

Minutes\*

**Senate Committee on Educational Policy**  
**Wednesday, May 7, 1997**  
**1:00 - 3:00**  
**Room 229 Nolte Center**

Present: Laura Koch (chair), Avram Bar-Cohen, Anita Cholewa, Elayne Donahue, Gordon Hirsch, Robert Leik, Judith Martin, Kathleen Newell, Tina Rovick, W. Phillips Shively, William Van Essendelft

Regrets: Darwin Hendel, Thomas Johnson

Absent: Gayle Graham Yates

Guests: Beth Aune (Minnesota Department of Children, Families, and Learning), James Borgestad (President's Office); Toni McNaron (English), Jan Smith, Joyce Weinsheimer (Human Resources)

[In these minutes: K-12 graduation standards; Center for Teaching and Learning Services; subcommittees on IMG and Twin Cities curriculum]

**1. K-12 Graduation Standards**

Professor Koch convened the meeting at 1:00 and welcomed Ms. Aune and Dr. Borgestad to discuss the new state K-12 graduation standards.

Ms. Aune began by explaining that her department had worked with people who use the "results" of K-12 education--post-secondary education and employers--to develop standards for K-12 education that would produce the knowledge and skills needed for work and higher education. She said her purpose was to enlist support for the standards and explain their present status and the next steps to be taken.

Ms. Aune distributed a handout summarizing the standards, and said they focus on the "three Rs": results, rigor, and relevance. With respect to results, the focus will shift from seat time based on an accumulation of courses to demonstrated achievement of standards or outcomes. At present, two classes that are supposedly on exactly the same subject can be widely different; there is also a great deal of confusion about the criteria for letter grades. The new "dual transcript" will report traditional information such as course titles and letter grades, as well as new, standards-based information including an achievement score for each standard completed.

With respect to rigor, there are too many students who are not challenged to the level of their abilities. Many parents have expressed dissatisfaction and a need for higher expectations.

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\*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.

With respect to relevance, students spend hours in classes listening to lectures and then "spill back" what they have learned on exams--but they cannot later connect what they have learned in any applied way. Also, the current curriculum has not been aligned with all of the key knowledge and skills that students must acquire to be successful in the next century. The standards expose these gaps in the curriculum so that schools may focus on what is most important.

There are three components in the standards: the Comprehensive Goals, the Basic Standards, and the High Standards in the Profile of Learning. First are the comprehensive goals: a student should be a purposeful thinker, effective communicator (including not only reading and writing but oral communication as well), self-directed learner (with a zest for learning that is life-long), productive group participant (employers need teamwork skills), and responsible citizen (one who thinks about the issues of the day). Four kinds of concrete, observable behaviors have been teased from these goals. They are called task management skills because the research suggests that if individuals are good at these four skills, the probability increases that they will be more successful at any task they try later. The task management skills are resource management, time management, perseverance, and team work. [Note: the Profile of Learning draft was revised at the 5/12/97 State Board of Education meeting. The new draft calls for Task Management Skills to be included in curriculum and instruction, but schools will not be required to assess students on those skills or report them on the transcript, unless the school chooses to do so.)

The second and third components of the standards are the "basic standards" and the "high standards in the profile of learning." The basic standards, Ms. Aune said, are directly related to the kinds of reports one sees in the media about low performance in reading, mathematics, and so on. Students will first be tested in the 8th grade on the standards, and will have multiple opportunities through 12th grade to pass them. If a student does not pass, he or she will not receive a diploma.

The "basic standards" are the safety net. "Students who are in the ninth grade in 1996-97 and thereafter must pass" reading and math tests and a written composition test. These are intended to catch students who are currently falling between the cracks. Asked about requiring students to perform at the 9th grade level, Ms. Aune acknowledged that these are not high standards. They are intended for survival; someone who cannot pass them would be someone who could not read a 10th grade social studies text and who would have trouble with some of the daily functions of life. It is doubtful, Dr. Borgestad observed, that anyone who could not pass the basic standards would come to the University.

The heart and soul of the standards, Ms. Aune said, are the "high standards in the profile of learning." There are 10 broad learning areas supported by standards that describe what students should know and be able to do. There are standards for four levels: primary grades, intermediate, middle level, and high school.

The 10 areas of learning are: (1) read, view, and listen to complex information in the English language; (2) write and speak effectively in the English language; (3) use and interpret the arts; (4) solve problems by applying mathematics; (5) conduct research and communicate findings; (6) understand and apply scientific concepts; (7) understand interactions between people and cultures; (8) use information to make decisions; (9) manage resources for a household, community, or government; and (10) communicate in another language. They went to the research and surveyed constituents to learn what would be needed in the future; the 10 learning areas are the result.

