Minutes[*]

Senate Committee on Educational Policy
Wednesday, March 28, 2007
1:30 – 3:30
238A Morrill Hall

Present: Richard McCormick (chair), LeAnn Alstadt, William Bart, Vernon Cardwell, Megan
             Cummings, (George Green for) Gail Dubrow, April Knutson, James Leger, Guy
             Merolle, Claudia Neuhauser, Peh Ng, Paul Siliciano, Craig Swan, Molly Tolzmann,
             Cathrine Wambach, Douglas Wangensteen, Joel Weinsheimer

Absent: Donna Spannaus-Martin, Kristen Wendtland

Guests: Assistant Vice President Barbara Brandt (Academic Health Center), Associate Dean
             Judith Buchanan (School of Dentistry); Vice Provost Arlene Carney, Vice Provost
             Gerald Rinehart (Office of the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and
             Provost); Vice Provost Billie Wahlstrom (Office of the Senior Vice President for
             Academic Affairs and Provost)

Other: Academic Health Center associate deans: Kathleen Watson, Linda Perkowski
             (Medical School), Ronald Hadsall (Pharmacy), Linda Lindeke (Nursing), Judith
             Garrard (Public Health), Laura Molgaard (Veterinary Medicine)

[In these minutes: (1) student evaluation of teaching in the Academic Health Center; (2) student
development outcomes; (3) portal]

1.   **Student Evaluation of Teaching in the Academic Health Center**

        Professor McCormick convened the meeting at 1:30 and welcomed Assistant Vice President
Brandt and Associate Dean Buchanan to discuss student evaluation of instruction in the Academic
Health Center (AHC).

        Dr. Brandt began by introducing the AHC associate deans who had joined the meeting. She
reminded the Committee that she and Associate Dean Buchanan had come before it about 18 months
ago, to request a change in the way students evaluate instructors in the School of Dentistry in order
that the School could pass its accreditation review. Associate Dean Buchanan was charged by Dean
Patrick Lloyd to take leadership for the School of Dentistry accreditation self-study in anticipation of
the American Dental Association accreditation visit in October 2006. At the time of the Fall 2005
SCEP meeting, there was concern about the (1) lack of student evaluation of teaching and (2)
outcomes measures. The health professions are highly-regulated and accreditors have very specific
expectations about outcomes and about structures.   Specialty accreditation agencies, as regulated by
the United States Department of Education, require schools and programs to conduct comprehensive
outcome assessment of student learning and programmatic outcomes. This requirement necessitates

comprehensive outcomes assessment plans, executed assessments, and faculty continuous quality improvements.

Dean Buchanan asked the Committee for a waiver from University policies regarding course evaluation, Dr. Brandt recalled, in order that Dentistry could meet accreditation guidelines. At that earlier meeting, SCEP determined that the School of Dentistry would receive a waiver; however, this waiver was not extended to the entire AHC schools. The other five health professions schools in the AHC experienced similar issues as dentistry. Two schools, the School of Public Health and the College of Veterinary Medicine, also faced accreditation self-studies and visits in April 2007. After the 2005 SCEP meeting, the AHC academic deans worked together to develop an AHC course-evaluation policy that would meet the needs across the health professions schools. The draft was brought individually to faculty councils and the deans of all six schools and endorsed by the AHC Deans Council. Senior Vice President Cerra approved the policy, and it was then forwarded to Provost Sullivan.

The AHC has invested in CoursEval software, widely used nationally by health professional schools for the evaluation of teaching. There is now a CoursEval users group that coordinates the system implementation across the AHC.   Dr. Brandt reported that she was the senior administrator who met with the ADA accreditation team during the exit interview. The School of Dentistry received many accolades and 18 commendations. However, the School is non-compliant in one standard: outcomes assessment. The reason is that there has not been one full-year cycle of outcomes assessment data collection and documentation of response and improvement by the School of Dentistry faculty. This will be accomplished in May to enable a correction before the ADA Council on Accreditation meeting in July.   The AHC associate deans were in attendance to present the consensus AHC Course Evaluation policy and ask that the Committee review the draft policy and grant a waiver for the entire AHC from the Faculty Senate policy on teaching evaluation.

