

Minutes*

Faculty Consultative Committee
Thursday, May 20, 1999
11:00 – 1:30
Room 238 Morrill Hall

Present: Sara Evans (chair), Kent Bales, Mary Dempsey, M. Janice Hogan, Roberta Humphreys, Michael Korth, Leonard Kuhi, Joseph Massey, Fred Morrison

Absent: Linda Brady, Gary Davis, Marilyn Grave, Stephen Gudeman, David Hamilton, Marvin Marshak, Judith Martin, V. Rama Murthy, Matthew Tirrell

Guests: Associate Vice President Victor Bloomfield, Dr Thomas Shaughnessy (University Librarian); President Mark Yudof

[In these minutes: academic publishing (journal prices and professional society publishing); building cost recommendations; dinners with junior faculty; NIH exceptional status, teaching loads, academic appointments; discussion with the President]

1. Academic Publishing

Professor Evans convened the meeting at 11:00 and welcomed Drs. Bloomfield and Shaughnessy to talk about academic publishing.

Dr. Bloomfield distributed copies of a draft resolution for consideration by the Committee, and reviewed its comments. The question is what universities should do about the scholarly publishing SYSTEM, and the resolution proposed a number of steps.

Dr. Bloomfield said the scholarly publishing system is "out of whack," serving the interests of publishers rather than the academic community and it is too expensive. It is also a complex problem, and the approach to it must be systematic; unilateral action by a faculty member, institution, or a graduate school will not work. Electronic publishing may be one way to help regain control of academic publishing.

Dr. Bloomfield suggested that FCC review the resolution and decide if it wished to adopt it, or to refer elements of it to the Senate Research Committee and Senate Library Committee. But if some group does not start to talk about their dismay, and ask that something be done, involving the libraries, professional societies, and provosts and deans, nothing will happen as a result of a conspiracy of silence. Minnesota, he suggested, could start the ball rolling.

Professor Evans observed that the Committee could devote its attention to the resolution, but said she would prefer to think strategically about where the best places to put ideas would be. One example

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might be an article in the CHRONICLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION, based on the language of the resolution. It is necessary to get ideas out to the constituents from whom collaboration is needed.

She also commented that there is a challenge in electronic publishing. The Author's Guild is worried about electronic publishing, and the impact it might have on authors who rely on royalties. Some see academic authors as scabs of a sort, whose reputation rests on publication but whose livelihood does not. Electronic publication is seen as something that may deprive authors of legitimate income. Universities should not get at odds with non-academic publishers.

Dr. Bloomfield agreed, and said that he saw scholarly and private publishing as two different systems, with different purposes and rewards. There is much cross-over in some fields, Professor Evans pointed out. Professor Bloomfield said there will be ways to ensure royalties with web publishing and that electronic publishing means authors need not rely on the publishing monopolies, but can set up their own mechanisms without expensive overhead. It would not work for someone like Tom Clancy. It would not affect authors such as Clancy, one Committee member chimed in; "I'll be damned if I'll read a computer in bed."

Dr. Shaughnessy commented that the resolution focuses on the main problem, which is periodicals and journals. He distributed to Committee members a handout on SPARC (The Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition), which, he said, has attracted a lot of attention (Minnesota is a charter member). It has been endorsed by the Association of American Universities, the National Association of State Universities and Land Grant Colleges, the Association of Research Libraries, and he expects endorsement as well from the Committee for Institutional Cooperation. SPARC advocates taking scholarly publishing away from firms and putting it back in the hands of faculty, the people who create the knowledge. About six editors have taken journals from publishers and are producing electronic editions, to which all SPARC members subscribe.

One major problem is that the commercial publishers own the most prestigious journals. BRAIN RESEARCH costs \$15,000 per year, Dr. Shaughnessy said, and the University or faculty can threaten not to subscribe, but the Medical School has to have it. Faculty WANT to publish in BRAIN RESEARCH because of the prestige. The question is how can faculty groups change the evaluation system? It is very difficult to get a mass movement; it has to be universities such as Minnesota that start.

What if the professional societies say they will publish journals instead, asked Professor Kuhl? In some fields, the high-priced journals are not the most prestigious, and it would not be a culture change for societies to change the way they publish. Dr. Bloomfield thought it would be.

Professor Morrison commented that the situation is extremely varied by field. When the journals are owned by the publishers, not the societies, the societies must start a competing journal, with an adequate editorial board and funds, so it can really compete. It is hopeless to tell an assistant professor in Neurology not to submit articles to the best journal; what must be done is to create another journal where senior faculty publish. That requires an investment. That investment could be made through SPARC, or through strong departments at the University, or in other ways, to create journals. Professor Morrison said his only reservation about the resolution Dr. Bloomfield presented was that it was too hortatory, urging libraries and other groups to do things. If anything is to be accomplished, he said, there needs to be an action plan--there has to be competition in the market on price and quality. The Committee cannot pass a resolution and expect that to happen.

