

Minutes*

Senate Committee on Educational Policy
Tuesday, November 15, 1994
1:45 - 3:30
Room 626 Campus Club

Present: Kenneth Heller (chair), Jeff Bauer, Anita Cholewa, Elayne Donahue, Darwin Hendel, Robert Johnson, Manuel Kaplan, Laura Coffin Koch, Ryan Nilsen, Darren Walhof, Gayle Graham Yates

Regrets: Rachel Brand, James Cotter, Judith Martin, William Van Essendelft

Absent: Megan Gunnar, Sara Hornstra

Guests: Professor W. Andrew Collins, Ms. Linda Ellinger, Professor Emily Hoover, Vice President Anne Hopkins, Professor Irwin Rubenstein, Professor Jan Smith

Others: none

[In these minutes: Conference on faculty roles and rewards; change in high school preparation standards; exemption for women's athletics; changes in Morse-Alumni teaching awards]

1. Report on Conference on Faculty Roles and Rewards

Professor Heller convened the meeting at 1:45 and welcomed Professors Hoover, Rubenstein, and Smith to report on a conference they had attended on faculty roles and rewards.

Professor Rubenstein began by saying that they wished to bring several points back to this group, and to the campus. He said he came away from the meeting believing that higher education is undergoing a sea change, as are the roles faculty are expected to play, especially at research universities. One change is that it used to be that the education was seen as a public good: the investment society made would be repaid by the work of the educated individual. Now education is seen as more of a private good, in part because colleges tell people to come to college to earn more money. The public has come to see higher education as a benefit primarily for those receiving the education. That is a big change.

That change bears on the role of the public institutions vis-a-vis the privates: as public tuition rises, they will be in competition with the private institutions on relative value. If the University is to ask the top 25% of high school students to come here, it must compete with the best universities in the country.

The second point he wished to bring to the Committee is the notion that teaching must be thought of as a scholarly public activity. Research has always been thought of that way--people publish results

*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.

and talk to colleagues--but teaching has rarely involved colleagues. Professor Rubenstein explained that there is a large project underway at several large institutions to do experiments in peer review of teaching; at Wisconsin, the goal is peer review for the improvement of student learning--entirely formative and not at all summative. Since this Committee established a summative process last year, they believed it the appropriate group to talk with about a formative process.

Professor Smith recounted comments made by Ernest Boyer on the assessment of scholarship, which is more than discovery but also consists of integration and transmission. He enumerated the six areas of teaching that faculty must attend to when evaluating effective teaching, three sources of evaluation of faculty teaching: self, peer, and student. Much has been done with student evaluations, and peer evaluation is being explored, but formative self-evaluation must also occur.

Professor Hoover reported on remarks of Lee Shulman of Stanford, who talked about the need to change the university culture in which teaching is now treated as an aside and research is what one is rewarded for. Teaching must be a public activity, not private, and the focus must be on excellence, not adequacy--as is the case with research. Moreover, the culture must change, not the artifacts; a teaching portfolio may be wonderful, but it is an artifact. In addition, the change must take place at the department level, up to the administration, not the other way.

A project at about a dozen universities, Professor Rubenstein then reported, involved picking two departments each from the hard sciences and math, from the social sciences and humanities, and from the professional and performing fields, and trying different methods of peer review. There is no reason the University could not begin a parallel process on its own in order to decide how to do peer review here, at the same time drawing on what the other institutions are doing.

The first question which could be posed to some faculty-student group, such as the University Senate, is "should we do formative evaluation of teaching by peers?" The second question, if the answer to the first is "yes," is "how will it be done?" The process could include outside help, such as asking Lee Shulman to organize a discussion on campus. Having faculty participate in a discussion about formative peer review might alleviate some of the anxiety about the summative reviews.

It was agreed, given the press of time and the agenda, that the Committee could not deal with this issue at this meeting, but agreed that it would take action on specific proposals to be presented to it in the near future, and that it would not let the issue simply trail off. Professor Rubenstein agreed to prepare a proposal for the Committee. Professor Heller thanked the three faculty for joining the meeting.

2. Changes in the High School Preparation Requirements

Professor Heller next inquired of the Committee if it wished to vote on the proposed changes in the high school preparation requirements brought to the Committee at its last meeting. Dr. Hopkins introduced Linda Ellinger, who had served on the committee that had developed the proposal, and then asked Professor Collins to comment.

