

Minutes*

Faculty Consultative Committee
Thursday, October 4, 2001
1:15 – 3:30
238A Morrill Hall

Present: Joseph Massey (chair), Wilbert Ahern (via teleconference), Muriel Bebeau, Susan Brorson (via teleconference), Dan Feeney, Richard Goldstein, Candace Kruttschnitt, Judith Martin, Scott McConnell, Paula Rabinowitz, Jeff Ratliff-Crain (via teleconference), Charles Speaks

Regrets: Les Drewes, Arthur Erdman, Marti Hope Gonzales, Marvin Marshak

Absent: Marc Jenkins

Guests: President Mark Yudof; Vice President Charles Muscoplat

Other: Elizabeth Wroblewski (Office of the Chief of Staff)

[In these minutes: (1) report from the Senate Research Committee; (2) discussion with President Yudof (various topics); (3) myths and realities in higher education; (4) replacement for Professor Wahlstrom; (5) tenure committee]

Vice chair Professor Feeney convened the meeting at 1:20 and announced that Professor Massey had been requested to join a meeting with President Yudof so would be joining the meeting at 1:30 along with the President.

1. Report from the Senate Research Committee

Professor Feeney then turned to Professor McConnell for a report from the Senate Research Committee.

Professor McConnell outlined what the Research Committee planned to do for the year, especially with respect to civic engagement. He noted that he has little history with some of the issues, as a new chair, and solicited corrections from Committee members if he was wrong. The Committee is just setting its agenda, he said, and he wanted to be careful to present the Committee's views, not his own.

What is the Research Committee planning to do this year? One topic will be the research infrastructure: how well is the University doing at providing the indirect support needed for research (e.g., access to electron microscopy). This will include a look at how the University spends its indirect cost recovery dollars: the differences across colleges, what the money is for, if the money is being spent wisely. The Committee will look at how these funds should be spent and how they are being spent.

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

Will the Committee also consider whether the 51/49% breakdown between the colleges and the central administration is appropriate, in addition to how the colleges spend the money, Professor Speaks asked? It will, Professor McConnell affirmed, and will also look at other questions, such as the basis for the rates used, how the federal government defines indirect costs, if the University pays for those things with indirect cost funds, and how the funds are allocated across colleges. He has the sense that faculty do not understand how this is done and they need to be provided information.

There are a variety of other issues before the Committee as well; Professor McConnell said he would be meeting in the near future with Vice President Maziar to learn about what matters confront the University.

The least well-articulated issue before the Committee is civic engagement, Professor McConnell related. As FCC has discussed it, he said he noted several issues that should probably come before the Senate Research Committee; he said he believes that representatives of the Task Force on Civic Engagement should talk with the Research Committee about public scholarship. How is it defined and promoted, and so on; he said public scholarship is confusing to him, from reading the report, and needs to be better articulated.

Professor Ahern said this sounded like a sensible approach. Professor Brorson agreed and said that the Crookston faculty will be tracking this with considerable interest, as they are still making the transition from a 2-year to a 4-year institution.

Professor Bebeau asked what he thought the role of the Research Committee is with respect to the Responsible Conduct of Research activities? At present the plan is to evaluate the Responsible Conduct of Research training; Professor McConnell said he assumes the Research Committee would be involved in the evaluation, but he has not given it any further thought. The broader question, Professor Bebeau said, is how the University as an institution assures the integrity of the research environment and puts in place systems to monitor the environment. There is an Institute of Medicine report coming out on this subject; since the University has been a model for research integrity, it should have something to say on the subject. The issue is not just training individual researchers but also an ATMOSPHERE that promotes integrity. Professor McConnell agreed.

Professor Ratliff-Crain said that there is continuing interest and concern about the Internal Review Board, especially among social scientists. That is an issue he and a number of faculty will be following with interest.

There are Internal Service Organizations in the Academic Health Center, Professor Feeney said, and the AHC Finance and Planning Committee has been dealing with how they are funded. There has been a reasonable effort to help the units keep going and achieve financial independence. That might be a matter for the Research Committee to take up for the institution as a whole.

2. Discussion with President Yudof

President Yudof and Professor Massey joined the meeting at 1:40. Professor Massey assumed the chair.

The President reviewed a number of matters with the Committee:

-- The recent article in the St. Paul Pioneer Press and Dispatch. He said he would be the last one to try to restrict faculty freedom of speech, but he asked that people use good judgment when talking with reporters.

-- Security at the University has been tightened in light of the events of September 11, but this is an open university and will remain so.

-- He has called a "time out" on the six-year capital budget in order to be sure that the capital plans are aligned with University priorities; this will be an excellent time for the faculty to weigh in on the plans. He said he would not bring a revised six-year capital plan to the Board of Regents until May or June, so there will be time to think about which units are poorly housed, what the priorities should be, and to sort through the proposals that have been made.

Professor Speaks said the Committee on Finance and Planning was pleased at the "time out" and would look at the capital plan. The existing review process appears to include no effective faculty participation so the Committee will welcome the opportunity. The President said he just wants a system that works, with faculty participation, in a timely and orderly way. It is his job to balance competing interests when it comes to capital projects, but he would like the PROCESS to be mechanical in the way it operates, so that it provides an opportunity for views to be expressed.