Dr. Bloomfield said he believed exhortation was needed; there needs to be a change in attitude in the whole system. Faculty consider scholarly publishing a free good, and see none of the costs (except for page charges in some field, which some senior faculty refuse to pay).

Professor Kuhl reiterated that practices are quite different by field, and the focal point must be the professional society. Professor Morrison agreed, and recalled his involvement with a journal. Published by a professional society, the editor is on the faculty at Berkeley, and his editorial service is regarded as part of his intellectual activity; the society pays for a part-time assistant and pays some money to Berkeley, but the campus subsidizes the publication. Professor Evans said she knows of a number of fields that operate in that way.

Professor Evans urged that Dr. Bloomfield write a piece for the CHRONICLE, and suggested that some kind of plan be presented to people in the disciplines that rely most on commercial publishers. One problem, Professor Morrison observed, is typified by the fact that one of his colleagues was approached to be on the editorial board of one of the commercial publications--for \$10,000 per year. In many fields, Professor Evans pointed out, filling that role is seen as a service to the profession, and carries no remuneration. Journals in one scientific field, Professor Kuhl pointed out, are supported by page charges, so the libraries are not bankrupted and grants pay the charges.

There is a need for a map of the different models that exist, Professor Evans suggested, so the problems can be identified more specifically. In response to a suggestion from Dr. Bloomfield, Dr. Shaughnessy said he could assemble data on estimated savings if all scientific journals were published at a reasonable price (e.g., \$750 for 5000 pages), so some idea of the costs could be gained. If there were \$5 million to be saved, it would be worth pursuing. (And of that, \$1 million could be directed to publishing the journals at the University, Professor Morrison observed.) An article that included a table of savings to be had would attract attention, Professor Humphreys added.

Dr. Bloomfield said that his draft resolution hints at action, but there is a need to build awareness. Faculty are creatures of habit, and keep using the same journal unless there is a reason for change. The leaders in each discipline, with the support of their professional societies, must convey the message that faculty and their institutions are being exploited by the system and that it needs to be challenged, Professor Evans said, with new journals and "superstar" boards of editors.

Dr. Bloomfield said that discipline specificity is important, because the disciplines can be as selfish as the faculty: they can say they are doing such important work, and bringing in a lot of money, that this is not the time to change, and the publications are a free good for the faculty. Deans, provosts, faculty, and the libraries must make the point that this is a COLLECTIVE problem that is robbing the system.

Professor Bales said that it might be easier to get university publishers to change. He then went out to point out that the strongest case against the \$15,000 journal price is not the cost to the libraries but the way it cuts off circulation of new research around the world. Unless people are making copies of articles and sending them to friends in other places, those at institutions that cannot afford the journals do not have access. ACCESS is the question; those who cannot pay are cut off.

Professor Evans suggested that the Senate Research Committee follow up on the need to map out practices and problems and identify an action plan, along the lines suggested by Professor Morrison. Professor Kuhi agreed that it would.

Asked why the journal charges \$15,000, Dr. Shaughnessy said that it, and others, have an intellectual monopoly and can charge whatever they like. It is not true that scientific journals must carry these extraordinarily high prices, Dr. Bloomfield said, and cited one in his own field. So, Professor Morrison concluded, there may be \$12,000 going into profits and salaries.

Professor Evans thanked Drs. Bloomfield and Shaughnessy for joining the meeting. Dr. Bloomfield agreed to work with the Senate Research and Senate Library Committees on the matters that had been discussed.

2. Building Recommendations

Professor Evans next drew the attention of Committee members to the recommendations concerning building costs forwarded by Professor Gudeman and the Senate Committee on Finance and Planning. Professor Gudeman asked that FCC review them, and if it deemed it appropriate to do so, forward them to the budget task force that is being appointed.

The recommendations were as follows:

1. Use the University's bonding capacity for infrastructure needs rather than for proceeding with unfunded projects
2. Initiate a building depreciation fund mechanism to provide for building repair and replacement needs
3. Require a system of escalation/inflation in all capital building or improvement budgets expected to extend beyond one year from the original cost estimate
4. Initiate a life cycle investment program, analogous to the Energy Conservation Program, wherein investments in infrastructure and materials that cost more initially but save money in the long run, can be made and tracked

Professor Kuhi inquired about using bonds for infrastructure costs. Professor Morrison pointed out that the University frequently issues bonds for projects that do not produce a revenue stream to pay them off (e.g., academic buildings), and one way to approach this is to identify the useful life of the infrastructure improvements and issue bonds for that expected life, paying them off at the University's favorable rate.

Professor Evans pointed out that these issues have been around for years: things cost more than planned and there is no budget for depreciation or upgrading of facilities. These are linked to what the task force will consider, such as common goods and the decision-making process. Professor Morrison moved that the Committee commend them to the task force; the motion passed unanimously.

Professor Morrison then observed that these are complicated matters, and that if the University were to depreciate buildings, for example, there would have to be massive changes in University budgeting.

