

Minutes*

Senate Committee on Educational Policy
Wednesday, September 27, 2000
1:00 – 3:00
140 Nolte Center

Present: Wilbert Ahern (chair), Steve Fitzgerald, Charles Henderson, Gordon Hirsch, Emily Hoover, Karen Seashore Louis, Geri Malandra, Christine Maziar, Kathleen Newell, Marsha Odom, Mary Ellen Shaw, Rita Snider, Steven Sperber, Rachel Sullivan, Craig Swan

Regrets: Frank Kulacki, Carol Miller, Richard Skaggs, Thomas Soulen

Absent: none

Guests: J. Peter Zetterberg (Institutional Research and Reporting); Karen Linquist (Human Resources); Professor W. Andrew Collins, Jan Morse (for the Bush Foundation faculty development proposal)

[In these minutes: undergraduate demographic profiles (where students come from, how they do); committees for awards for contributions to education; Bush Foundation faculty development proposal; grading policy (repeating courses)]

1. Undergraduate Demographic Profiles

Professor Ahern convened the meeting at 1:05, noted that three of the faculty members of the Committee had inadvertently had teaching commitments scheduled at the same time as Committee meetings, and then turned to Dr. Peter Zetterberg to lead a discussion of demographic profiles.

Dr. Zetterberg explained that the Board of Regents had asked for a presentation on how University of Minnesota undergraduates compare with undergraduates at peer institutions. The information he provided looked at where the students come from, how they compare on ability levels and other measures, and demographic trends. He noted, by way of introduction, that University students come from over 100 countries; if one counts graduate and professional students, they come from over 150 countries.

At present the University has eight reciprocity agreements: full reciprocity with Manitoba, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Wisconsin and partial reciprocity with Michigan, Kansas, Missouri, and Nebraska. (The agreement with Michigan excludes the University of Michigan and Michigan State University.) Most states, Dr. Zetterberg commented, have NO reciprocity agreements; it is very unusual for a state to have eight of them. These agreements, he said in response to a question, are negotiated by the state; the University has little say about them.

* 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 represent the views of, nor are they binding on, the Senate or Assembly, the Administration, or the Board of Regents.

Crookston undergraduates come largely from Minnesota and North Dakota. Crookston is the only campus with no non-resident tuition; there will be proposals in the legislature, Dr. Zetterberg told the Committee, to extend that policy statewide. He noted that Minnesota is a net exporter of college students by a slight margin; more students leave Minnesota to attend college than come to Minnesota from elsewhere to attend college.

Morris students also come largely from Minnesota, with a number from the reciprocity states; in total, it draws from about half the states. Duluth draws its students primarily from Minnesota, with a large contingent from Wisconsin and smaller numbers from other reciprocity states.

The Twin Cities campus draws from all 50 states but most heavily from Minnesota and Wisconsin and smaller contingents from the Dakotas.

Dr. Zetterberg then reviewed the number of Minnesota undergraduate students on each campus by the county in Minnesota from which they come. Not surprisingly, Crookston draws primarily from the northwest part of the state. Morris draws heavily from the Twin Cities-St. Cloud corridor, Duluth draws from St. Louis County and the Twin Cities, and the Twin Cities campus draws over half its students from the Twin Cities metropolitan area and particularly Hennepin County (which has approximately one-quarter of the state's population). While the majority of students at the University come from the Twin Cities, there are several counties that send a higher proportion of its students to the University as freshmen (e.g., Brown, Nicollet, Marshall, and Polk counties all send a higher percentage of their students to the University than does Hennepin County).

The University draws few students from Iowa, which is a non-reciprocity state; Iowa also has low in-state tuition, works hard to keep Iowa students, and recruits heavily in Minnesota. Iowa would NOT like it if Minnesota eliminated non-resident tuition.

Each campus has a peer group, Dr. Zetterberg then reported, groups developed for the purpose of making faculty salary comparisons but which work equally as well for these kinds of demographic comparisons.

Dr. Zetterberg highlighted a few of the points in the demographic comparisons for each campus.