Dean Buchanan reviewed how health professional education varies from undergraduate education: entering students have an average GPA of 3.6; the AHC receives about 1000 applications for 96 student positions, and the students are highly motivated. The students all have the same goal— they want to be a doctor, dentist, pharmacist, etc. The educational structure is lock-step except for a few electives; there is one time to take a course, and they in the AHC are not free to modify content that is dictated by accreditors and the standards of the profession, so AHC faculty must meet these requirements for accreditation purposes. The professional schools have the added responsibility of the protection of the public and hence need to ensure their students meet high standards. Many courses are team-taught by specialists and there can be up to 70 instructors/faculty in one course. There is a greater variety of educational experiences (didactic, laboratory, seminars, clinical rotations, clinical simulations, and clinical experiential education throughout Minnesota). Often when students learn in a clinic with one supervising dentist, the student course evaluation is the only document that provides the school with feedback.

Dean Buchanan provided information on the uses of the data in the School of Dentistry for the last three terms, beginning with Fall, 2005. She demonstrated how this process has improved student course ratings over these three semesters. The School collects data, sets benchmarks, engages in ongoing analysis of the data, makes recommendations for improvement, and follows up on the recommendations. She pointed out that for a number of courses, the ratings improved notably between Fall, 2005 and Fall, 2006. If a course did not meet a pre-set benchmark, she worked with the

Educational Policy Committee and department heads to discuss ways the department and faculty could improve their teaching and assure that student-learning outcomes are met. Peer review of teaching is performed in certain instances. She and the dean of the dental school read all student comments during that period and discuss with each department head their findings. The accreditation site visitors commended the School on an excellent system but that it had not been in place long enough to be compliant with ADA Standards. The School feels very positive about the changes and believes it helped improve the curriculum and teaching.

Professor McCormick connected the discussion to teaching evaluation across the campuses. When Dean Buchanan came to the Committee in the fall of 2005, it was fine-tuning and consolidating teaching evaluation policies that dates from the early 1990s. The discussion with Dean Buchanan at the time helped the Committee crystallize its thinking about the policy revisions. Even under the previous policy, because these are multi-instructor courses, they were exempt from the policy provisions. Both the old and the new policies cover only classes with one or two instructors. The Committee gave Dentistry a waiver last time because there were good reasons to do so and because its proposal was in the spirit of the Faculty Senate policy. When the Committee recommended and the Faculty Senate adopted a new policy on teaching evaluation, it did include the provision that any unit that wished to seek a waiver from the policy would have to obtain approval from this Committee. This Committee is charged to decide whether the proposed waiver would allow a practice that is in the spirit of the Senate policy.

The discussion last time about software was very instructive for the Committee, Professor McCormick said. There has been a lot of concern about web-based teaching evaluation because participation tends to be much lower than when paper forms are used. The AHC system, which requires a student to log on in order to complete the course (at which point the student can fill out the evaluation form or may opt out), has higher participation rates than the paper forms. He said he believed that is the direction the University should go in because to have reliable data the participation rate must be high.

Professor McCormick said he understood that the AHC was requesting a waiver for all AHC colleges. Professor Weinsheimer said he would like to see the actual instrument used in evaluations. Dean Buchanan noted that the AHC separates course evaluation from instructor evaluation. Vice Provost Swan said the Committee works with the actual questions to be asked; they have distributed information on the types of questions to be asked. Why type of question, he asked? It depends on the type of instruction, Dean Buchanan said—didactic, clinical, outreach, etc. A year-long clinical course that could be 80% of a student's time might involve 60-80 clinicians. Each of whom is evaluated, Professor McCormick added.

