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Minutes

**Faculty Consultative Committee**  
**Thursday, August 5, 2004**  
**1:15 – 3:00**  
**238A Morrill Hall**

Present:

Marvin Marshak (chair), Gary Balas, Jean Bauer, Susan Brorson, Charles Campbell, Carol Chomsky, Arthur Erdman, Emily Hoover, Kathleen Krichbaum, Scott Lanyon, Judith Martin, John Sullivan

Absent:

None counted for a summer meeting

Guests:

Senior Vice President Robert Jones

Other:

H. Jeanie Taylor (President's Office)

[In these minutes: (1) biennial request; (2) stadium update; (3) draft statement on the budget; (4) Citizens' League testimony; (5) appointments; (6) academic freedom report; (7) visits to coordinate campuses; (8) library funding; (9) exceptions to the research secrecy policy]

**1. Biennial Request**

Professor Marshak convened the meeting at 1:15, reviewed the agenda, and turned to Senior Vice President Jones to lead a discussion of the biennial request.

Dr. Jones noted that the Committee had earlier reviewed the biennial request principles. He provided information about various budget scenarios and an outline of the University's biennial request. Committee members discussed a number of questions with Dr. Jones. It was agreed that the Committee would be provided an update on the request, when there would be more substance to it, within the next week or so.

Professor Marshak thanked Dr. Jones for joining the Committee.

**2. Stadium Update**

Professor Marshak next welcomed Vice President Kathryn Brown to the meeting. Vice President Brown reviewed briefly the proposals made at the legislature last year, the elements of an update that

would be provided to the Board of Regents, and the status of fund-raising efforts for a new on-campus football stadium. She reiterated the President's position that if it turns out this project "is a bridge too far," the University will not go forward with it. Committee members asked Vice President Brown a few questions.

Professor Marshak thanked Vice President Brown for joining the meeting.

### **3. Draft Statement on the Budget**

Professor Marshak next drew the attention of Committee members to the draft statement on the University's budget that he had circulated earlier by email. He said that the University has had a roughly 15% cut in state support, but if one asks how much of it was accommodated through programmatic changes, there are a variety of estimates. There were two clear programmatic cuts: the Minnesota Extension Service and Facilities Management. In total, perhaps \$15 million per year was reallocated centrally, and perhaps about another \$10 million in was reallocated in the colleges. It appears that much of the total cut in state support was accommodated through across-the-board steps: tuition increases, fringe benefit reductions, and salary freezes. That seems a non-optimal way to run a university, he said.

There now seems to be support among some deans and central administrators for making programmatic changes, Professor Marshak continued. One cannot expect anyone to offer their own programs for cutting, but there appears to be general support for doing what is necessary. This Committee needs to help, he said. He noted that he will make a report to the Board of Regents in September, so he drafted a statement on the need for change. He asked the Committee if it wished to get into this issue, and if so, how.

Committee members discussed the draft statement, the Provost's recent statement on planning, the role of the Committee, and the ways in which it might be involved in discussions of or the process of making programmatic changes. It was agreed that several Committee members would work with Professor Marshak on drafting a statement that reflects the Committee's views.

### **4. Citizens' League**

Professor Marshak next reported that he had spoken with a colleague who had told the Citizens' League that while research is important to Minnesota and should be supported for its own value, frontier research is not closely related to undergraduate education. Professor Marshak said that he pointed out that statement is not true of all disciplines and that many provide important research opportunities for undergraduates. He went on to describe to the colleague examples of undergraduate with whom he had personally worked through the UROP program and otherwise. He also pointed out to the colleague that software skills make many undergraduates particularly valuable in contributing to all kinds of empirical research.

It appeared that most Committee members agreed with Professor Marshak and disagreed with the Citizens' League presentation.

### **5. Appointments**

Professor Marshak asked Committee members to identify potential members of the Faculty Academic Oversight Committee on Intercollegiate Athletics and the Advisory Committee on Athletics. Once he has a list of names, he will contact individuals about serving.

