.

2. Parking

Professor Gray next welcomed Mr. Bob Baker, Director of Parking Services and told him that the immediate question was about parking on the St. Paul campus; there may be other questions left over from his presentation last spring.

One Committee member related that a number of people on the St. Paul campus have been both infuriated and paranoid about the campus master plans for parking structures; people in the local community are also upset. A meeting was held in August, when most people were not there; Parking puts itself in a bad light when it convenes a meeting in August. What are the plans for the St. Paul campus, Mr. Baker was asked.

Mr. Baker related that in March of 1995 Provost Allen appointed a committee to study parking on the St. Paul campus; that group identified several options, including on-street parking, small lots, and

ramps. The need for additional parking has been raised by departments, faculty, and service units on the campus, both to Dr. Allen and to his office. Because of these widespread requests, Dr. Allen asked for a study.

The committee, chaired by Paul Tschida, has been meeting since March, and has looked at needs and demand as well as earlier studies; it also met with representatives of the campus and the St. Anthony Park neighborhood. It was one of the neighborhood groups that requested an August townhall-format meeting, which was held. At that meeting, the chief concern of residents was the possibility of construction of a ramp on the site of the demolished North Hall. The neighborhood appointed a committee to work with Provost Allen and the University committee to study access issues. The committee is now preparing its report for Dr. Allen.

According to one faculty member, a difficulty with the meetings is that they were never scheduled according to member availability, so faculty were not able to attend. It may be that the group is doing all the right things, said one Committee member, but information is not getting out, so people get upset and do not see any coordination with the campus master plan.

Mr. Baker expressed surprise, and recited the number of meetings that have been held with St. Paul campus representatives, placement of articles in newspapers, and so on. He said they tried to reach the community as best they were able, that the process was completely open, and that no conclusions have yet been reached. He agreed to provide to the Committee the information that he has about the discussion that has taken place.

Asked what the major concern was, one Committee member said that one plan had been to tie additional parking to the transitway, which would have put additional traffic in the center of the campus--because people supposedly do not want to walk very far and the St. Paul Student Union would get more business. The center of the campus is already congested, it was said, and more parking would make it worse.

Another Committee raised different issues. First, the budget information last spring used to justify 9% rate increases--which this Committee protested, with absolutely no result--indicated there would be an additional \$1 million per year in revenues. Charges against the Parking Services budget for this year included \$1 million for some part of the Carlson School building, which is a one-time charge. If there is no change in rates, that means Parking Services will have an additional \$1 million in revenues after the current year; would Mr. Baker pledge that there would be no increase in parking rates during 1996-97 because of this windfall.

Mr. Baker said the charge to his budget would be greater than \$1 million, and then noted that there are a number of issues on the horizon that they will have to confront. Most immediately is the East River Road ramp; they put the least amount of money possible into it recently to keep it safe for the short term, but it will be demolished in 1997. Replacing it will cost \$21 million.

But that can be paid with bonds, it was said. In a well-run system, with 30 ramps and 30-year bonds, there should be no change in rates required. Mr. Baker said that they have not had the luxury of issuing bonds in a regular cycle.

Another Committee member noted that exception had been taken by some to the flyer, printed in color, distributed by Parking Services; they see that as one of the uses to which their rate increases was being put. Mr. Baker responded that they are trying to be sensitive but explained that their experience suggested that people would be more likely to read that kind of brochure than some memo printed on letterhead. Committee members expressed reservations about this.

Each department faces sharp fiscal constraints, one Committee member pointed out, but most do not have the luxury of passing on costs to others. The management of the increase was upsetting and there has not been justification of the contribution from Parking Services to the construction of the new Carlson School building; Professor Morrison has been asked to investigate how the Committee can take a more active role in these decisions. One possibility will be to bring these issues to the full Senate.

A second issue is that one justification for the rate increases was that the parking rates should bear some relationship to the cost of other ways of getting to the campus. If there is a bus strike, and increased bus fares are used as a justification to increase parking rates, the Committee will be extremely upset, especially since salaries have not kept up. What is the comparison--bus rates? downtown parking costs? rates for downtown professionals? Anecdotal evidence suggests that University faculty and staff pay MORE than professionals who park downtown, many of whom have subsidized parking.

A related issue, said another Committee member, is that Parking Services apparently believes faculty and staff work fixed hours and that they all leave at 4:00 in the afternoon. Most faculty come and go at all hours of the day. It was particularly irritating when everyone had to vacate their contract spots by 4:00 in order to accommodate the Special Olympics. For most faculty who come and go a lot, the MTC is not a solution.

Mr. Baker said that Parking Services recognizes the movement of faculty; they run a 24-hour-a-day operation. They know peak times of arrival and departure and also understand that this is a research university that has a University Hospital that is open 24 hours a day all year. They also understand that mass transit is not a solution for everyone. But as a member of the Twin Cities community, the University needs to encourage alternative means of transportation--that is a directive given to Parking Services.

One Committee member argued that parking rates are too low and that the University should discourage single-occupancy vehicles for both environmental and energy consumption reasons. Doing so also gets students started off right. It is true that public transportation is not a good alternative--but that is because of the absurdly low costs of using private vehicles. Unlike Europe, the United States subsidizes energy-inefficient practices.

Mr. Baker said his department does do market comparisons with Minneapolis and St. Paul; the University is consistently at or below those rates. One Committee member expressed an interest in seeing the data.

Questions were also raised about reciprocal parking for contract holders. The Campus Club, for instance, is very difficult for St. Paul faculty to use; perhaps one solution might be significantly reduced rates in the Weisman. Wilson Library is difficult for St. Paul or East Bank faculty to stop and use. It would be helpful if there were reciprocal parking in Minneapolis and St. Paul for exams. What the

solutions may be are not clear, but there should be creative ways to add flexibility to the system.

Mr. Baker explained the current program. In general, there are three reciprocal lots (East Bank, West Bank, St. Paul) that a contract parker may use at any time if they do not hold a contract on that campus. In addition, they make case-by-case accommodations for faculty special needs--teaching, carrying equipment, etc.--and will also accommodate one-time requests. All that is required is a call to his office; they will try to get individuals as close as possible to their destination. Reciprocal parking is without charge; one-day arrangements by contract are also without charge. If a reservation in a public parking facility is required, a budget charge is made. They made 32,000 reservations last year. They would appreciate having more than one day's notice, he added. All of this, Mr. Baker noted, was in the brochure they sent out.

When the Committee met with him last spring, recalled one Committee member, Mr. Baker was going to meet with a planner from Minneapolis to coordinate transit services; what was the outcome of that meeting? Mr. Baker said they are in frequent contact with city planning staff and staff of the MTC about service and coordination issues. Generally, he said, there will probably be more coordination as public institutions see their funding decrease.

The Committee discussed briefly with Mr. Baker the implications and arrangements that would be made were there a bus strike (there would be some additional bus service through Medicine Lake Lines, and people would be encouraged to carpool and use the Como and Fairgrounds lots).

Professor Gray thanked Mr. Baker for coming to the meeting and adjourned it at 4:50.

-- Gary Engstrand

University of Minnesota