

Minutes*

Fall Retreat
Senate Committee on Educational Policy
Wednesday August 23, 2000
8:00 – 12:00
University Club, St. Paul

Present: Wilbert Ahern (chair), Steve Fitzgerald, Gordon Hirsch, Emily Hoover, Frank Kulacki, Geri Malandra, Christine Maziar, Carol Miller, Kathleen Newell, Mary Ellen Shaw, Richard Skaggs, Thomas Soulen, Steven Sperber, Craig Swan

Regrets: Karen Seashore Louis, Marsha Odom

Absent: none

Guests: Peter Zetterberg; Linda Ellinger (Office of the Executive Vice President and Provost)

[In these minutes: issues in undergraduate education, in graduate education, discussion of IMG, and issues for the year]

1. Opening Matters

Professor Ahern convened the meeting at 8:00, welcomed everyone, and called for a round of introductions.

He then informed the Committee that Professor Hirsch has agreed to serve as the chair of the ASSEMBLY Committee on Educational Policy. Since he, Professor Ahern, is from the Morris campus and thus not a member of the Twin Cities Campus Assembly, it seemed appropriate that a Twin Cities faculty member serve as chair of the Assembly committee, which deals with educational policy matters exclusively of concern to the Twin Cities campus.

Professor Ahern then inquired of the Committee if it wished to follow the practice of the Faculty Consultative Committee by including attribution in its minutes. With only brief discussion, the Committee voted unanimously in favor of attribution, with the understanding that Committee members would have the opportunity to review draft minutes before they are distributed.

2. Issues in Undergraduate Education

Professor Ahern asked Vice Provost Swan to outline the issues in undergraduate education he sees coming during 2000-01 academic year.

* 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.

Dr. Swan began by reporting that Professor Laura Koch (chair of this Committee for 3 years) has been appointed 50% time as Associate Vice Provost for first-year programs. Dr. Koch will also have an informal working relationship with the coordinate campuses.

In terms of issues, Dr. Swan said there are three NEW issues, in addition to those that the Committee has paid attention in recent years. First is the distance education task force, which will be chaired by Professor Billie Wahlstrom. The task force has not been appointed yet; the Committee may wish to review the membership and may wish to have a representative on the task force.

Professor Ahern recalled that SCEP has been interested for a number of years in possible policy issues related to distance education and is also concerned about who owns course materials developed for distance education courses as well as how to ensure the quality of the distance education experience. When is it expected the task force will begin its work, he asked? In September, Dr. Swan responded, and should be done by spring. Dr. Maziar later pointed out that the presumption of the Intellectual Property policy is that these course materials belong to the faculty; the task force could provide guidelines about when the University should be more aggressive in providing support for distance education and sign contracts for work related to it.

What will be the charge, Professor Skaggs inquired? To deal with all issues associated with distance education, Dr. Swan said, as well as whether the University should (1) make specific strategic investments or (2) "let 100 flowers bloom." In addition, it should provide advice on how the University should structure its investment (e.g., through a private corporation it establishes?). The technology changes so fast, as do ideas about how to use it, that the subject is difficult to deal with. Dr. Maziar suggested that the task force might be asked to develop guidelines rather than policies as the University gains more experience with distance learning.

Dr. Maziar also commented that there is a need for protocols for entrepreneurial activities and clearer understandings about intellectual property. She noted, too, that there is potentially a "mission creep" problem with distance education: the University (any institution, for that matter) could start doing things that make money but that reasonable people could argue are not within the scope of the University's mission.

The second new issue, Dr. Swan then said, is the civic engagement task force, which will seek consensus on what it means to the University to engage the community and what the "community" is. The task force will be chaired by Associate Vice Provost Mary Heltsley and will also look at University outreach efforts. Professor Ahern noted that the most recent issue of ACADEME is devoted to the issue of civic engagement.

What is the purpose of the task force, Professor Skaggs again asked? Dr. Swan provided to the Committee a draft outline of its charge. One important issue is how the University recognizes and values civic engagement. What does it mean to enter into partnerships? What does it mean to engage with the community? It may time to reconceptualize the idea of civic engagement; some, for example, have said the University has gotten away from the land-grant ideals.

One issue in civic engagement is to identify those areas where the University can bring added value, Dr. Maziar said. Dr. Swan added that there are crying social needs; the question is where the University is best able to help address them.

The third issue is academic integrity, Dr. Swan said. The Clayton Committee report was adopted in principle by the Senate; there have been discussions over the summer about implementation. Some of the issues include the name of the office (the Office of Academic Integrity is too far-reaching; it sounds like the office has responsibility in research and everywhere else, which was not the intent), the need to work with the coordinate campuses (mentioned in the report, although its recommendations were aimed primarily at the Twin Cities campus), when and how often students should sign a statement regarding academic integrity, the appointment of an advisory committee, and how SCEP should participate in the decision-making. Dr. Swan also suggested that the Committee may wish to look at the Ibele Committee report (which examined how each of the individual allegations in the investigator's report of the basketball scandal should be addressed) because there may be general implications that the Committee as a whole will wish to be informed about.

