

Minutes*

Senate Committee on Finance and Planning
Tuesday, March 30, 1999
3:15 – 5:00
Room 238 Morrill Hall

Present: Charles Speaks (chair pro tem), Jean Bauer, Charles Campbell, Catherine French, Cynthia Gillett, Wendell Johnson, Gerald Klement, Jane Phillips, Terry Roe, Susan Carlson Weinberg

Regrets: Stephen Gudeman, Terrence O'Connor, Peter Robinson

Absent: Eric Kruse, Richard Pfutzenreuter, J. Peter Zetterberg

Guests: none

[In these minutes: parking and transportation recommendations, Twin Cities; benchmarks for support services and links with Senate/Assembly committees; work of the IMG subcommittee]

1. Parking and Transportation Recommendations

Professor Speaks convened the meeting at 3:14 and turned to Ms. Phillips, chair of the Subcommittee on Twin Cities Facilities and Support Services (STCFSS), for a review of the status of the recommendations the Subcommittee had made last spring. This update follows on an update provided last December and the responses from (then) Interim Vice President Eric Kruse. The recommendations and their status follow.

Recommendation 1: Explore ways of making the UPass bus program acceptable and affordable to students and central administration.

Although Parking and Transportation had been working on this, Ms. Phillips reported, Vice President Kruse said that further investigation had been postponed at the direction of central administration because of other competing interests for student fees at this time that needed to be resolved first. The UPass program requires student fee support (about \$10 per quarter), but the primary student fee issue at present concerns the renovation of Coffman Memorial Union.

Ms. Phillips recommended that this Committee should ask Dr. Bruininks when he envisions that UPass might get back on the table. Will it have to wait the six years while student fees are being devoted to pay the major part of the Coffman renovation? Part of the problem is that the MCTO (the bus service) will not reduce their rates enough to make the program work without student fee support. Using other University income (e.g., from Parking) is not practicable; Parking does not have excess income to use, and any central funds potentially would have to be diverted from academic programs.

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It was noted that Mr. Baker, Director of Parking and Transportation, is a strong supporter of the UPass program because he believes it good for transit and ecological and other reasons, and that he is still trying to come up with a program. One barrier has been that MCTO estimates of needed additional resources from it (that is, buses) are significant; the University has doubts about the accuracy of the estimates. One thing the University could do is take a gamble, and ask MCTO to provide the service and see what the demands are. If MCTO is right, the University would have to find funding; if not, the service could be provided.

Is there not Parking money diverted to intercollegiate athletics, asked one Committee member? Ms. Phillips said there is not: for special events (e.g., games) in the arenas, a higher parking fee is charged, with some of the money going to Parking and some going to athletics. There is no diversion of Parking money to athletics.

It was said that if the UPass idea is a good one, it should not have to wait another six years for implementation; either the Committee should push it, or some alternative plan should be developed. It was agreed that Dr. Bruininks should be invited to join the Committee at meeting during Fall Semester to inquire when this program might again receive attention and possible support.

Other points made were that (1) students support this program, but that any contract with MCTO should be two way, with MCTO accountable for performance and a substantial commitment of funds, and (2) with Ted Mondale at the head of the Metropolitan Council, there might be a change of attitude toward support for the UPass program, because he is a strong advocate of transit. It was suggested that Professor Marshak be contacted about being in touch with the Metropolitan Council.

Recommendation 2: Parking rates should be increased proportionally to the cost of building replacement parking sites.

Ms. Phillips reported that this recommendation has been put into effect, and that the Subcommittee believes there should be continuation of the policy of increasing parking rates proportionally to the cost of building and maintaining the parking location.

Recommendation 3: The decision to build surface lots or ramps or underground garages cannot be made into policy but must remain situational and based on current and future needs and professional judgment.

Facilities Management agreed with the recommendation, Ms. Phillips reported, and suggested that this Committee may want to urge that the administration pursue the purchase of contiguous campus land which becomes available in order to provide for continued availability of surface lots. The Subcommittee concurred with this suggestion. The primary reason for the increase in the number of ramps and garages around the Minneapolis campus is that there has been no land available for surface lots. Purchasing land, however, raises questions about University expansion and the desirability of surrounding the campus with parking lots. The suggestion that non-adjacent land be used for parking, with a shuttle service, has the problems that people do not want to use it and there are objections to use of land for University parking away from the campus.

