

Minutes*

Faculty Consultative Committee
Thursday, December 17, 1998
12:45 – 3:45
Room 626 Campus Club

- Present: Sara Evans (chair), Kent Bales, Linda Brady, Gary Davis, David Hamilton, Roberta Humphreys, Michael Korth, Leonard Kuhi, Judith Martin, Fred Morrison, V. Rama Murthy
- Absent: Mary Dempsey, Marilyn Grave, Stephen Gudeman, M. Janice Hogan, Marvin Marshak, Matthew Tirrell
- Guests: Regents' Professor Ellen Berscheid (representing the Sesquicentennial committee); President Mark Yudof; chairs of several of the college faculty consultative committees
- Other: Maureen Smith (University Relations)

[In these minutes: sesquicentennial plans; Twin Cities higher education; non-resident tuition exemptions; first-year seminars; discussions with AHC reps; AAUP/FCC project; discussion with college FCC chairs]

1. Sesquicentennial Committee

Professor Evans convened the meeting at 12:45 and welcomed Regents' Professor Ellen Berscheid to report to FCC about the activities of the Sesquicentennial Executive Committee.

Professor Berscheid said she wished to meet with FCC in order to inform it about the activities of the Sesquicentennial Committee and to request suggestions from the faculty for the University's 150th birthday celebration, which will run from late August, 2000, to late May, 2001. It is intended that there will be at least four "signature" events: a "prelude" at the State Fair in August, a "kick off" at the beginning of Fall Semester, a commemoration of the signing of the University's charter on February 25, and a "finale" in late May. In addition, many groups and organizations will be planning other events during the year. Suggestions from faculty, students, staff, and others are needed now because the general outline of the signature events must be sketched within the next few months.

*** The Sesquicentennial Committee has a website, www1.umn.edu/sesqui, where people can make suggestions and obtain more information about the celebration. ***

Suggestions for activities the faculty would like and enjoy are especially needed because, she said, she worries that the faculty will get lost in the shuffle. Although the committee has a few faculty members, most members are staff, as it should be. Institutional Relations looks outward, which is its job, and celebratory activities for the external community are important. But celebration and benefit for the University's internal community are also important; such celebrations at other universities have included,

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for example, the establishment of sesquicentennial scholarships, chairs, colloquia, and so forth. Professor Berscheid also emphasized the importance of student participation in the planning of events. She said that although the celebration has many aims, President Yudof has noted that one of the most important is to have fun.

Committee members offered a few suggestions.

-- Draw on the Academy of Distinguished Teachers, to be appointed very shortly. The letters of appointment will go out in the next two or three weeks, and there will be an induction event in January; participation of the University's distinguished teachers would be an asset to the celebration.

-- Encourage departments to set up displays about the significant people who taught in the department and who made significant discoveries. This information could also be put on department web pages, and linked to the main sesquicentennial web page. It would also help if the departments were offered assistance. Professor Berscheid noted that money is needed for more than the major events, to help departments and students.

-- Identify the first departments or first fields, and first faculty in them.

-- Professor Berscheid reported that there will be something about the event at the State Fair, and possibly giveaways for fairgoers, especially children. It was suggested that there be an interactive display where one could go to the website, which would be linked to other sites about the history and things that have happened at the University.

Professor Evans thanked Professor Berscheid for her report.

2. Discussion with President Yudof

Professor Evans welcomed President Yudof to the meeting, and invited the President to take up the items on his list. He did so.

-- The possibility of a consortium to promote a higher education plan for the Twin Cities, especially to reach under-served populations. Any plan would go to the faculty, and while the mission of the University is that of a research university, it would have a role to play. The Committee endorsed the idea of pursuing such a consortium.

-- The present and future politics of the Capitol and how they might affect the University.

-- The possibility of at least selective exemptions from non-resident tuition rates, in order to increase the ability of the University to recruit students from across the country, and to pull brainpower into the state. It would be important NOT to reduce opportunities for Minnesotans. The Committee believed this an idea worth pursuing, and it was agreed that the Committee on Educational Policy would take it up.

The Committee and the President then touched upon the first-year student seminars. The students need to be surveyed to find out what they got out of them, the President said. He also commented that it is his strong impression that it is NOT true that the faculty of the University are uninterested in

undergraduate education; the faculty DO want real courses (not with 400 students) with students with whom they can interact, they know how to teach undergraduates, and they enjoy it.

Professor Evans thanked the President for joining the meeting.