Crookston: The comparison group is polytechnic institutions; most of them do not have a high percentage of students from the top 10% of their high school class (i.e., 10% or fewer; Crookston, however, has fewer students (50%) from the top half of their high school class than do its peers); its acceptance rate is 81%. The schools in the Crookston comparison group are significantly larger than Crookston but it compares quite favorably with its peers on the ACT scores of its entering freshmen. Crookston has a lower percentage of part-time students than its peers and the average age of its students is lower than most of its peers as well.

Morris: The comparison group is 13 other liberal arts colleges, only two of which are public (and includes Carleton, Macalester, St. Olaf, Hamline, Concordia, and St. John's); Morris, Dr. Zetterberg said, probably has the best peer group of any University campus. The overall acceptance rate at Morris is 88%, which may appear puzzling in light of its high-ability profile; the answer, Dr.

Zetterberg suggested, is self-selection. In terms of student rank, 45% come from the top 10% of their high school class and 76% come from the top 25%; Morris compares very favorably with its peers.

The only characteristic where Morris is low in comparison to its peers is the five-year graduation rate. Even that, however, is open to question; there is, it is said, no good standard by which to measure graduation rate and the rates at other institutions is probably inflated. It is true, Dr. Zetterberg said, that the way the University calculates graduate rates will produce the lowest possible rate. The key is defining the entering cohort; over the past 2-3 years there appears to be agreement that the students who should be counted are those who are first-time and full-time students only. This is in part because of NCAA regulations covering student-athletes but the standard is a reasonable one, he opined; federal IPEDS data now reflect this definition.

Even though Morris is thought of as a residential campus, 52% of the students live off-campus. They probably live within a very short (walking) distance, however--as do many of the students on the Twin Cities campus.

The Duluth campus also compares favorably with its peer group, which is quite reasonable; the list includes both public and private institutions that have the same general mix of programs and that are about the same size as UMD. 16% of UMD students are from the top 10% of their high school class; 86% are from the top 50%. It has, however, far fewer part-time students than its peers and has the highest percentage of Minnesota residents of any of the four campuses. It is also the only campus with a majority of male undergraduates (51%). The graduation rate for UMD is also about the same as for the peer group.

For the Twin Cities, the peer group is the top 30 research universities and the Big Ten public institutions (some of which are not in the top 30 research universities), of which 15 are public and 15 are private. The size of the entering class compares with the other public institutions but not with the privates; the latter are smaller and have very high-ability students. The acceptance rate of 77% is high outside the Big Ten. With 28% of the entering class from the top 10% of their high school class, the Twin Cities resembles Indiana, Iowa, Ohio State and Michigan State; the other Big Ten and public top 30 institutions are more selective (e.g., the California top 30 schools--Berkeley, UCLA, San Diego, and Santa Barbara--have entering classes with 95% or more from the top 10% of their high school classes, but that is a matter of public policy in California and a phenomenon not found anywhere else in the country. They also take few students from outside California.)

In terms of ability levels as measured by the SAT and ACT, the Twin Cities campus is at about the same level as the Morris and Duluth campuses; in the Big Ten, Illinois, Michigan, and Wisconsin have higher test scores than the others. The Twin Cities has about as high a non-resident undergraduate student body as there is at any of the public institutions anywhere (24%). Although 81% of undergraduates live off campus, the Twin Cities is only a commuter campus because the University says it is; most of the students live in the neighborhood of the University. Wisconsin has as many students who live off campus as the Twin Cities does. The 4-year graduation rate of 24% is similar to that at Ohio State and Michigan State. One of the myths about the Twin Cities campus is that students are indigent and eat Ramen noodles; that is not true: Twin Cities students are VERY similar to students at peer campuses as measured by estimated parental income of freshmen; over 65% come from families with parental incomes of \$50,000 or more.

Dr. Zetterberg then noted various demographic statistics about the counties. The discussion focused on the projected change in the population by county, 2000 to 2010, aged 0-19: the number will decrease in ALL counties except four (Chisago, Scott, Carver, and Sherburne). Over 20 years, the number of people in that age group will drop by 50% in some counties.