Professor Weinsheimer reported on the discussion at the last meeting about teaching evaluation: while there was not unanimity on the wording of evaluation questions in the new instrument, there was unanimity of view about the demerits of the last version and the need to get rid of the question asking for an overall view of the course, so it and that question are gone. Dean Buchanan said they in the AHC wanted an overall rating question. So did some outside the AHC, Professor Weinsheimer responded, but the answer to that question obscured the answers to the other questions. Their faculty value the question, Dean Buchanan said; it is a way to put the course in perspective. The question is about the COURSE and the results are a way for faculty go gauge courses overall; if the results of the overall question are lower than the responses to specific questions,

the college Educational Policy Committee may conclude that students are not being asked the right questions.

Professor Weinsheimer said he every interested in the emphasis their accrediting agencies place on outcomes assessment. The more he hears, he said, the more it seems that is the way the wind is blowing. He said he would like to know how the evaluation of faculty and courses relates to outcomes assessment. Dr. Brandt said that student evaluations are a small part of outcomes assessment, which should include a comprehensive plan for student performance, performance-based evaluation, traditional testing, etc. Each college educational policy committee serves as the nerve center overlooking the enterprise, and some schools have separate assessment committees that review the data and make and manage recommendations for continuous improvement. They are required to ensure students are ready to interact with the public as they are placed in their clinical rotations across the state. Dr. Brandt indicated that she reads all of the AHC promotion and tenure files and noted that this area needs to be strengthened and there is a need to provide support for faculty for teaching and faculty development in documenting their impact on student learning. It is not unusual to see comments from external reviewers that teaching portfolios are not included in the promotion and tenure dossiers. The driving force behind assessment is protection of the public; support for teaching is one part of responding to that driver.

In undergraduate courses with multiple instructors, students have difficulty remembering which instructor was which, Professor Siliciano observed. Dean Buchanan said their evaluations are not semester-based; if student is in a clinic in Hibbing, the evaluation is completed when the student returns to the campus. There is a lot of flexibility in the CoursEval system; if there is a guest lecturer, students may complete the evaluation immediately after the lecture. They have five or six windows in which they evaluate instructors—and they also include pictures of the instructors on the evaluation to help students recall the faculty member.

Professor Siliciano asked how they intervene in a course for which the evaluations fall below the benchmark. Dean Buchanan said she sends a letter to the course director expressing the concerns and asks for a response in writing how they will be dealt with—she has a dialogue with the course director. For courses that fall significantly below the benchmark, they bring in peer evaluators; her office chooses people with expertise to look at course portfolios, sit in the class, and provide guidance to the Educational Policy Committee.

Dr. Knutson asked if they have a lot of non-tenure-track/non-tenured faculty. They do, Dean Buchanan said; a high percentage of their instructors are clinical faculty, and this system is the only way effectively to evaluate them. Many of these faculty are not paid, Dr. Brandt added; they are community-based faculty who serve in hospitals and clinics. Dr. Knutson said she would be concerned about using an overall question to evaluate the instructor in those settings. They use many questions, Dr. Brandt said, not just one.

Professor Neuhauser said the AHC is very broad; they use this system for ALL courses? Only those in professional programs, Dr. Brandt said, such as MD, DDS, MPH, etc. They do not use it for Ph.D. programs.

Professor Wambach asked who decides on the item pool for each course, which could vary depending on the kind of course it is. Dean Buchanan said the Educational Policy Committee

approves the course-evaluation questions while the Faculty Council approves the instructor-evaluation questions. The results of these questions go to different places. There are six or seven standard questions asked in every course type and for every instructor; every faculty member has the right to ask additional questions. They also use software to evaluate outreach; faculty can evaluate student performance with this system and students can also use CoursEval to evaluate their outreach experience. If there is significant variance between the questions used between each AHC school, who determines if the questions still meet the AHC policy, Vice Provost Swan asked? The associate deans at the meeting said there was significant similarity between the questions used at all schools.

How do they evaluate the questions, Professor Leger asked? Dean Buchanan said the questions for dentistry were instituted in a hurry; however, they plan to use the data collected from the first two years in anticipation of reviewing the questions on an annual basis. The Educational Policy Committee will look at them in terms of validity and reliability, but that has not been done yet. The evaluation will guide where they need to investigate further; the present questions are a rough cut that allows them to focus attention on acute areas. Some schools do a methodological analysis, Dr. Brandt said, and user groups are very helpful.