Asked if there were anything in the Governor's proposals that might help the University, Ms. Phillips suggested that Mr. Baker really needed to be part of the conversation. As far as light rail transit is concerned, there would be a stop at Cedar-Riverside, and the University has looked at providing shuttle

service to the campus from that stop, Ms. Carlson Weinberg reported. At the same time, while communities along the light rail corridor support light rail, they do NOT support construction of parking lots for people to drive to and park.

The Committee then unanimously adopted the following resolution:

Because of the high cost of parking spaces in garages and ramps compared to surface lots, the Senate Committee on Finance and Planning urges the administration to pursue the purchase of available adjacent lands for surface lots and that the University consider lands along the transitway and potential light rail routes for similar purposes.

It was agreed that the resolution should be forwarded to Executive Vice President Bruininks.

Recommendation 4: Revise Recommended Parking Policies to require that access needs (whether by vehicles, commuter transit, pedestrians, tunnel system users, etc.) created by new buildings will be provided for in the planning process.

Ms. Phillips reported that there has been no plan put in place to address this recommendation, but that the Subcommittee has heard from Vice President Kruse and Associate Vice President Pfutzenreuter about the precinct planning process. This process requires that buildings cannot be built without giving consideration to impact on access, transit, parking, and so on. She urged that the Committee hear from the two about this process.

It was agreed that Messrs. Kruse and Pfutzenreuter should be invited to join the Committee later in Spring Quarter.

Recommendation 5: Increase the convenience of and access to evening and weekend parking on the Twin Cities campuses.

Ms. Phillips reported that this issue was addressed and discussed by the Subcommittee, and that it was provided copies of a brochure on evening and weekend contract parking options for students and staff. Parking has been moving more and more to providing better evening and weekend staff and student contract parking, and she said is very encouraged by what has been done.

One Committee member urged that Parking be asked to keep the Weisman garage open until 1:00 a.m., and said that there was sufficient student demand to pay for the cost of doing so.

Recommendation 6: An overall parking and transportation strategic plan for the Twin Cities Campuses should be communicated to staff and students to increase understanding and acceptance of Parking and Transportation policies.

Ms. Phillips reported that the plan is being updated and revised and will be reported back to the Subcommittee in May.

Professor Speaks thanked Ms. Phillips for the report.

2. Benchmarks for Support Services

Professor Speaks turned again to Ms. Phillips for a report from the Subcommittee on its examination of support services benchmarking, one of the two charges to the Subcommittee for the 1998-99 academic year.

The subcommittee of the subcommittee looking at support services benchmarking sent a questionnaire to five units, of which four responded (the Libraries said they were an academic unit, already doing much of what the survey inquired about, and would not respond). The reports provided by the other four units (Office of Information Technology, Facilities Management, Environmental Health and Safety, and Parking and Transportation) led the subcommittee to believe that these units were effectively setting goals and priorities, developing a mechanism for communicating them, and were reaching their clients.

What they discovered, however, is that the relationship between these support services and the governance system is rather tenuous. For example, the Libraries have no representative on the Senate Research Committee, which seemed to be an omission. As a result, the subcommittee recommends that each support service identify a Senate or Assembly committee with which it might work, and that each Senate and Assembly committee identify the support service units it believes it should hear from about goals and priorities. One way to organize such interaction would be creation of ex officio members. Ms. Phillips suggested that the lists of support service and committees be sent to the Senate Consultative Committee with the recommendation that links between support services and committees be established, where appropriate.

With respect to the Libraries, Ms. Phillips said she was troubled by the fact that it was upset with the request for information. Support service units should all feel they are a part of the academic community, and if they are made to feel they are not, the University has a problem. They will be marginalized if not seen as part of the academic life of the institution, and the University cannot do without them, so they should feel a part of it.

Committee members engaged in a brief colloquy about academic versus some other term for support services, and whether or not the notion of customer service should play a role in how such units are considered. (It is better to think of everyone as walking down the same road rather than thinking about customer service, maintained one Committee member.) This may be a matter of semantics, said another; a larger problem may be that under IMG, for units such as the Graduate School and the Libraries there is no mechanism to direct their growth. At the same time, said another Committee member, it has become known that there are no faculty members on the design group for the library portion of the renovated Walter Library, which suggests they do not view faculty as part of the enterprise.

The Committee voted unanimously to forward to Professor Evans the recommendation concerning support services and committees.

Professor Speaks again thanked Ms. Phillips for her report.

3. Report from the IMG Subcommittee

Professor Speaks now turned to Professor French for an update from the IMG subcommittee.

Professor French reported that the Subcommittee has taken a global perspective on IMG. Unit funding was to be held constant during the change to IMG, which meant that the state funding for each unit was adjusted to accommodate changes in revenue from tuition and ICR funds. As a result, there is a wide range of state support for units, and the Subcommittee concluded it should take an all-funds approach to considering IMG.