3. Report of the Chair and Other Business

Professor Evans next reported that she had received a call from Senior Vice President Frank Cerra after FCC had met with the Academic Health Center Senators and AHC FCC members, the minutes of which Dr. Cerra had read with care and great concern. She and Dr. Cerra had a meeting, in order that she could provide him her perspective on events, as an "outsider." She informed Dr. Cerra that there would be a second meeting with faculty representatives from the AHC, in order to identify possible faculty-initiated responses to the perceived problems. Professor Evans said the meeting had been very positive.

The Committee agreed that the agenda for the next meeting with the AHC faculty should be structured around two or three specific problems that could be addressed.

Professor Murthy reported on a meeting held by a small group (himself, Purple, Hogan, Engstrand) to pursue the proposal from the AAUP to have small focus groups of junior faculty meet with two or so senior faculty. The details are being settled, and the plan is that the groups would start in mid- or late winter quarter. The meetings are intended to be friendly, informal, and to introduce junior faculty into the community aspects of life as a professor, to identify issues of concern to junior faculty, and to acclimate them to the principles of faculty governance and academic freedom. Any issues identified would be directed to FCC, for subsequent disposition by an appropriate group.

It was suggested that the planning group talk with faculty who have been through the Bush program.

4. Discussion with College Faculty Consultative Committee Chairs

Professor Evans now welcomed to the Committee the chairs of committees responsible for faculty consulting within the colleges. She explained that since FCC, of all faculty committees, is the one that talks most often with the University's senior officers, it wants to be able to hear from and carry the concerns of the faculty to the administrators. It may also be helpful, she suggested, for the committee chairs to hear about what one another is doing.

The chairs present each described the structure and general activities of the committee in his her or her college, and identified problems that had been encountered. Some believed their committees work very effectively with the dean and college administration and clearly influence policy and decisions; others were more lukewarm about the extent to which they were able to affect collegiate decision-making. A number of issues were raised in the various comments and discussion:

-- Deans hear from many faculty (and other) groups; it is sometimes unclear which group the dean should pay most attention to.

-- The relationship between the college consultative committees and the larger University Senate governing structure is non-existent; should there be some kind of relationship? Relatedly, to what extent are there committees comprised solely of faculty, rather than with membership that also includes P&A staff, civil service staff, and students (or some combination thereof), and to what extent are they elected, rather than appointed.

-- The role, responsibilities, and titles of P&A staff needs clarification, particularly since the numbers of these employees are growing rapidly.

-- The number of tenured faculty lines, in some units, is shrinking, replaced by annually-renewable P&A faculty appointments. The role of P&A faculty/staff in governance is one that many colleges are struggling with. There is great need for clarification of academic appointments, and for greater faculty participation in decisions about how positions will be allocated.

There is a sense in some places that the colleges are being told, as a matter of central administrative or regental policy, to eliminate tenured faculty lines. In some cases, a department must make a VERY strong case for appointment to a tenured faculty line, and often urged instead to make a temporary, annually-renewable P&A appointment. It is unlikely that any level of excellence will be achieved by having a faculty on annual appointments, but there may be good curricular reasons for hiring P&A faculty.

-- The effectiveness of a college consultative body can vary with the style of the dean; it can also vary notably with the energy of the faculty participants.

-- Communication with the college administration, and with other representative groups of faculty, is sometimes a problem.

Professor Evans thanked all the chairs for coming, and urged that they contact her about their thoughts about linkages with each other and with the Senate.

5. Change in Leave Procedures

Professor Bales next reported on a change in the procedures governing leaves that had been requested by the administration. One provision in the policy approved by the Faculty Senate held that a faculty member who held a research grant that paid more than 50% of salary during an academic year, that year would not count toward earning a sabbatical. The administration asked that that provision be deleted.

Professor Morrison said the provision to be deleted was distinctly unfriendly to the faculty and that he strongly supported the administration request. The Committee thereupon promptly and unanimously approved it. Under the provisions of the leave procedures, changes can be made by the Committee on Faculty Affairs and this Committee, with a report to the Senate. The change is thus considered approved, and will be reported to the Faculty Senate.

6. Changes in Regents Policies

Professor Morrison reported that he and Professor Evans had received a memo from the Office of the Board of Regents proposing changes in Regents' policies to accommodate the change to semesters. The majority of them were innocuous, but those made to the tenure code need review.

The Committee approved the changes Professor Morrison deemed innocuous and agreed that the tenure code changes should be referred to the Tenure Subcommittee, with a request that it bring recommendations to the Faculty Senate by the end of the year. In the event it is unable to do so, it will adopt "interpretations" to the code that will govern until final action can be taken.

Professor Evans then adjourned the meeting at 3:15.

-- Gary Engstrand

University of Minnesota