Do they see questions changing depending on the feedback, Professor Leger asked? They do. If the Committee grants the AHC a waiver, based on a particular set of questions, what is to prevent the system from evolving to something inappropriate? It could also evolve into something more appropriate, Dr. Brandt commented. Dean Buchanan said they want the AHC system to be in the spirit of what the Committee is adopting for the rest of the University but hope they can be given some degrees of freedom to be thoughtful about what works for the AHC. There is faculty oversight of the process, Dr. Brandt observed. And also by the accrediting agency, Dr. Swan asked? There is, Dr. Brandt affirmed.

Professor Weinsheimer said he wondered if the AHC needed a blanket grant of autonomy. Their accrediting agencies do not stipulate the mechanism or questions by which the schools assess outcomes but the AHC is seeking autonomy for its educational policy committees. There is a lot of overlap with the Senate policy and accreditation does not alter the issues involved. Professor McCormick said he believed accreditation in the AHC drives issues in a way not true elsewhere in the University; if there is more emphasis on accreditation in the future in the rest of the University, it will likely have the same effect elsewhere as well. Accreditation agencies do not prescribe, Dr. Brandt agreed; their proposal is in the spirit of the Senate policy and it is a faculty-driven process; there are checks and balances. The accrediting agency would not say that the questions used outside the AHC are unacceptable, Professor Weinsheimer asked? They would not, Dr. Brandt said, but those questions might not generate the data set they need in the AHC. They need more data, Professor McCormick commented.

Dean Green said "forever is a long time" and there is much to learn; he moved to grant an exception for five years, with the understanding that the AHC representatives can return to the Committee at any time to help educate it. The Committee deliberated whether to grant five years or a shorter period; Associate Dean Kathleen Watson of the Medical School said that outcomes assessment for physicians, for example, will take five years and that it would be more informative for them as well as the Committee if they have five years of data to work with. Professor Weinsheimer said he supported five years with the understanding that the AHC representatives would return to the Committee in three years with the details of implementation—because this Committee has much to

learn from what the AHC is doing—how things are going, what they have learned, and how they have adjusted their practices.

The Committee voted unanimously to grant a five-year exception to the Senate policy. Professor McCormick thanked Drs. Brandt and Buchanan for their very helpful presentation.

2.   Student Development Outcomes

Professor McCormick next welcomed Vice Provosts Arlene Carney and Gerald Rinehart to discuss Student Development Outcomes. He noted that this topic had been on a previous agenda; the proposed outcomes were now being brought back for final approval.

Vice Provost Rinehart distributed a handout listing the seven proposed Student Development Outcomes that included co-curricular and academic/classroom examples of how they might be met. He noted that the outcomes are now in sentence format so they make more sense to students. They are also doing additional consultation with the Council of Academic and Professional Administrators (CAPA) and the Senate Committee on Student Affairs, after which the outcomes will be brought to the University Senate for action. They are asking that the Committee endorse the Student Development Outcomes as outcomes students should be made aware of and counseled about; they will also try to develop assessment techniques to evaluate whether the University is making progress on students' achieving them.

The seven Student Development Outcomes are:

"As they progress toward their bachelor's degree, University of Minnesota, Twin Cities, students will demonstrate and develop the following:

--   **Responsibility and Accountability** by making appropriate decisions on behavior and accepting the consequences of their actions.
--   **Independence and Interdependence** by knowing when to collaborate or seek help and when to act on their own.
--   **Goal Orientation** by managing their energy and attention to achieve specific outcomes.
--   **Self-Confidence /Humility** by knowing their personal strengths and talents and acknowledging their shortcomings.
--   **Resilience** by recovering and learning from setbacks or disappointments.
--   **Appreciation of Differences** by recognizing the value of interacting with individuals with backgrounds and/or perspectives different from their own.
--   **Tolerance of Ambiguity** by demonstrating the ability to perform in complicated environments where clear-cut answers or standard operating procedures are absent.