Professor Ahern said that the workforce and reciprocity issues were ones that SCEP might take up; were there others? Dr. Zetterberg said the Regents had suggested none.

Dr. Swan suggested that the biggest issue for the Twin Cities campus is the graduation rate, which is the datum most out of line in comparison to peer institutions. It also has a large number of part-time students. Are there policies in place that serve as a bar to graduation? Dr. Zetterberg said that the University of Minnesota Twin Cities is the only campus that under-performs its projected graduation rate (based on the characteristics of the undergraduate students), although Vice President Maziar said that the University of Texas at Austin and the University of Washington similarly under-perform.

Professor Ahern recalled that it had been suggested at the retreat there be a subcommittee to identify obstacles to a degree as well as matters related to credits required.

The Committee discussed with Dr. Zetterberg whether it was possible to track students who enter (any campus) and graduate (from any campus). It is illegal to track students between systems or colleges (the University can and does track students who transfer within the University system), but the data that have been gathered suggest that a very high percentage of students who leave the University do graduate somewhere else. What about students who start elsewhere, Ms. Shaw asked? Dr. Swan noted that the University graduates about 5000 students per year and admits about 5000 students per year; it also, however, admits about 2500 transfer students per year. Dr. Maziar reported that of the students who move between MnSCU and the University, the vast majority go from MnSCU to the University and very few go the other direction.

Professor Ahern thanked Dr. Zetterberg for his presentation.

2. Award Committees

Professor Ahern next asked Ms. Linquist to explain a minor change in the wording of the eligibility requirements for the Morse-Alumni award (to recognize the change in terminology from temporary to term faculty); the Committee approved the change unanimously.

Professor Ahern then outlined the possible nominating committee memberships for the Morse-Alumni and Graduate/Professional awards. The Committee discussed for some while the need to have the membership on the nominating committees rotate.

Dr. Maziar reported that the Graduate School gives the winners of the Graduate/Professional award more recognition in graduation ceremonies and the Graduate School also buys the winners a hood. Asked if the Morse-Alumni winners received the same offer, Dr. Swan said he would ask the deans.

3. Bush Foundation Faculty Development Proposal

Professor Ahern next welcomed Professor W. Andrew Collins and Dr. Jan Smith to the meeting to discuss the University's faculty development proposal to the Bush Foundation. Professor Collins thanked the Committee for the opportunity to join it and said that this meeting was intended to launch discussion of the proposal. He first provided an overview.

Those preparing this proposal are guided by the University's previous (unsuccessful) experience in making a faculty development proposal to the Bush Foundation; after the last proposal, the Bush Foundation provided feedback. The Foundation wanted a more coherent proposal driven by what is known about faculty development and one that is more integrated (i.e., a UNIVERSITY proposal, not four college proposals grouped together).

As a result, the proposal being prepared now is a more superordinate approach. The Bush Foundation also insisted on a more faculty-driven proposal that arose from the faculty and reflected what faculty say they need. There were campus-based committees established that he and Dr. Smith coordinated, Professor Collins said; Dr. Smith was the one MOST responsible for coordinating and integrating the work of these committees.

They also addressed other concerns of the Bush Foundation, Professor Collins said, including a needs assessment across all four campuses on problems with student learning and what faculty need to learn to help and what kind of format the faculty would most likely participate in. That assessment was extremely useful and has driven the focus of the proposal.

Dr. Smith then reported that she had compiled the four campus efforts into one program that could be implemented on the four campuses (there are differences among the four). She reviewed a summary outline of the proposal, which follows.

SUMMARY OUTLINE BUSH FACULTY DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL

The proposal to be submitted to the Bush Foundation November 1 for implementation in 2001-2004, outlines a plan to support faculty in integrating technology-based solutions with other innovative teaching practices in order to address the need to improve student learning. Each campus will conduct yearly programs, which provide an in-depth practical and collaborative faculty development experience through the cooperative effort of participating units and the teaching/learning and technology centers.