With respect to numbers 1 and 2, students need to be able to deal with technical information. K-12 education has typically focused on fictional literature and spent little time on graphs, charts, and directions. This will be more important in the future as students become adults, and must be incorporated in the schools. There remains a need for understanding of the use of simile and metaphor, but increased skills in technical language must be added.

Number 5 is new for the schools; all of their discussions revealed that students are expected to have good research skills and, absolutely crucial, be able to communicate their findings. They heard from college faculty on this point. This learning area has more standards than any of the others.

On number 7, which is essentially history, social science, and geography, they discovered a severe learning gap in geography.

They cannot require number 10 now, because there are not enough language teachers in the state; they hope to require it in the future.

Associated with these 10 learning areas are 62 specific standards at the high school level which describe what the student should know and be able to do.

Students performance on the high standards will be assessed in a radically different way from the basic standards. For the former, there will be performance assessments, which will include opportunities to apply the knowledge and skills to real world tasks. They are trying to blur the line between teaching and assessment; assessment should inform. This will be a long road, Ms. Aune said; teachers do not know how to do this kind of assessment. Scores on each standard will range from 1 to 4 (4 is outstanding). Students will be required to work in a minimum of 24 standards in the 10 areas of learning.

One Committee member inquired how this effort was connected to similar efforts in other states. Ms. Aune said that they had hoped simply to buy or replicate what another state is doing, if they could find something they liked. What other states are doing, however, did not match with the requirements of the constituents. Other states' efforts tend to be more narrowly academic with a lot of paper and pencil testing. The Minnesota effort, she said, is classroom-based reform; if the teachers do not change, the standards will not work. As a result, they involved hundreds of teachers in developing the standards.

Dr. Borgestad then spoke to the issue of the relationship between the standards and the University. The broader context, he said, is that this is now state policy, an effort which is also receiving federal funding. It will have an impact on the University; the majority of students in higher education in Minnesota are from Minnesota and will come from schools that must use the standards. The class of 2002 will be the first group that has come through school with the standards in place for their entire 8th-12th grade career.

The effect on the University will be incremental. For admissions personnel, the standards will require understanding of what the transcripts mean (it will be helpful, for the short-term, to continue to have traditional records also included). The standards were developed in consultation with the faculty in the College of Education and Human Development, so those faculty have an advanced understanding of the standards.

The largest group on campus that will not have an understanding of the standards will be the faculty at large. How will they be affected? Primarily through the method of teaching, which will hit higher education as these students enter college; students will be less content with the traditional lecture and will expect more active learning. Ms. Aune said students will expect authentic performance assessment and not as much paper-and-pencil testing. One question is how to develop among the faculty an appreciation of the implications of the change to the new standards, Dr. Borgestad told the Committee.

The Minnesota Higher Education Advisory Council (the system heads plus the Commissioner of Children, Families, and Learning) have established a task force to determine how the standards "interface" with skills needed for college success, to provide a process for continued communication between K-12 and post-secondary higher education about the standards, to ensure admissions standards are congruent with the K-12 standards, to determine how the standards affect curriculum and instruction in post-secondary education, and to recommend ways to make "seamless" transitions from secondary to post-secondary institutions. President Hasselmo wants to be sure that appropriate faculty and Senate groups are included in the consultation on these issues; that is the reason Ms. Aune has joined this meeting.

Asked about the post-secondary education options, Ms. Aune said it will continue; it is one of the most popular programs they have. It is not clear how courses and credits a student earns will translate to the standards. The program is very successful at encouraging students to attend the University, Dr. Borgestad added; many who participate eventually come here.

One Committee member inquired about the scoring on the high standards; what of variations in grading between schools? Ms. Aune agreed that inter-rater reliability in the current system of letter grades is a problem. In the standards-referenced system, this will still be a problem, but to a lesser degree. They know what the standard is, and what should be assessed; they will have groups of teachers review student work and discuss the evaluation/scores, a process that will be a powerful staff development tool.

Professor Koch thanked Ms. Aune and Dr. Borgestad for the presentation.

## **2. Center for Teaching and Learning Services**

Professor Koch next welcomed Professor McNaron and Mss. Smith and Weinsheimer to discuss the Center for Teaching and Learning Services.