-- The state budget situation deteriorates; the question is whether there will be a recession.

-- The University has changed much since the 1980s and has momentum on its side. The question is how it is positioned in the public's mind. It is doing extremely well on most measures; in the face of declining faculty numbers and state funding, and a stable number of staff, educational quality, student numbers, and research funding are up. In terms of diversity, the University's 17% enrollment of students of color is significantly higher than the corresponding high school graduation rates; to be sure, the University must talk about where it wants to be but it must also look at where it has been.

What about the people whose only contact with the University is through the athletic programs, Professor Kruttschnitt asked? The President agreed that that was an area that warranted further consideration.

There is a nice story about the transformation of the University in the last 15 years, Professor Martin agreed; is there a risk that the response will be that the University is doing so well on less money that it doesn't need any more? The President agreed that the message must be carefully crafted. He repeated that he believes the University faces a different paradigm--he does not see adequate funding to support public research universities (and keep low tuition) being provided anywhere in the country except for California.

One never hears anything about the University just teaching people to be more aware of ideas and books that are not in their usual realm of experience, Professor Rabinowitz commented, or that the largest humanities department in the University is not even on the map; that does not make people feel like their work is valued. The English department has been in temporary quarters for 45 years. There is no major

research university in the country without top-ranked liberal arts and humanities departments to go along with top-ranked science, engineering, and other programs.

The President agreed. This is a difficult problem, he said; for example, getting English into new quarters, Pillsbury Hall, requires a sequence of moves.

Professor Rabinowitz said she also continues to remain concerned about the statement that the liberal arts should be in the MnSCU system. Is this the start of a movement that will, in 25 years, move the liberal arts? If that happens, the University is doomed to mediocrity; there is no great university without great humanities departments. The President agreed and said such a move would never happen.

Professor Massey thanked the President for joining the meeting.

3. Myths and Realities in Higher Education

Professor Massey next welcomed Vice President Muscoplat to the meeting. Dr. Muscoplat presented a series of slides on myths and realities in higher education [the substance of this presentation was summarized in the minutes of the Senate Committee on Finance and Planning, August 28, 2001, part 2, and will not be repeated in these minutes; the minutes can be found at <http://www1.umn.edu/usenate/scfp/01-08-28pt2.html>.]

Committee members asked a number of questions and made a number of comments.

-- Apropos the statistic that the United States spends about 8% of its Gross Domestic Product on higher education, Professor Martin asked if that figure was matched anywhere else in the world. Dr. Muscoplat said he did not know.

-- Apropos the comment that the University must develop a valuation model that will convince the citizens of the state that they should invest in it, Professor Martin commented that the University had such a model for most of its first 150 years of existence. The question, she said, is what persuaded the citizens in recent years to change their mind about making the investment.

-- Dr. Muscoplat said that he told the Board of Regents these are trend lines from the last 15-20 years: nothing has changed right now and there is not a crisis. What has happened is that universities have just awakened to what has happened. The University needs a long-term strategy to preserve what is most dear. It must preserve its quality above all, or the institution will unravel.

-- Is the implication of these trends that the University should charge for what has been characterized as civic engagement, Professor Kruttschnitt asked? Selectively, yes, Dr. Muscoplat said, if there is a market for the University's service or offering.

Professor Ahern said he would draw a distinction between civic engagement and service. Much of what Dr. Muscoplat talked about is service, but for some activities, access should not be based on ability to pay. Dr. Muscoplat agreed that the University must keep itself open and fund things for people in need. If the University does not obtain funding increases, it must use other models, Dr. Muscoplat said; it must become more efficient, use different technology, or charge for service while protecting access.

-- Professor Martin reflected that this is a society that has become market-, brand-, and celebrity-driven, with the accompanying belief that if one does not pay a lot for something, it is not valuable. She said she believes in the public mission of the University, but if there are activities it could generate income from but does not do so, does it not look dumb? Dr. Muscoplat agreed and cited examples where the price of a service offered by the University was increased substantially--and the number of users tripled. The University is giving away a lot and it feels like it is under-pricing what it does, Professor Martin concluded. Professor Ahern cautioned, however, that this is a delicate balance in arriving at an appropriate cost that maintains access.

The discussion then roved over a number of points.

Professor Ahern commented that the University must operate in the world as it is, it must be realistic; many of these questions about higher education are about money and the unwillingness of public leaders to spend what is needed. But the University must also look at the longer trends: recent trends reflect an emphasis on narrowly economic, market-place forces, but over 100 years, that has not always been so. There is an ebb and flow in U.S. history. The disparate demands on the University for service reflect an erosion in the definition of common goods. The University must recognize the force of the market-place but must at the same time try to strengthen public attention to the common good. Dr. Muscoplat argued that the aim of the Morrill and Smith-Lever Acts was economic growth; the Wingspread Conference of Land Grant University Presidents and the Task Force on Civic Engagement interpreted them differently, and said they were about a democratic social vision.