* The approach will be a peer-based one, in which individual faculty, as well as collaborative faculty development groups, receive support and consultation from experienced faculty facilitators and technology/teaching consultants.

* Faculty will apply to participate in the program by outlining the particular student learning problem they wish to address and possible solutions they may choose to employ.

- * In order to refine their teaching and learning concerns and long-range goals, participants will work to assess their initial proposals using the results of recent faculty and student surveys of student learning problems.
- * The student learning problems identified by recent surveys include significant time constraints, inadequate skills preparation (math, reading, writing, study skills and note taking), failure to complete reading assignments, and a lack of motivation to learn.
- * Faculty will be encouraged to combine web-based instruction with a variety of sources of expertise, including active learning, enhanced lectures, and attention to diverse learning styles, in fashioning creative solutions to identified problems.
- * The resulting projects will range from developing simple web sites that primarily provide syllabi and other text resources, to sites that offer assignment feedback and alternative modes of communication between students and faculty, to more sophisticated interactive sites that develop student skills in writing, critical thinking, and problem solving.
- * Each campus has an in-depth evaluation plan to determine program effectiveness and will work to encourage participant dissemination of acquired skills and ideas to faculty colleagues.

On each of the four campuses, the grant will provide funding for faculty participants (mini-grants or professional development funds), as well as stipends/salaries for faculty facilitators and technology/teaching consultants. On the Twin Cities campus participating colleges will be asked to provide a portion of these funds.

The grant would be for three years and could be renewed. About \$750,000 to \$1 million would come from the Foundation, so that no one faculty member would receive a large amount of money.

Professor Collins noted that although the theme of the proposal is support for faculty in integrating technology-based solutions, the focus is first on pedagogy: given a problem, what is the best way to approach it? It may be that technology is the approach, or technology combined with other techniques will make a course work the way a faculty member wants it to. The proposal is not method-driven nor do they want technology to take over; the point is to think about choices and make decisions.

Dr. Maziar inquired if faculty would participate in a semester-long or year long effort; they would be year-long projects. She then asked if there is any possibility of including advanced graduate students, and would it help the case if the Graduate School would help pay the costs for the graduate students? Professor Collins expressed doubt that that the Bush Foundation would welcome such a proposal, but added that if it were framed right, as supporting future faculty, it might work. Professor Ahern said the Foundation is focused on undergraduate student learning but that preparing future faculty could be an attractive element. Dr. Smith said it might also be more attractive if the proposal teamed graduate students with faculty members. Professor Collins recalled that the last proposal included non-regular faculty, which was received very negatively. Dr. Maziar observed that as Dean of the Graduate School, she has an interest in increasing the capabilities of faculty.

Professor Louis commented that her department has an I.T. graduate student intern helping their faculty increase their technology skills and that the effort has been a tremendous help. She added that much of what she and her colleagues know about good teaching they have learned from advanced graduate students who have been school teachers; school teachers, she said, generally teach better than university faculty.

The Committee discussed with Dr. Smith how the program might be implemented on the various campuses and in the colleges.

Professor Ahern noted that historically it is this Committee that triggered the first proposal to the Bush Foundation for faculty development (after the initial funding of sabbaticals); this proposal begins another cycle of grant proposals. He said that when the proposal is ready, the Committee could consider endorsing it to underscore for the Bush Foundation that the governance structure has been involved and supports it. It was agreed that the proposal would be brought back to the Committee for endorsement.

Professor Ahern thanked Professor Collins and Dr. Smith for their report.

4. Changes in the Class Notes Policy

Professor Ahern asked the Committee about the changes proposed by the President in the policy barring the commercial use of class notes that SCEP had recommended to the Senate which the Senate had adopted. The Committee voted unanimously to approve the changes.

5. Interpretation of the Grading Policy on Repeating a Course

The Committee unanimously approved an interpretation of the grading policy providing that the new provision governing how often a student may repeat a course (only once, with only the second grade counting in the GPA) would not be made retroactive. The interpretation will be placed on the November 16 Senate docket.

Professor Ahern then adjourned the meeting at 3:05.

-- Gary Engstrand