Professor Collins recalled that he had chaired the committee, nearly a decade ago, that had developed and recommended to the Senate high school preparation standards; before that time, the University had no requirements. It was a major effort to develop the standards and achieve consensus on

them, he told the Committee. The primary practical reason for establishing the requirements, he said, was to send a clear message to the high schools about what the University expected. Many were concerned, at the time, that the high schools would not be able to respond, but that has been shown not to be true and the results have been very positive.

The State University System (SUS) followed the University example and expanded on the requirements. He said he found their arguments to add to the requirements to be compelling. The University believed a greater international perspective was necessary, so had established a language requirement; the SUS had expanded upon it by requiring geography--which has been a weakness in the high schools. The committee that developed the joint proposal believed this important, and also thought it would help build the resources in the high schools. There must be the quid pro quo, he said; the two systems must help the high schools. Without the statewide endorsement, there would not be the impetus to make the change.

The original report, Dr. Hopkins pointed out, noted the difference between "seat time" and competency; where should things go now? The earlier committee walked a fine line on that question, Professor Collins said, because there was little available to measure competencies. They concluded they could not establish competencies; he said he is impressed that the SUS has tried. The earlier committee urged that they be established, and that recommendation was part of what the Senate adopted.

The only place competencies have been established, Dr. Hopkins noted, is in the languages. The others, Professor Collins pointed out, will take longer to develop because they are more complex areas--and they are more controversial.

Asked about why his committee had not called for an arts requirement, Professor Collins said the committee had required one in its draft report, but it became apparent that such a requirement would not be approved by the Senate. There was a good rationale for it, but there was also concern that the high schools would not be able to meet it, and that the number of requirements being proposed would overburden the schools. The committee backed off, but now there is evidence that they can provide the courses for students to meet the requirement, so it makes sense to adopt it.

Discussion turned to acquiring the ability to use computers. His committee, Dr. Collins reported, had recommended that students themselves take on that responsibility, although they had originally proposed it as a requirement. At this point, many believe those skills are essential. There is disagreement in the state, Dr. Hopkins again told the Committee, about whether that skill should be learned in high school or in college; the community colleges believe it appropriate to the college setting while the University tends to believe it should be acquired in high school. Another factor, Professor Collins pointed out, is that there are many avenues by which to gain computer skills, so it may not be as necessary to build it in as required coursework.

In terms of geography, Ms. Ellinger reported, the SUS spells out the requirement but understands that the high schools may not offer separate courses in it; they expect it could be folded into other courses, such as world history and geography or American history and geography.

One Committee member inquired if the SUS has developed a system to monitor whether or not students are achieving the competencies they have established. They have not, Ms. Ellinger reported;

they trust the high school statements. They have ongoing meetings with the high schools, but do not verify; they tell the high schools what they expect and leave it to the schools to do the job. The University trusts and checks. The hope, Dr. Hopkins said, is that the schools will provide instruction that the students can use; if the institutions are going to seek competency, they will have to be more aggressive.

Another byproduct of the preparation requirements, Professor Collins said, is that before they existed, there was little communication between the schools and homes about standards. As a result of the University's requirements, it is standard practice for schools at the 8th grade and later to send home information about preparation standards. The question about access to information was raised with his committee, he related, and access has improved a great deal.

The University does not propose to adopt the competencies established by the SUS, which are compiled in a thick notebook. They are too voluminous and unfocused, Dr. Hopkins said, to be guides to teachers or on development of programs. It is a noble effort, but only a first try. But she said she agrees with the SUS that these requirements should be established and then the development of competencies should follow.

The Committee, Dr. Hopkins said in response to a query, should probably only act on the change in the requirements themselves, and perhaps commit to working with the SUS on competencies; it need not adopt the entire report nor the competencies the SUS has now established.

How would achievement of competency be determined, asked one Committee member? By tests, said Dr. Hopkins, although not necessarily by a single or written examination. Would it be up to the high schools to determine the achievement? That is the case now, Ms. Ellinger pointed out, when the University accepts grades as a surrogate. What would be needed would be a more active institutional role in defining what would be expected, she said. It is only fair to tell students what they will be required to know, said one Committee member; one measure might be to see who does and does not do well in University courses, and correlate that performance with the high school attended. It would be relatively easy in math, harder in writing. There is no quick fix, Dr. Hopkins observed; it could be ten or fifteen years before there is significant progress on measurement of competencies.

One Committee member observed that writing, now, is a "seat time" requirement. Students come to the University with a lot of writing courses and have no idea how to communicate effectively in writing. There must be a way to test writing, it was said; courses in high school are no guarantee students will be able to perform once they arrive at the University. There are discussions taking place, Dr. Hopkins said, about measuring the competencies in writing that students bring with them.

