

Minutes*

Faculty Consultative Committee
Thursday, January 18, 2006
1:15 – 3:00
238A Morrill Hall

Present: Carol Chomsky, (chair), Jean Bauer, Nancy Carpenter, William Durfee, Barbara Elliott, Megan Gunnar, Emily Hoover, Mary Jo Kane, Kathleen Krichbaum, Scott Lanyon, Judith Martin, Richard McCormick, Nelson Rhodus, Steven Ruggles, Geoffrey Sirc, John Sullivan, Jennifer Windsor

Absent: Gary Balas, Martin Sampson

Guests: Vice President Rusty Barceló, Professor Perry Leo, Provost E. Thomas Sullivan, Vice Provost Craig Swan; Vice Provost Arlene Carney

Other: Lynn Holleran, Kathryn Stuckert (Office of the Chief of Staff)

[In these minutes: (1) election of 2007-08 committee chair; (2) extra senate meeting in future years; (3) academic support and performance of student-athletes report; (4) student learning outcomes]

1. Election of the 2007-08 Chair

Professor Chomsky convened the meeting at 1:15 and called for the distribution of ballots for next year's chair. Professor Balas, who was not present at the meeting, was elected.

2. Extra Senate Meeting

Professor Chomsky next recalled she had polled Committee members by email about the advisability of scheduling an additional Senate meeting in the future (either Faculty Senate or University Senate, as pending business might suggest appropriate), given that the President's State of the University address takes one of the five meetings. Committee members concurred with the suggestion.

3. Academic Support and Performance for Student-Athletes Task Force Final Report

Professor Chomsky turned now to Provost Sullivan to introduce the task force report on the academic performance of student-athletes; the presentation also included remarks from Professor Leo and comments from Professor Kane and Vice Provost Swan. It was agreed that the discussion would be off the record, but several points can be noted (following the recommendations). The recommendations of the task force are these:

-- Formalize, standardize and streamline data collection of student-athletes' academic performance by creating a *centralized* database that can be used by Athletics, Compliance, Admissions, the McNamara Academic Center, and other relevant units across the University.

* These minutes reflect discussion and debate at a meeting of a committee of the University of Minnesota Senate; none of the comments, conclusions, or actions reported in these minutes represents the views of, nor are they binding on, the Senate, the Administration, or the Board of Regents.

- Examine the potential for an intensive and comprehensive *Summer Bridge* program to help student-athletes—especially those who are academically fragile—successfully transition into the academic and social rigors of life on a college campus.
- Increase access to academic programs that are relevant to student-athletes as a way to increase their interest and motivation, leading to better academic outcomes.
- Intensify efforts to track, engage, and provide opportunities to former student-athletes who have left the U without graduating, but who have accumulated enough credit hours so that graduation is well within reach.
- The research and methodology used in the report has already won a national award.
- The Provost endorses the recommendations and the University has begun to implement them. The question of program access is a faculty matter.
- The recommendations are important for the larger student body as well as student-athletes.

Professor Chomsky thanked Provost Sullivan, Professor Leo, and the other guests for the report.

4. Student Learning Outcomes

Professor Sullivan welcomed Vice Provost Carney to discuss the student learning outcomes that had been forwarded from the Committee on Educational Policy. Dr. Carney reviewed the history of the development of the learning outcomes and referred Committee members to a draft motion for the Faculty Senate (Twin Cities Delegation only because these learning outcomes are for the Twin Cities campus):

Motion: That the Twin Cities Delegation of the Faculty Senate:

- adopts as University policy the following seven Undergraduate Student Learning Outcomes for the Twin Cities campus;
- endorses these seven learning outcomes as the guiding principles for teaching and learning at all levels of curricular decision-making on the Twin Cities campus;
- endorses establishing pilot programs in a cross-section of departments across a number of colleges to develop methods, rubrics, and processes that will serve as models for campus-wide adoption and implementation of the learning outcomes by academic units; and
- encourages the coordinate campuses to review and consider the adoption and implementation of these undergraduate learning outcomes for their campuses as well.

Undergraduate Student Learning Outcomes

At the time of receiving a bachelor's degree, students:

- Can identify, define, and solve problems
- Can locate and evaluate information critically
- Have mastered a body of knowledge and a mode of inquiry
- Understand diverse philosophies and cultures within and across societies

- Can communicate effectively
- Understand the role of creativity, innovation, discovery, and expression across all disciplines
- Have acquired skills for effective citizenship and life-long learning.

Dr. Carney explained how colleges and departments could amplify on these learning outcomes, identifying elements of specific curricula that contribute to the outcomes. While every major will address some of the learning outcomes, it is not expected that any major will cover all of them. She and the Committee discussed how students might allocate their time and classes to achieve the learning outcomes; Dr. Carney reported that there will be a pilot project to implement the outcomes in particular programs before efforts are made to implement them across the entire campus. She also commented that the learning outcomes should drive the liberal education requirements and that the two should not be developed separately. Among the purposes of the learning outcomes, Professor Chomsky said, is to suggest that faculty and departments be more mindful of what ends a course will achieve and will be articulate those ends. Professor Elliott, responding to a comment from Professor Gunnar that anyone could make a claim about what a course is accomplishing without any evidence to support the claim, noted that the Medical School is changing its curriculum to competency-based outcomes. This effort is actually changing the frame for evaluation from what a course offers to what the student achieves or gains—and the achievement/gain is documented and tracked in each student portfolio. That may be the long-term direction for the learning outcomes on the Twin Cities campus, Dr. Carney observed.

The Committee discussed how best to bring this matter to the Faculty Senate. It will be important to present this in a national context, Professor Martin said, and in a way that recognizes most faculty are already doing things in a way to promote these outcomes. It is important that the University articulate these outcomes, Dr. Carney said, or it runs the risk of having an assessment scheme forced on it in a way that it might not like. She said they have tried to keep the outcomes simple so they can be on the web, advertised to parents and students, and can be assessed.

The most difficult part of the process will be assessment, Dr. Carney said. There will be new student-evaluation-of-instruction questions, based on the student learning outcomes, that faculty can choose to use to help assess how well they are doing in addressing the student learning outcomes. Professor Bauer asked if faculty will be required to address the learning outcomes; they will if the Faculty Senate adopts them, Dr. Carney responded.

Professor Hoover suggested that the third and fourth bulleted points ("endorses establishing. . ." and "encourages the coordinate campuses. . .") be removed from the motion, as inappropriate for the Faculty Senate. The Committee concurred.

Professor Chomsky thanked Dr. Carney for her presentation; Dr. Carney stayed for the meeting of the Senate Consultative Committee, which followed immediately after this one was adjourned at 3:10.

-- Gary Engstrand