3. Dinners with Junior Faculty

Professor Evans noted now for the Committee the reports that had been prepared, one summarizing the notes taken by the senior faculty at dinners with the junior faculty, the other a summary of the comments on the evaluation forms provided by the junior faculty. Professors Hogan and Murthy will lead a discussion at a later meeting, but Professor Evans inquired if there were any questions or comments. The major question is whether to recommend to FCC that it sponsor these dinners in the future.

It was noted that both the comments and the evaluation forms suggested strongly that the junior faculty very much enjoyed the events and wished them repeated.

One issue that arose was the fact that tenure-track faculty were invited while non-tenure-track faculty were not. One problem with mixing the groups up, Professor Evans noted, was that some of the discussion was focused on the tenure process and expectations; it might be troublesome to mix up the two groups of faculty. It was clear from one discussion, Professor Bales commented, that in some departments the non-tenure-track faculty are discriminated against, and there is no attempt to integrate them into the department. That is a significant issue, Professor Evans said, and recalled that at the workshops in the AHC, some department heads struggle to avoid divisions between faculty and P&A staff who do faculty-like work.

It was agreed that the Committee would await a more specific report from Professors Hogan and Murthy before deciding what specific recommendations might be made.

4. Report from Committee Chairs

Professor Kuhl reported that the Senate Research Committee items of most importance were on the Senate docket, and commented that the Intellectual Property policy took a long time but was REALLY a product of joint effort with the administration. He commended Professor Carol Chomsky for her work in drafting language for the policy.

Still on the Research Committee agenda are policies or policy changes generated by the University's exceptional status with NIH. Professor Kuhl noted that NIH representatives will be on campus June 8-10, and that on June 8 there will be a series of presentations on grants management to which all faculty are invited. This visit is in the way of a progress report, and is not the official visit to review the exceptional status.

Professor Bales reported that the Committee on Faculty Affairs will hear about PeopleSoft and grants management at its next meeting. In addition, other issues it has taken up include a faculty handbook (part of a group looking at getting information on the web), professional expense funds (an issue that they do not know if they wish to raise, because such funds are unevenly available around the University, with some needing it badly and others not at all), whether or not a department should keep a position if it votes to reject a candidate for tenure (this should not be a matter of policy, but should be

brought to the attention of the deans; sometimes local circumstances may require a reconfiguring of units), and faculty workload (it has only been considered with respect to teaching, and it is the view of the Provost's office that there has generally been an equitable transition from quarters to semesters).

On the last item, Professor Korth inquired, is there no intent to examine unit-to-unit differences in teaching load? He had heard that as long as workload was preserved within units, the can of worms that constitutes the difference in loads among units would not be opened. Professor Bales said that would not be taken up. There was talk about the speed-up in workload, but that is difficult to measure, and evidence about increases in errors, classes less well-taught, and so on, could only be gathered through anecdote or anthropological studies.

Professor Kuhi recalled that the University of California at Berkeley had changed from semesters to quarters, and then back to semesters. It was clear that there had been a decline in workload (teaching) over time, and with the change back to semesters, there was an effort to restore teaching loads to previous levels. There is NO QUESTION that there was a speed-up. Professor Evans surmised that something similar may have happened here, and that the change to semesters has brought teaching loads higher. The issue will be passed on to Professor Richard Goldstein, chair of Faculty Affairs next year.

Professor Bales then commented on the subject of academic appointments. There was concern in the Joint Committee about the dilution of expertise represented by the appointment of a task force that will consider the Joint Committee report, but that is inevitable when other stakeholders join the discussion, he said. He also expressed concern about the routing that the report of the task force, and said the Joint Committee wanted assurance it would go to the Senate. The charge to the task force is ambiguous on this point. The November 1 deadline for a task force report could be a problem, and may mean that the matter will not come to the Senate until Spring Semester.

Professor Evans noted that Professor Bales is on the task force, and urged that he push to clarify the manner in which its report will be taken up by others. She said the November 1 date was set so that those who do not have 11-month appointments would not be expected to work in the summer. She also said she assumes the report will go to the Senate. Professor Morrison said the task force is the equivalent to a legislative conference committee, working out differences between administrators and the faculty.

5. Discussion with President Yudof

Professor Evans welcomed the President to the meeting at 12:15. The subjects of discussion included:

- the politics of, and the outcomes from, the legislative session
- strategies for dealing with the problem of faculty salaries, and how the capital campaign and private funds might be the source for making them more competitive
- the politics of the state and the attitudes of legislators
- tuition policy, in light of the state's very generous student financial assistance programs
- Rochester
- the basketball allegations
- Staff Day, June 2

Professor Evans congratulated the President on having receptions at Eastcliff for the University's custodians. He reported that he had earlier held a similar event for the groundskeepers, as a way to help make them feel more a part of the University community.

Professor Evans thanked the President for joining the meeting, and then adjourned it at 1:15.

-- Gary Engstrand

University of Minnesota