One question is whether or not the University should have preparation requirements IN ADDITION to those of the SUS and community colleges. The community colleges have none, Dr. Hopkins said, and this is not the place to make a statement about tougher standards; the University does that by determining who it will admit. What is needed is a strong statement on what is needed to go to college.

Are the preparation requirements weighted differently, asked one Committee member? Can one be admitted without being able to write? Or if a student has no interest in the arts and is missing the requirement? That is an admissions decision, Dr. Hopkins said. If one applies by a certain date, has

completed the preparation requirements, and has achieved a certain ACT score and high school rank, one is automatically admitted. If one of the preparation requirements is missing, then a judgment is made. No one, however, would be admitted missing all four of the required units of English--but it probably isn't possible to graduate from high school without taking English, either.

The Committee voted unanimously to approve the changes in principle, subject only to a review of the language of a resolution. When finally approved, the resolution will be brought to the Senate Consultative Committee with recommendations that it be presented to the University Senate in February.

3. Women's Athletics Request for an Exemption

Professor Heller distributed a letter from Senior Associate Director of Women's Athletics, Donna Olson, requesting SCEP approval for two exceptions to the requirement that teams not be away from campus during Study Day and Finals Week, one in basketball and one in volleyball. After brief review of the factors associated with the requests, the Committee voted unanimously to approve the exceptions.

One Committee member inquired whether or not these exceptions made a difference in final exam results or grades achieved. It was agreed that the Committee would request of the two athletic directors a compilation of grades achieved by team members when they did, and did not, travel during the Study Day and Finals Week period.

4. Changes in the Morse-Alumni Award Program

Professor Heller then turned to Professor Graham-Yates to lead a discussion of possible changes in the Morse-Alumni Award program.

In its previous discussions, Professor Graham-Yates observed, the Committee conflated two sets of issues: those related to the existing guidelines and those having to do with a more fundamental change in the program itself. The proposal she brings to the Committee speaks to the more fundamental changes; she cautioned that she does not wish to press the changes--all five of which she supports--unless the Committee is interested in doing so.

Most of the ideas for the changes came from last year's nominating committee, she recalled, and were discussed in a preliminary way with SCEP last spring and early this fall. The point of all of them is to use the Morse-Alumni award as a vehicle to strengthen attention to undergraduate education and to provide a fuller award to those faculty who excel in their contributions to undergraduate education.

She then turned to a review of the five recommendations.

1. That the annual Award ceremony be a large public event to which the students and colleagues of all the winners can be invited. (This may be in addition to a smaller event at Eastcliff or some other appropriate setting.)
2. That the Award include for each winner an appropriate, well-publicized lecture or exhibition in the individual's specialty, a seminar of some or all of the year's Award winners, or a colloquium among some of the winners in order to showcase the winners' work public ways.

3. That in the 1995 30th anniversary year a special recognition event be held for all of the winners over all of the years and that a special lapel pin be designed and given to all of them, and that the Alumni Association be asked to provide the publicity and the pin for this event.
4. That a permanent, annual-meeting group of Morse-Alumni award winners be formed as a resource and advisory group to the University about excellence in undergraduate education, somewhat on the model of the Regents' Professorships, and
5. That the Morse-Alumni award money be added to the recipient faculty members' base salaries by the University, that it be not only a one-time award, but a lifetime one.

One suggestion about the last proposal, received from a dean, is that it be an augmentation, funded from a separate pool to be created by the University. Should the Committee take these proposals to the Senate, it would be recommending the University assign and find the money for the proposal; the Committee would not be recommending that it be raised or identified in a particular way.

Committee members then discussed the elements of the proposal.

- Would the second recommendation be mandatory or voluntary? Some winners might not be interested in all the publicity or to participate in a seminar or colloquium. This would be intended to make teaching a more public activity.

If the public presentation is a good idea, this is a real change in the program. As it is, this is just an award: people get it, they get the money, the departments get the money. These changes would mean the program is being changed.

This speaks to the issue raised by the meeting in Madison: teaching should be a public enterprise; if one wins an award such as this, one should expect to present one's work publicly.

There has been discussion of increasing the number of people nominated from different colleges, it was said; one would hate to see this as a deterrent. A public presentation is a continuation of the present policy of having the this award as a means of emphasizing the University's commitment to undergraduate education; if the Committee wishes to make a larger statement, having the winners showcase the qualities and achievements for which they received the award is more interesting.