Ms. Weinsheimer distributed a handout and explained that the center is new; it is an umbrella organization for a number of programs to provide assistance in enhancing teaching and learning on the Twin Cities campus. All have been in Human Resources; it is hoped that with one title and organization, funds can be shared and connection with the campus can be simplified. With respect to the title, "center" indicates they have a physical location (in Fraser Hall), "services" is intended to tell the campus that they do collaborative work with departments and disciplines, and "teaching and learning" means they want to help faculty and TAs promote student learning.

Professor McNaron explained the kinds of things the Center does, including individual

consultation, customized workshops for colleges and departments on a wide variety of topics, short courses, year-long programs, and the Bush Faculty Development program.

The Center also offers a new program suggested by the deans and provosts: a fee-for-service program, whereby units can request assistance from a menu of choices. They will work with deans who make available money for departments; Professor McNaron said they do not know if anyone will take advantage of the service.

She also explained that the Center allowed services for graduate students to be consolidated, including orientation of new students, coursework to prepare future faculty, mentoring opportunities (at local colleges and UMM and UMD), international student assistance, coursework in communication skills, coaching for mentors, and support for departmental pedagogy courses. They have also begun to work with undergraduate tutors and mentors. The Center is also a resource for administrators to identify opportunities for faculty; it also is preparing a website allowing access to services and providing opportunities for self-instruction.

One Committee member inquired if the Center would assist faculty in educational research, helping them assess whether what they are doing is effective? Professor McNaron said they provide faculty with research data which demonstrates that certain things about learning are well-documented; she agreed it might be worth considering to assist faculty with research on their own instructional methods.

Professor Koch thanked Professor McNaron and Mss. Smith and Weinsheimer for joining the meeting.

### **3. Proposals for Subcommittees**

Professor Koch next drew the attention of Committee members to two revised proposals, one for a subcommittee on the undergraduate curriculum on the Twin Cities campus, the other for an IMG oversight committee, to be jointly appointed with the Committee on Finance and Planning. She reported on comments and changes to the IMG subcommittee that the Finance and Planning Committee had made, as well as changes to the undergraduate curriculum committee. Originally it had been thought that one subcommittee might be sufficient, but as she worked with Professor Catherine French from the Committee on Finance and Planning, it became clear that the focus of the curriculum committee would be narrower, and that the amount of work involved would make it impossible for a single group to accomplish the charge.

Asked if the central administration supports the establishment of the IMG subcommittee, it was reported that Associate Vice President Kvavik had welcomed its appointment. Provost Shively has promised support for the curriculum subcommittee.

Asked what the recourse would be if a subcommittee observed that something was not working, Professor Koch explained that policy matters would be brought to SCEP or Finance and Planning, for transmission to the Senate. One minor concern, she said, is that SCEP not get involved in Finance and Planning matters, and vice-versa; the chairs can in all likelihood resolve jurisdictional issues.

Other issues dealt with were these:

- Individuals eligible for membership should include faculty as well as P&A staff who are eligible to serve in the Senate
- Individuals selected for the IMG subcommittee must be knowledgeable about IMG
- The curriculum subcommittee will have to focus on the incentives (or lack thereof) for interdisciplinary teaching across colleges; it is at disciplinary boundaries that advances are being made, and the last thing the University needs is a rigid structure to prevent work in these areas
- There must be central support for the two subcommittees, especially in the provision of staff support

After brief additional discussion, the Committee unanimously approved the documents establishing both subcommittees; they follow.

### **TWIN CITIES UNDERGRADUATE CURRICULUM SUBCOMMITTEE**

#### **CHARGE**

Under the general direction of the Assembly Committee on Educational Policy, the Twin Cities Undergraduate Curriculum Subcommittee shall work within the framework of the educational policies adopted by the University Senate and Twin Cities Campus Assembly to provide assistance to the college curriculum committees for their review of all undergraduate course proposals in order to help the college curriculum committees consider factors that would affect curriculum and policies across collegiate units and across the campus as a whole. The Twin Cities Undergraduate Curriculum Subcommittee shall: 1) review and advise the deans and central administration on all undergraduate courses, undergraduate majors and program proposals; 2) establish a campus-wide course offering plan; and 3) coordinate its work with the Council on Liberal Education.

#### **MEMBERSHIP**

The Twin Cities Undergraduate Curriculum Subcommittee shall be appointed by the Chair of the Committee on Educational Policy, in consultation with the members of the Committee on Educational Policy. It shall be composed of 10 faculty members or P&A staff eligible to serve in the Senate selected from the curriculum committees of colleges that offer undergraduate instruction; 2 decanal representatives (nominated by the deans and appointed by the Executive Vice President and Provost); 2 undergraduate students (appointed by the Committee on Committees); ex officio representation from the Council on Liberal Education and other representatives as the Subcommittee recommends and are approved by the Committee on Educational Policy.