Dr. Maziar noted that every graduate program must have a component about the responsible conduct of research and scholarship. They are trying to support these efforts through the Graduate School with an annual set of forums on important issues.

Dr. Ellinger reported that she had been in contact with the Center for Academic Integrity at Duke University and have been provided with a number of helpful resources. She also noted that another element of the Clayton Committee report was the distinction between central responsibility and college responsibility when it comes to pursuing charges of academic fraud. The undergraduate deans want recognition for the role of the colleges, she said, but the University must get away from the idea that cheating is a private matter between the instructor and the student; when that view prevails, no one knows what is happening from one incident to the next. There must be a change in the culture in that regard.

This falls within the purview of SCEP, Professor Ahern observed, both the question of what and when students sign as well as addressing the challenge to faculty to reduce the likelihood of cheating. Will recommendations on implementation go to the Faculty Consultative Committee and this Committee, Professor Newell asked? Dr. Ellinger affirmed that they would.

Other undergraduate education issues it was suggested the Committee take up included (1) the impact of semesters on resources for undergraduate education, on credit hours, and on faculty workload, and (2) encouragement of excellence and innovation in instruction, a topic on which the Academy of Distinguished Teachers is focusing and on which the University is making a proposal to the Bush Foundation.

3. Issues in Graduate and Professional Education

Professor Ahern turned now to Graduate School Dean Christine Maziar to lead a discussion of issues in graduate and professional education. Dr. Maziar distributed a one-page list of topics and reviewed it with the Committee. The issues were these:

-- "Nature of and support for post-doctoral students (?), employees (?)": The question is, who are they and how do they fit? If the understanding is that they are students, there should be institutional expectations for their support and development. If they are to be treated as employees, is there a need for a distinctive title and who is to take care of their interests? Funding for post-docs can be student-like or not. The concern is that post-docs may be falling between the cracks in the University's administrative

and policy structure. This is a topic, Dr. Maziar said, that she will bring to this Committee, the Senate Research Committee, and the Senate Committee on Faculty Affairs.

-- "Resumption of Graduate Program reviews": Now that the University is soon to be beyond the NIH exceptional status and has changed to semesters, the program reviews will start again. They will be redesigned so they are conducted in cooperation with the budget colleges in order to enhance the capability of addressing financial needs. The reviews will be combined with undergraduate program reviews where it makes sense to do so. They will also be conducted in concert with accreditation reviews at the discretion of the program (sometimes it will make sense to conduct them in concert; other times it will not, depending on the nature of the accreditation review.)

-- "Development of 'umbrella' programs--increase flexibility within programs to define 'tracks.'"

-- "Modular course offerings": Dr. Maziar said she will ask the Committee to endorse such courses in graduate programs (e.g., a 3-hour course for 5 weeks rather than a 1-hour course for 15 weeks).

-- "Role of 4000 and 5000 level courses in students' degree programs and in course offerings of departments": There is a struggle with 4000 courses in particular. Dr. Maziar said she would bring this issue to the Committee once the governance bodies in the Graduate School understand where they want to go.

-- "TA support and development issues": This is an important and difficult issue for the Graduate School, Dr. Maziar commented. The Graduate School plays an advocacy role for graduate students and graduate education but it pays no TAs and makes no appointments. As a University community, we need to keep this issue (both stipend and fringe benefits) front and center, she said; one element of this issue that is scary is that health care costs are a large percentage of compensation but something over which the University has little control, and one which causes increased costs to departments but for which increased costs the students may see only marginal additional benefit.

-- "MnSCU's interest in developing Applied Doctoral programs": It is important that the University continue its collaborative programs with MnSCU and at the same time be aware of this effort.

-- "Life-long learning, certificate programs, terminal or professional master's programs": This topic sparked considerable discussion. Dr. Maziar said the University should not object to others offering these types of programs if the University has decided they fall outside its mission, and the University also needs to be careful about "mission creep." Post-baccalaureate certificates may take a variety of forms. It is time to give post-baccalaureate certificate programs a clearer role and definition than is the case at present.

Professor Kulacki inquired if there had been any discussion about articulation with other institutions in terms of certificate and similar programs, or of portable programs. Dr. Maziar said she was unaware of any discussion and could imagine "indigestion" at the graduate level were such suggestions to be made.