- Has thought been given to the value of the award as a critical measure at the collegiate or departmental level? Some colleges have proposed that such awards be among the factors used in demonstrating that they are doing a good job of teaching.
- A public presentation is a major task to put on; it requires that some administrators be assigned to do so. Dr. Hopkins said the requirement is entirely appropriate. The only caveat is that if it passes the Senate, the question of who will organize it needs to be determined.

The statement is that this is to be a showcase of the work, not necessarily a lecture.

One way to make the awards more public is to ask the winners to be at graduation ceremonies, in addition to the award event itself, so that all graduating students and their parents can see them. That is already done, Dr. Hopkins said. They are also presented at a Regents' meeting, it was noted. The second recommendation calls for other events, to be well-publicized, in which subject matter, performance or presentation would be the focus--they could take place over the following year, and perhaps lead up to the next awards.

The point is doing something with more exposure for the University community and the public.

- The third recommendation, it was noted, is not a matter of Senate policy, but is a recommendation that the administration and alumni.
- Will the fourth one simply be a formality? Dr. Hopkins said that she could recall a number of occasions where it would have been useful to have a group designated to serve in an advisory capacity. It appears that under the reorganization there may be governance bodies associated with each provost to advise them; this group could be helpful. Whether or not it need include all award winners is an open question. This is not the way the Regents' professors work; they are called together as needed by the President to provide him advice.
- These are all good ideas, Dr. Hopkins said, but it is to be hoped that some of them might be done in combination with other things. The important thing is that they not be lost. Committee members agreed.
- The most controversial recommendation is probably the last one, it was suggested. Committee members reported very little reaction to the proposal; those who had heard comments said they were positive.

To have some kind of inter-departmental award for something that is done within departments is attractive. The fund-raising part of the issue stalled the discussions last year; if the University is asked to provide the money, it may or may not float. But saying that undergraduate education and teaching are so important that the Committee wants the University to reward it in this way is a stand the Committee should take.

The base salary award is attractive, but one can be concerned that when salary money is tight, a department will discriminate against a recipient who receives a base salary increase. How can that be prevented? That is the idea of the augmentation proposed by one of the deans, it was said; then it is NOT added to the base. Augmentations can be withdrawn, Dr. Hopkins noted, so care must be taken in the choice of language.

The point is that the award should be in addition to any merit increase the individual would normally receive. Department administrations may still try to cheat, Dr. Hopkins pointed out; it comes down to what one wants to police.

If there is an objection from other faculty in the Senate, it will be that the salary pool is so small anyway, for merit raises, that this amount will reduce everyone's salary. But perhaps the University could raise a separate pool of funds to endow these stipends. Or it could put more

money in salaries, Dr. Hopkins pointed out; that pool is not fixed.

- Will this have to go to the Committee on Finance and Planning? Will there also be a call for a similar award for research? It was pointed out that meritorious achievement in research almost always results in base salary increases.
- Do previous award winners, who have not had an opportunity to be considered for the permanent salary increase, get a chance to be considered for the "new" award? At present, the policy itself declares one can only win the award once.

That could be changed; next year's SCEP could say it will be opened to everyone, starting the following year, but that is a different level of policy change.

- Would this proposal eliminate the money to the department, presently provided for three years? No, this assumes all that is now in place and changes only the award to the individual. Some of the existing regulations may need to be considered, however. There should be a number attached to the recommendation, it was said. The other question is whether or the amount (added to the base salary) should remain at \$2500 (the existing three-year award), which is higher than the promotional raises.

The award is unusual, it was pointed out, and the people who receive it are extraordinarily successful at what they do. There is nothing wrong with the award being higher than promotional increases. What is more problematic is getting it passed. It would be better to have a smaller award, and have it adopted, than to get nothing at all. Another alternative would be to set it low initially, and then adjust it upwards in future years, if that is deemed wise.

Politically, the right number might be \$1500, which is closer to the promotional increases. Making it part of the base salary, moreover, makes clear the University's commitment.

- Should the Committee say something about where the money should come from, Dr. Hopkins inquired? Or should the Committee remain silent on that point.

Earlier, it was suggested that the University raise the money from outside sources, or make a special request to the legislature. So the Committee could suggest, Dr. Hopkins commented, that these funds be IN ADDITION TO the regular salary pool. Committee members endorsed this proposal.

Professor Heller asked that the Committee vote on whether or not to accept these recommendations in principle and work on developing more precise "policy" language for the Senate at a later meeting. Without dissent, the recommendations were approved.

Professor Heller then adjourned the meeting at 3:30.

-- Gary Engstrand