Minutes[*]

Faculty Consultative Committee
Thursday, January 21, 1999
12:45 – 3:00
Room 238 Morrill Hall

Present: Fred Morrison (chair pro tem), Kent Bales, Linda Brady, Marilyn Grave, Stephen
                Gudeman, David Hamilton, Roberta Humphreys, Michael Korth, Leonard Kuhi, Marvin
                Marshak

Absent: Sara Evans, Gary Davis, Mary Dempsey, M. Janice Hogan, Judith Martin, V. Rama
                Murthy, Matthew Tirrell

Guests: Vice President Sandra Gardebring

Other: Maureen Smith (University Relations); Winifred A Schumi (Grants Management)

[In these minutes: resolution regarding protection of research data; discussion with Institutional Relations
Vice President Sandra Gardebring; update on grants management]

1.   Research Resolution

        Professor Morrison convened the meeting at 12:45, explained that he was serving as chair while
Professor Evans was in Japan, and asked Professor Kuhi to lead the discussion of a resolution he brought
from the Senate Research Committee.

        Professor Kuhi reviewed the language of a new federal law requiring federal funding agencies to
make available, under the Freedom of Information Act, all information gathered under federally-funded
research. The language was apparently inserted into the law by Senator Shelby because of a feud he was
having with the Environmental Protection Agency.

        The key difference between the new law and former practice is that before, data in a report was
public and the property of the federal agency, but the raw data were kept by the university. The new law
provides that ANY data collected in a project that is federally funded will be available to anyone who
asks for it. This raises major concerns about such things as patient confidentiality, the way research is
conducted and the possibility of external interference in research, undermines intellectual property rights,
and contains the potential for doing great damage to research.

        The Senate Committee on Research adopted a resolution opposing the new law and urging the
University to support national efforts to have the language removed from the appropriations bill.

        The Committee unanimously approved the resolution, and directed that a parallel resolution be
prepared for presentation to the Faculty Senate for the February 4 meeting.

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

2.   **Public Matters**

Professor Marshak announced that Regent Michael O'Keefe will be nominated by Governor Ventura as Commissioner of Human Services, and also reported on presentations to the House Finance Committee. He also discussed with the Committee the debate about what disposition should be made of the money from the tobacco settlement and the process of electing new regents.

3.   **Discussion with Vice President Sandra Gardebring**

Professor Morrison welcomed Vice President for Institutional Relations Sandra Gardebring to the meeting, and explained that because the discussion involved the structure and operation of the office of a newly-appointed vice president, the minutes would reflect only a summary of the points made and that there would be no attribution. The Committee assented.

Vice President Gardebring commented on a number of matters.

--   She thanked the faculty for their work with the legislature on the last biennial request, said it was very important and helpful, encouraged the faculty to do so again, and said that it was also extremely important that everyone be speaking "from the same page."

--   While she is not responsible for internal University communications, they need to be joined with external communications to a certain extent because the ability of the institution to speak effectively to the external community depends on a consistency of message. She said she would like to return to the Committee to seek its advice on this point.

--   There is a need for the University to have a more articulated FEDERAL agenda, beyond the focus on the state. With Mr. Etten's departure, a new individual will be hired. Mr. Etten has done an outstanding job, and her objective is to develop a "crisper" federal agenda, and she wishes also to consult with the Committee on this matter.

--   She spoke briefly about the role of her office in any capital campaign.

--   She distributed to the Committee copies of a proposal for a community relations plan, a new way to deal more thoughtfully with the University's neighbors, especially with respect to capital projects and plans. The proposal would call for more evaluation of neighborhood impacts and increased communication with surrounding areas through both meetings and written communications. She said she would like to know the reaction of the Committee to such a plan, and hopes to have the endorsement of the Board of Regents for it as well.

Committee members reacted very positively to her proposal, and suggested a number of issues that should be considered: relationships with the small business community, especially in Stadium Village and Dinkytown; the possibility of University-community economic partnerships; coordinated institutional efforts to help improve surrounding areas; the need for improved housing stock that permits sufficient student density to help keep local businesses viable; and parking and transportation.

It was also suggested that Dr. Gardebring draw on faculty expertise in such areas as urban planning; she agreed, and said she has already begun to do so. She also said she is contemplating creation of an overall communications group that might meet four to five times per year, with representatives from the deans and the faculty, to consider broader strategies and to evaluate what has worked well.

Professor Morrison thanked Dr. Gardebring for joining the meeting and said the Committee would welcome hearing from her again.