Dr. Zetterberg inquired what constituted a certificate program; Dr. Maziar said one approximate definition is that it is an education roughly equal to 12-15 semester credits narrowly focused on skill development. He asked if there is a Graduate School standard for certificate programs; Dr. Maziar said there is much variation nationally in such standards. Dr. Malandra noted that there exists a set of working

guidelines for certificate programs in the office of the Executive Vice President and that the College of Education and Human Development also has a useful set of guidelines. These, however, are not for graduate programs. The big issue at the graduate level, she added, is whether the work carries graduate credit.

Dr. Maziar said that in her judgment there is value in certificate course work that does not carry graduate credit. Students in the program may not meet Graduate School entrance requirements (they need only have a baccalaureate degree) and such programs make post-baccalaureate study available to a larger number of working adults. She would not want to risk that such programs be used as a back door entry to graduate programs. On the other hand, certificate programs that do meet Graduate School admission requirements and use course work that is appropriate for graduate credit can also provide valuable learning opportunities and could usefully be considered a part of the University's offerings.

This is a troublesome area, Dr. Zetterberg opined. There is no University policy at the undergraduate level. Certificate programs, however, are desirable, they meet educational needs, and they raise tuition revenue. It is bothersome that there are no criteria; what is the University certifying? He suggested there needs to be a policy on what a certificate program is.

Professor Kulacki observed that there are continuing education units for engineers. These are only important programs if employers see them as important; the employers should be asked if they believe it important for people to have a piece of paper after going through a program. They be more interested in skill acquisition than a piece of paper. Another advantage to not having the certificate programs part of Graduate School programs is that they can be tailored for companies, Dr. Maziar pointed out, but the University would not want tailored programs feeding back into a graduate program.

The College of Continuing Education is reviewing certificate programs, Professor Hoover reported, because it also has no guidelines at present. One question that arises is whether regular (tenured or tenure-track) faculty should or must be in charge of certificate programs.

It was agreed that this was a topic the Committee would take up.

- "Course scheduling--standard versus nonstandard hours and calendars"
- "Timely reporting of grades": Dr. Maziar expressed a concern that the culture of the University leads to only loose respect for the deadline for grades. Professors Skaggs and Sperber inquired why meeting the grade deadline was important for graduate and professional programs; Dr. Maziar said that many of the reasons were the same as for undergraduates: late grades affect the awarding of degrees, receipt of financial aid, and so on.

Professor Ahern recalled that the Committee had made a clear statement about the importance of the deadline and that it should be enforced. There may be, on this topic, a disagreement between this Committee and the Faculty Consultative Committee. He then thanked Dr. Maziar for her presentation.

4. Discussion of Incentives for Managed Growth (IMG)

Professor Ahern now turned to Dr. Zetterberg to lead a discussion of IMG.

Dr. Zetterberg began by saying he feared that life-long learning opportunities through the College of Continuing Education (University College) were a casualty of IMG. The University learned how subsidized they were and learned they were serving thousands of students INSIDE the University, not outside. At the same time, one advantage to IMG is that it essentially solved the problem of course access for regular students; course access is much better. The question that this interplay of results raises is whether anyone cares about the non-degree-seeking student. Have they fallen by the wayside? IMG has also affected summer school offerings as well.

Some colleges take continuing education seriously: the Carlson School is a model of one that does so. They run their programs well and wanted to own them. But even before IMG, he said, continuing education programs were largely whatever the faculty wanted to offer. One possible long-term effect of IMG is that continuing education may not receive the same level of instruction as in the past, which would be too bad because non-regular students want to take courses from University faculty.

Dr. Zetterberg told the Committee that he has never been a strong proponent or opponent of IMG; it is, he said, just a way to do the University budget. What is unique about it is that it has a name. The principal objective of IMG is to give colleges more control over their own revenue. Once that happened, there were different effects. He has advocated not pushing IMG to the departmental level: colleges can control their enrollments while departments cannot.

When IMG was first adopted, there were worries about the educational implications. There is, however, no evidence that the worst predictions have come true. IMG is the way the University does its budget and cannot be separated from the budget process; if educational concerns are brought to the table by the deans to the Provost, they will be addressed. He said that as far as he can tell, only Law and Nursing have faced significant financial problems BECAUSE of IMG. He said he was not aware of anything crazy happening in education. The administration tries to keep an eye on things in the budget cycle but there is no watchdog initiative specifically for IMG.

Questions about the University's mission are important: IMG incentives could lead a unit away from what many would think of as the institution's mission. With all the University's changes, however, in calendar, information systems, and IMG, if there is a problem it is difficult to identify the culprit.

One important question with IMG is how the University funds academic support units such as the libraries and classroom technology. When the central administrative gave away ALL the tuition revenue; it now takes some money back through a tax on all funds. Mr. Fitzgerald observed that one area that was a problem was general purpose classrooms; there is no mechanism to deal with life-cycle costs.