The handout also identified the links between the Student Development Outcomes and the Student Learning Outcomes. Both are intended to help students to "develop skills for effective citizenship and life-long learning," the superordinate goal of both sets of outcomes. The Provost supports this characterization; it is what the University is all about, Vice Provost Rinehart commented.

To "develop skills for effective citizenship and life-long learning" is an eighth Student Development Outcome, and that is being used on the handout to link the two sets of outcomes,

Professor McCormick noted   Vice Provost Rinehart agreed. There could be other such summary statements, Dr. Carney said, but this one seemed the clearest and showed best how the two sets of outcomes are related. Undergraduates will be assessed on the Student Learning Outcomes (which will be difficult, but it will be done) and also on the Student Development Outcomes. The latter could be demonstrated in a variety of ways: learning abroad, student employment, service learning, UROP, etc.

Dean Green said he was sympathetic to the ideas in the Student Development Outcomes and whole-person development. The Committee has been discussing Derek Bok's book *Our Underachieving Colleges* and one subject it has talked about is moral responsibility, something not developed in students in public universities. Moral development is not in this list as such but it is implicit in the statements. In teaching a freshman seminar, he has realized that students have progressed on these outcomes in settings outside the University; he suggested that if students will be assessed on achieving these outcomes, the observational data be opened to activities unrelated to the University. Vice Provost Rinehart agreed; students will be given the option to include on- as well as off-campus activities. When they discussed the Student Learning Outcomes with the Committee, Dr. Carney said, they talked about student reflections; she hopes the same could be done with the Student Development Outcomes, and that would not be restricted to what happens on campus.

How will these be assessed, Ms. Cummings asked? Initially, through students' self-report, Mr. Rinehart said. Students will not be prevented from graduating because they do not meet a Student Development Outcome, but the University can look at how students are doing. These are expectations, not graduation requirements. They do, however, put the University on the line as fostering these characteristics and attributes, Professor McCormick observed.

These outcomes could be assessed at the point students graduate, Professor Bart said; the question is their origin. Students may have had the characteristics before they came to the University or may have developed them outside the University. Inferences from outcome data need to be carefully evaluated. Vice Provost Rinehart agreed. Dr. Carney said she assumed that baseline data would be developed. Professor Bart agreed; one way to do so would be to assess students when they enter the University and what activities they engage in outside the University.

They have discussed introducing students to the outcomes during Welcome Week, Dr. Carney reported; the beginning of reflection could be powerful and students will be asked to engage in periodic reflection. As students leave the University they must do a lot of reflecting (about jobs, further education, etc.), and that is more difficult to do if they have done none of it before that point. People will be able to write richer statements for various purposes as a result of their reflecting while at the University.

Parts of the University will have differential effects in terms of the achievement of these outcomes, Professor Bart said, and some parts could have negative effects.

Ms. Alstadt said she thought there should be an "and" rather than the "/" in "**Self-Confidence /Humility** by knowing their personal strengths and talents and acknowledging their shortcomings." She also said she was confused about the outcomes because they seem to be both ambiguous and hopeful. The Student Learning Outcomes can be measured; what is the University trying to get at with the Student Development Outcomes except suggesting to students they should be conscious of them? These are characteristics everyone knows are important, Mr. Rinehart said; there is nothing new in

them. Articulating the outcomes provides clarity and gives students and staff working with students common language to use in discussing students experiences. The outcomes also can help units think about the desired impact of co-curricular programs they offer. Ms. Alstadt thanked him for the explanation but expressed doubt the outcomes could be measured (how does one measure reflection, she asked?).

Dr. Carney gave an example of how she might assess a student doing a UROP project in her lab in terms of expectations for accountability and responsibility. She agreed that these outcomes are not as easy to measure as classroom learning, but they do give faculty and staff language to use in working with students that relate to University-wide goals.

Professor Cardwell suggested that the chart with examples of co-curricular and academic examples be expanded to include a column with community engagement examples. He also said that the University needs to communicate to students how valuable these attributes are to them when they graduate; these are the kinds of characteristics employers are looking for. Professor McCormick agreed that additional focus on public engagement was appropriate, given that it is also part of the University's strategic positioning goals.