4. Grants Management Project

Professor Morrison turned next to Professor Hamilton to make a presentation on the improvements to the grants management system.

Professor Hamilton distributed copies of a set of slides, and then walked Committee members through them. He commented that he had made this presentation to over 40 departments and about a dozen other groups.

He began by reviewing the events that led up to the redesign of the grants management system. The effort began in 1993, by the disclosure by the University of irregularities in the ALG program. In 1994, the Regents commissioned a study. In August, 1995, the University received the letter from NIH placing it on exceptional status. This event significantly increased activity with respect to improving grants management. A Grants Management Group was appointed to respond to NIH, and a November, 1995, site visit by NIH led to a corrective action plan being issued in the spring of 1996. This plan was very prescriptive, and Senior Vice President Infante and Vice President Brenner negotiated with NIH for a year in order to obtain a more reasonable plan, which was obtained in 1996.

Professor Hamilton said he was asked to lead the grants management redesign effort, and agreed to do so only if he were NOT given an administrative appointment and that the effort would be a joint faculty governance/administrative effort. That was acceptable, and he now regularly reports to the Senate Research Committee all information on the grants management system.

A group from the University will travel to NIH in February of this year to ask what more the University must do for removal of exceptional status. Professor Hamilton said he believes the University has accomplished most of what NIH wants.

Professor Hamilton then reviewed extensively the vision for the grants management system, the organization and procedures that are being put in place, and the forms (primarily electronic) that will be used. A few highlights:

-- The effort is a part of the enterprise systems project, but has nothing to do with PeopleSoft, although there will be links to it as needed.

-- They are studying central, collegiate, and departmental management processes, and will develop recommendations on the best business practices in grants management; those practices will become the University standard to which all MUST adhere.

--   The intent is to provide tools that make it easy for investigators to accurately manage their grants, for administrators to provide support, and educational experiences of all personnel on regulatory compliance and ethical issues.

--   The intent is to avoid having investigators need to become administrators. The investigators should not have to jump through as many hoops as they now do either to obtain or administer a grant, they should have a small administrative burden while still maintaining financial and scientific oversight, and should focus on creation and dissemination of new knowledge while others provide administrative functions.

--   For administrators, with decentralization, there is a need for expertise that ORTTA used to provide. They need to have knowledge necessary to get a grant submitted and assist in administering once obtained, they should have information needed to assist the investigator in financial administration, and should provide administrative foundations necessary for good business practices.

--   There will be a single point of entry for an investigator to obtain everything needed to manage a grant.

--   Fiscal management reports will be provided that include project-specific data, including monthly summaries, reports updated daily, and which indicate amounts budgeted, encumbered, expended, and the balance remaining. Provision of knowledge of encumbered funds is required for compliance and also part of good practices.

--   Some characteristics of decentralization are that responsibility is maintained locally to the maximum extent possible so decisions are made by people with the best information, responsibility means authority to make the decision AND being accountable for it, and that oversight is always separate from the operating unit that makes the decision.

--   Mechanisms to assist decision-making include training, technical enhancements, and both positive and negative incentives.

--   There is a new institutional organizational structure, with Sponsored Project Administration, Patents and Technology Marketing, and Institutional Oversight and Reporting as three new units (replacing ORTTA). The latter will conduct electronic reviews in order to spot unusual activities. The intent also is to increase the "help" function between departments and funding agencies.

--   One very specific improvement is that once there has been Notice of Grant Award, if it is entered in the database by 5:00 in the afternoon of any business day, the investigator can begin spending the money at 7:00 the next morning.

--   There will be an expertise data base, in which investigators will have available electronically all the public portions of their CV, divided into different subject areas, and investigators will be able to draw from it as needed to support a grant application. It is also possible that this information could be compiled and kept current for use in the faculty activity report, although this idea has not yet been presented to the Senate Research Committee.

--   The KEY message is that FY1999 is the implementation year for the new grants management system. Professor Hamilton commented that he set a deadline so that the project did not go on forever, and added that they know there will be problems but that they will be worked out with departments.

--   This will be the first university able to do an automatic upload of a grant application to NIH; at this point, NIH is behind the University in its capability to handle applications electronically.

It appears, commented Professor Morrison when Professor Hamilton had finished his presentation, that with some modest additions, the grants management system could handle the entire University budget.

Professor Morrison thanked Professor Hamilton for his presentation and adjourned the meeting at 2:45.

-- Gary Engstrand

University of Minnesota