Committee members asked a variety of questions or raised issues in the ensuing discussion.

-- IMG is not necessarily driven by enrollment; some professional schools increased tuition rather than enrollment; other units can increase revenue by persuading students to be more full-time. He said he was aware of only one college that had requested an increase in its enrollment (which was not permitted).

-- Dr. Zetterberg said he did not know what happened with respect to tuition income in CLA but agreed that there are real concerns. He said it may be three years before the situation shakes out. He said the University will have to be vigilant on student course loads or there will be complicated issues related to retention and graduation rates (which had been improving in recent years).

-- Professor Hoover reported that she was now not allowed to teach a course in another college that she had enjoyed teaching. The consequences of IMG for interdisciplinary education are significant, Dr. Maziar observed. In some departments and colleges there have been no problems; in others there have been, Dr. Zetterberg said. Those with problems tend to forget that the goal is not maximizing tuition revenue but to keep the college running. There seems to be no University solution to inter-college academic program issues, Dr. Hoover commented.

-- SCEP called for assessment of IMG when it first began to discuss the subject; now there is no IMG oversight committee, Professor Ahern pointed. Professor Soulen, who served on the IMG Oversight Subcommittee, recalled that the more it dealt with problems, the more it realized that there were problems that had no mechanism to correct them.

Professor Ahern wondered if the relationship of the deans to IMG was analogous to asking the foxes to guard the chicken coop. He pointed out that in terms of the academic appointments issue, IMG encouraged the deans to do them the cheapest way possible. The Bales committee proposed recommendations that would have set limits on the use of non-regular appointments; the deans rejected those limits. One must worry about the deans, he concluded. Dr. Zetterberg later rejoined that he did not know of any dean who was not trying to improve instruction as opposed to simply maximizing revenue. Non-regular faculty were an issue before IMG, he pointed out. The incentives were also the same before IMG, Dr. Maziar added.

The whole issue of faculty teaching outside their department or college is a problem, Dr. Zetterberg agreed. It has always been messy and now is worse.

How is the tax working? The library problem existed before IMG, Dr. Zetterberg observed. The University has the same amount of money as before and that money is distributed mostly in the same way. The main casualty has been the College of Continuing Education. Funding common goods remains a problem.

Assessment needs to include a governance committee, Professor Ahern maintained; it must be sure that there are measures in place. Implementation is the responsibility of the administration. There was a response to the IMG Oversight Subcommittee, Dr. Zetterberg said, and there were several meetings devoted to it. His Morrill Hall colleagues took the report seriously, he assured the Committee. He went on to observe that doing the budget would be a lot easier without IMG; the more complicated question is whether IMG solves more problems than it creates. The pluses and minuses need to be looked at over time. He said he worried that people would think of the pre-IMG as a golden age. It was not, he declared; there were no consistently-articulated principles and the rules changed every year.

Professor Ahern thanked Dr. Zetterberg for his comments.

5. Issues for the Year

Professor Ahern then drew the attention of Committee members to the draft list of issues that the Committee might take up during the year and asked if there were any additions to it. A number of topics were raised.

-- The question of a common entry point, a place where students enter the University but do not declare a major, versus entering in any of a number of different colleges and being asked to declare a major early. Dr. Zetterberg noted that there is a long history of discussions of a common entry point; the Twin Cities campus decided against it. He said he believed the campus is moving in the right direction, with freshman admission to eight colleges, but that barriers to transfer and graduation must be gotten rid of.

It was agreed that a subcommittee should examine degrees and credits and hurdles to graduation. It should also explore the impact of semesters on the ability of students to explore other fields and on the flexibility available in their schedules.

-- The use of animals in teaching will stay within the purview of the Senate Research Committee because the vast majority of the use of animals at the University is in research.

-- There is increased pressure from accrediting agencies to assess graduates, especially with respect to liberal education. There will also be questions of interest to the Committee that flow from North Central Association guidelines, especially those related to international education and distance education. The standards are much more specific and less flexible, which Dr. Maziar characterized as problematic.

Dr. Zetterberg noted that one of the current institutional measures involves surveying current students. The 1998-99 (the last year before semesters) results are done; the Committee might wish to talk with Darwin Hendel about them, he suggested.

-- The Committee should receive an annual report on the PeopleSoft implementation.

The priorities for the Committee will be:

- IMG
- Distance education (following the work of the task force)
- Faculty/academic appointments (hear from Professor Bales on the newly-issued report)
- Civic engagement (again, follow the work of the task force)
- Academic integrity (respond to the Senate Consultative Committee)
- Academic calendars (act soon to set the 2002-03 calendars)
- Accrediting reports and assessment

Professor Ahern thanked everyone for coming and adjourned the meeting at 12:00.

-- Gary Engstrand

University of Minnesota