Last year the Subcommittee interviewed a number of deans and department heads about behavior that was initiated because of IMG, and they obtained some preliminary perceptions. Those interviews will be followed up with additional interviews this year to learn what the impact of IMG has been.

The Subcommittee has established three primary subcommittees to address issues that arose after its report last year.

-- One subcommittee is reviewing the compact process and how it might address problems and issues that pertain to IMG. Such issues include course duplication and possible migration of a curriculum in order to maximize tuition revenues in a college, faculty hires on funds that may be tenuous, and historical inequities in allocation of the state subsidy.

With respect to curriculum, the subcommittee has posed the question of whether or not it should be included in the college plans in the compacts and whether or not the Provost ought to have a say about curriculum. A Twin Cities Campus Curriculum Subcommittee has been established by SCEP, but it serves only as an appeal body when a college brings an issue to it. The IMG subcommittee is asking whether the Provost should have oversight responsibilities, for the good of the University.

With respect to faculty hires, the subcommittee is inquiring whether the Provost should oversee the process if a unit can increase the number of lines that could be on tenuous funds. The deans, however, do not want the administration to direct growth.

With respect to historical inequities, some colleges are heavily subsidized by state funds, some are less so. Professor French observed that the situation is as it is because budgets have accommodated changes, because all money is green, and because tuition can be tenuous as well as state or ICR funds. It is appropriate these issues come up in compacts; colleges can provide views on what the relative allocation of funds should be, and what should shrink and what should grow. It is not clear that the administration needs a separate pool of funds to support new initiatives; it should perhaps use the compacts to redirect funds.

-- A second subcommittee is looking at the matter of providing revenue to academic support services (e.g., the Graduate School, the Libraries). ICR and tuition go to the units that generate them; the state subsidy is apportioned among units. The academic support units have no mechanism to increase their income. The subcommittee is investigating whether funds should be redirected to those units, through the compact process.

There is concern about redirecting the funds to the administration for the support units, because of the lack of accountability to the colleges. The University becomes the overseer, and will it take funds "off the top" for purposes of redirecting growth as well?

There are issues here that could be the subject of a task force with the administration.

-- A third subcommittee is looking at interdisciplinary activities and outreach. It is not evident that there have been negative effects from IMG in these areas, at least not yet. One concern is that in the future, faculty teaching in another college may be discouraged unless there is some revenue sharing. The role of the Graduate School in interdisciplinary activities also needs review. (Dean Maziar will be given the opportunity to review the draft report before it is circulated.)

Professor French said that one concern is how colleges make deals with other colleges. There have been a number of decanal turnovers; do the agreements hold even with turnover?

Committee members raised a number of points and questions with Professor French.

-- With a new tuition model next year (with tuition discounted 50% for students who enroll for 13 or more credits), colleges could be affected differentially, depending on their balance of upper and lower division students. Upper division costs more, so colleges could see a change in tuition with no change in costs. Professor French said she knew of no plans to change the 75/25 allocation, nor of plans to make the change revenue-neutral, should there be a significant change in the revenue profiles of the colleges.

-- It would be better for the University to have a plan or template for inter-college agreements on teaching, rather than leaving it up to individual negotiations between units. One college is going to lose great teachers because of IMG. Some colleges have done so, Professor French reported; in other cases, a template is difficult because of varying circumstances.

-- If a college and dean decide to teach a course that represents curriculum expansion, they are not going to admit it. Or faculty and department heads will see it for what it is, but be reluctant to bring the matter to the SCEP subcommittee for fear of being thought of complaining about sour grapes. There needs to be a place where the Provost can oversee curriculum issues. It may be hard to identify alleged duplication, but one can trace migration and college requirements.

It may be that in the compact process, colleges should be asked to list all new courses and why they are being offered. Is there any will in the University to monitor or regulate curriculum? Professor French said that this is up to the Provost, the SCEP subcommittee, and the colleges, but that she thought the will existed. If the Provost will not act for the common good, who will, she asked?

-- The greatest loss to the University in course duplication will come when units try to duplicate courses with large infrastructure costs. Professor French pointed out that funding will not increase, and tuition from these courses would not support large expenditures, so it is not clear there is any incentive to duplicate these courses. It may be, however, that with other sources of funds (e.g., NSF), there could be slow evolution to such duplication.

Hearing no more comments, Professor Speaks thanked everyone and adjourned the meeting at 4:35.

-- Gary Engstrand