Professor Martin said she did not disagree but was amazed at one of Dr. Muscoplat's graphs, which showed how state and federal funds are increasingly locked into entitlement programs and how little discretionary funding is available. This is a different world, she said. and the flexibility to support public goods does not exist as it did in the past.

Professor Rabinowitz observed that people are also changing: no one with a college education does not want their kids NOT to have a college education as well. As more and more people are college-educated, more and more people will want college. Does the state not want those people to be able to go to college? The nature of the current discussion, however, is that all should be responsible for their own education and that there are too many entitlements, Professor Bebeau remarked.

Several FCC members commented, in response, that one cannot assume that all continue to believe in equal opportunity; if one believes that all should pay their own way, that is not equal opportunity.

Professor McConnell said that it is interesting to try to articulate the value of the University, rather than simply the money expended; he surmised that with increasing costs and the pressure to reduce state allocations in all categories, the University would lose any argument based solely on the amount of money that should be provided. There are times, though, when many people will spend a bit more money to increase the value of what they purchase. It seems that people at the University think there is great value to the state in what they do; it is not clear what others outside the University value. Perhaps the University needs to improve the way it describes what people get for the money that is spent so they can more closely assess the value of their investment.

There are all different kinds of constituents, Professor Martin pointed out, that are not connected and that do not talk to each other, so the University has to talk in 25 or 50 different ways. The University does nothing to lessen that fragmentation, Professor Ahern said; why does the University have to tell 25 or 50 different groups about what it does? Some of its activities are always necessary and the University needs to figure out where everyone benefits.

Professor Kruttschnitt recalled Dr. Muscoplat's graph showing the decline in public funding for higher education everywhere but California. What turned around there, she asked? The population has changed, Professor Rabinowitz said. The public base of support has changed, Professor Kruttschnitt said, partially answering her own question. It is gaining in population, so has more money available. And people woke up to what was happening to California higher education under Ronald Reagan, Professor Rabinowitz surmised.

Professor Ahern observed that the graph Dr. Muscoplat presented contained almost a straight-line increase in the portion of public budgets dedicated to entitlements. Is it possible to imagine a society willing to pay higher taxes, he asked? Professor Rabinowitz said that of course it is, and noted that the residents of Minneapolis had twice voted substantial tax increases on themselves to support the public schools.

Professor Rabinowitz added that she had learned, during the tenure debate, that Minnesota ranked only above Mississippi in the amounts that parents pay for higher education for their children. People are supposed to pull themselves up by their bootstraps, a la Jesse Ventura's view, she said. That helped her understand the way people talk about the University. She said she is amazed at how good people feel about the University; it has many good things that it does not play to enough. She also related how, in a conversation with a reporter several years earlier, the reporter went through her (Professor Rabinowitz's) file the year she was up for tenure and was astounded at what someone had to go through; the reporter said that no one else had to go through that kind of process.

As the University relies more heavily on tuition and state funding declines as a percentage of the total budget, it will become more private. That is what Michigan decided to do, Professor Rabinowitz pointed out, but that was different because Michigan and Wisconsin drew from the East Coast while Minnesota does not function in that orbit. There has been much support for the move in Michigan but there was also much anger. In Michigan, however, there was always the alternative of Michigan State.

It is interesting that not more is being made of the phenomenon typified by the Western Governor's University, which meant the governors would not have to spend more money but most of their constituents could go to college at a virtual university. No one with money, however, would send their kids to college on line but the thought was that maybe the rest of the people would. Professor Rabinowitz expressed doubt that they would; people like to be with other people, she said.

This conversation went beyond the time that Dr. Muscoplat was present; earlier in the meeting, Professor Massey thanked him for coming and making the presentation.

4. Resignation and Replacement

Professor Massey announced that Professor Wahlstrom had accepted a 75%-time administrative position with responsibilities for distance education and had resigned from the Committee. [Under these

circumstances, the bylaws provide that FCC members elect the replacement, who serves until the next elections to FCC.] Later in the meeting, following brief discussion, the Committee voted to ask Professor Kuhi to serve. [Professor Massey asked Professor Kuhi the next day if he would serve; Professor Kuhi agreed to do so.]

5. Tenure Committee

Professor Massey next commented that he believed that with respect to the agenda of this Committee and the docket of the Senate, the other committees should work through an issue and then bring it here with a recommendation. FCC will also take up issues, but there are many that should be taken up by other committees first.

In terms of the proposal to establish a tenure committee, the Committee on Faculty Affairs looked at it and formed no conclusion. He suggested it should work on it more and come back to FCC with a firm conclusion.

Committee members then made a number of suggestions to Professor Goldstein, most of which supported the proposition that it should remain a tenure subcommittee, rather than a standing committee of the Senate. Professor Rabinowitz commented that whatever would institutionalize the structure best should be adopted; she urged that the draft bylaw creating a Senate committee be used for any subcommittee.

Professor Goldstein said he would bring the matter back to the Committee on Faculty Affairs.

Professor Massey adjourned the meeting at 3:30.

-- Gary Engstrand

University of Minnesota