Professor Neuhauser opined that the "develop skills for effective citizenship and life-long learning" statement was closer to the Student Development Outcomes than the Student Learning Outcomes because there is nothing about competency in it. There will be when the Student Learning Outcomes are developed, Dr. Carney said. If the statement is intended to represent a "bridge" between the two sets of outcomes, Professor Neuhauser said, there should be something in it related to the learning outcomes; nothing in those outcomes leads to a competent person. Dr. Carney disagreed; she said there are many elements of the learning outcomes that require competence. The diagram is only a map of how the two sets of outcomes merge, Professor McCormick said; they will not be measured for graduation. They are still an expectation, Professor Neuhauser said; to what extent will be they be expected? Are they something the University controls in the way it trains students? Or are they something it has no control over? It is a process, Vice Provost Rinehart said, and the benefit is to help advisors or anyone working with students who are concerned about their success. Professor Neuhauser maintained that by setting expectations, the University will want to see them met; can it really do so?

Dr. Knutson said she was glad the Committee talked about bringing in more community involvement. With the high cost of tuition and a lot of students working, many will not have time to demonstrate these characteristics through on-campus activities. But they may be involved in church or community groups. She asked if this set of outcomes would be a speed-up for advisors, because they will now be asked to deal not only with academic issues but also developmental outcomes and reflections—or they will need to have fewer students. Mr. Rinehart said they are considering how to incorporate the outcomes in the advising process. The outcomes will affect the curriculum in some colleges, however, Dr. Swan observed. Good advisors already consider these outcomes, Professor McCormick added; this makes explicit what they are already doing.

Mr. Merolle said that one hole in the learning outcomes is the lack of anything about environmental learning and natural systems. Dr. Carney said the Student Learning Outcomes contain nothing in any discipline or anything that is topic-oriented; those requirements come under the liberal education rules. Any Student Learning Outcome can be applied to issues of the environment. Is

environmental literacy achieved only for students who focus in those fields, Mr. Merolle asked? Dr. Carney said no, but it is a topical/content area; the learning outcomes are devoid of content and are to apply to any discipline.

Professor McCormick ended the discussion, because of time constraints; the Committee voted 13-1 in favor of the Student Development Outcomes, with 1 abstention.

Professor McCormick thanked Vice Provosts Carney and Rinehart for joining the meeting.

3.   Portal

Professor McCormick now turned to Vice Provost Billie Wahlstrom to inform the Committee about portal developments.

Dr. Wahlstrom began by pointing out that the University has about 2 million web pages; everyone has no doubt had the experience of not being able to find something they want at the University. Her office is trying to use technology to help people find things at the University. There is a Google search appliance at the University, which can be tuned, but right now one can enter a search term and receive a lot of hits that are not what one is looking for.

Dr. Wahlstrom distributed several handouts, pictures of various web pages (which will not be described in these minutes). A few highlights from her comments:

--   People should not talk about information overload at a large university with 2 million web pages; they should talk about information abundance. The portal can help put information at hand where one needs it. It is an out-of-the-box tool that provides windows in to the University.

--   The portal was used to provide information to the class of 2008; they found it "sort of useful." They asked students what they wanted; usage rates for subsequent incoming classes have increased significantly. There is 86% regular usage of the portal; students see email as for old people—they use instant messaging.

--   There are 141,800 registered portal users, including 17,000 students.

--   My U is on the portal, as will be WebCT.

--   Students can get all their courses and what is assigned in them on the portal.

--   There is a faculty portal, designed to cover the many parts of faculty lives.

--   It is all password-enabled. Some elements may be on clocks and will require re-registration if there is no use for a time.

--   The portal will take one to UM Reports seamlessly; it also remembers the last 15 reports the user looked at. One can also reach information about individual students.

--	One of the most useful elements of the portal for faulty is learning about department seminars, which will require that staff in departments enter the information. Faculty will be able to learn about seminars in other departments as well.

Professor McCormick thanked Dr. Wahlstrom for joining the meeting, and adjourned it at 3:30.

-- Gary Engstrand

University of Minnesota