The chair of the Subcommittee shall be a tenured faculty member, shall be appointed by the Executive Vice President and Provost, in consultation with the Committee on Educational Policy, and shall serve as an ex officio member of the Committee on

Educational Policy. The position of the chair shall be a 25-percent time funded appointment through the end of the academic year 1999-2000. The office of the Executive Vice President and Provost will be asked to provide staff support to the subcommittee.

#### Duties and Responsibilities

- a. To bring together, integrate, and disseminate campus-wide guidelines for use by college curriculum committees. The criteria for course approval shall include policies adopted by the University Senate and the Twin Cities Campus Assembly, including but not limited to those that govern the relationship between credits and contact time, the relationship between credit and student academic effort, time constraints for completion of a degree program, and the number of credits necessary for graduation. The actual review will be conducted by the college curriculum committees.
- b. To review all new undergraduate majors and program proposals. This includes reviewing the overall undergraduate curriculum of the Twin Cities campus, including programs offered, the breadth and sufficiency of course offerings, and the requirements of the programs including those established by the Council on Liberal Education.
- c. To review, for possible duplication, courses that have been approved by college curriculum committees and proposed for the change to semesters. This includes consideration of the similarity between and among courses that are offered in more than one college; the Subcommittee will determine, after consultation with (1) the college curriculum committees, (2) faculty proposing the courses, and (3) college administrators, the necessity of offering similar courses and whether one or several courses shall be offered. Such disputes will only be considered when brought to the committee by one or more collegiate units. Recommendations of the Subcommittee shall be forwarded to the Executive Vice President and Provost and the Senior Vice President for the Health Sciences for implementation.
- d. To recommend to the Committee on Educational Policy such actions or policies it deems appropriate.
- e. To coordinate its work with the Council on Liberal Education.
- f. To establish and monitor a campus-wide plan on the frequency and scheduling of courses.

The subcommittee shall report to the Assembly Committee on Educational Policy at least twice per year.

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## **IMG OVERSIGHT SUBCOMMITTEE**

### **CHARGE**

Under the general direction of the Senate Committee on Educational Policy and the Senate Committee on Finance and Planning, the "Incentives for Managed Growth (IMG) Oversight Subcommittee" shall monitor implementation of IMG and develop recommendations, for the Senate and for the administration, for modifications of IMG which the subcommittee deems appropriate. The subcommittee shall consider broad University concerns, and the subcommittee members shall represent the interests of the entire institution.

The IMG Oversight Subcommittee shall provide counsel to the administrator(s) who will be making detailed budget decisions at the various levels within the University based on its analyses of the impact and implications of IMG.

### **MEMBERSHIP**

The IMG Oversight Subcommittee shall consist of 6 faculty or P&A staff eligible to serve in the Senate. In addition, there shall be 3 ex officio faculty members (with vote): 1 from the Committee on Educational Policy, 1 from the Committee on Finance and Planning, and 1 from the Committee on Research (the committee representatives shall be designated by the chairs of the respective committees). The 6 faculty subcommittee members shall be appointed jointly by the chairs of the Committees on Educational Policy and Finance and Planning, with assistance provided by the Committee on Committees as it may be requested. There shall be 3 ex officio administrative representatives, without vote: 2 from the office of the Executive Vice President and Provost (one individual for undergraduate education and one individual for graduate education and research), and 1 from the office of the Senior Vice President for Finance and Operations.

The chair of the subcommittee shall be designated by agreement between the chairs of the Committee on Educational Policy and Finance and Planning.

The office of the Executive Vice President and Provost will be asked to provide staff and budgetary support to the subcommittee.

### **DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

The oversight subcommittee shall address issues which include but are not limited to the effects of IMG: on interdisciplinary teaching, timely graduation rates, and course duplication; on micro-managing; on morale; on using a particular point in time as the benchmark for deciding, for departments, the revenue-neutral status of space charges and tuition revenues; on how tuition revenue may affect the quality of the student body and the quality of education; and on collegiate units versus on other non-academic units.

When the oversight subcommittee identifies a problem with IMG calling for a

change in policy, it shall make appropriate recommendation(s) to the Committees on Educational Policy and Finance and Planning. When the oversight committee identifies a problem with implementation of IMG, it shall make recommendation(s) to the appropriate senior officers. The oversight subcommittee shall coordinate its work as appropriate with campus curriculum committees.

Professor Koch adjourned the meeting at 3:00.

-- Gary Engstrand

University of Minnesota