## **6. Academic Freedom Report**

Professor Marshak next inquired what disposition the Committee wished to make of the report of the Task Force on Academic Freedom.

Professor Martin recalled that the Committee and Provost Maziar established several joint task forces; this one was appointed following several conversations with Dr. Maziar about academic freedom. It is incumbent on this Committee to identify what to do with the report. One possibility would be for the Committee to sponsor a forum at which participants talk about academic freedom. Another would be to have the topic the focus of a "Great Conversation." It is a great report, she said, and it needs broader dissemination.

Might the Committee co-sponsor something with the AAUP chapter, Professor Marshak asked? Professor Campbell, an officer in the Twin Cities chapter, said that it could. Professor Brorson said this is an important issue for new faculty; she also inquired how coordinate campus faculty could participate in any events. Professor Martin suggested that any event on the Twin Cities campus should be connected by video to the other campuses. Professor Marshak added that the Committee could sponsor an event when some Committee members visit the coordinate campuses.

## **7. Visits to Coordinate Campuses**

Professor Marshak noted meeting dates when a delegation from the Committee would be asked to travel to one of the coordinate campuses. He asked Committee members to volunteer for one of the dates.

## **8. Library Funding**

Professor Balas reported that he had recently had a conversation with the University Librarian and he provided information to the Committee about the funding situation. He expressed great concern about the funding model for the University in recent years. The Committee discussed whether increased indirect cost funds are directed in part to the libraries (they are not). Professor Balas said that faculty do not realize that more research does not mean increased library funding, and often the faculty do not know about cuts in subscriptions until after they have been imposed. He said the Committee should talk with Provost Sullivan to remind him of the Committee's concern and to urge him to support the libraries at the level needed.

Professor Hoover said she would ask the Librarian to join a meeting of the Educational Policy Committee; Professor Balas said she would also be asked to speak with the Research Committee as part of its discussions of research infrastructure support.

It was agreed that the Committee would speak with Provost Sullivan about these matters in September.

## **9. Exceptions to the Research Secrecy Policy**

Professor Balas next noted that the request for an exception to the Regents' policy barring secrecy in research or publications restrictions came up very quickly. The research secrecy subcommittee had reviewed the request and voted to recommend it be granted; the Research Committee and this Committee had then been polled by email about approving the recommendation to the President. Although the procedural requirements of the policy could not be met within the deadlines for the grant (that any request be presented to the University Senate for debate and recommendation to the President), both committees voted in favor of recommending that the exception be granted.

This was a significant exception to the policy, Professor Balas commented. The grant would allow the federal government to review any publication in advance and to extract from it any information related to homeland security; the research could not be shared with some other individuals in the research group because of export controls. The process was rushed but the President signed off on the exception because of a belief that the technology proposed for development could be helpful. If the University declined to accept the grant, it would not be playing a significant role in technology transfer in this area. The technology, Professor Marshak explained, involves TV monitoring of activities in mass transit stations; the computers would identify suspicious actions. The argument was that the research has intellectual merit; the downside is that export restrictions apply to the University's own foreign national graduate students, so some students cannot be involved in the research. This is a big problem, he said, and it will come up again. Professor Erdman noted that when one is working on a patent, the research is also typically not shared. In this case, however, Professor Marshak said, students are excluded from participation because of their nationality.

The Senate Research Committee will begin to review the process for granting exceptions to the research secrecy policy as well as to develop criteria to be used in deciding on whether to grant an exception.

Is there a way for the committees to be involved earlier in the process in order to avoid the rushed circumstances, Professor Lanyon asked? He said he worried that an agency will dangle a lot of money in front of the University, which will then make a decision without adequate discussion. That is why he would like to have guidelines in place, Professor Marshak said.

Professor Marshak adjourned the meeting at 3:10.

-- Gary Engstrand