

Minutes*

Senate Committee on Educational Policy
Wednesday, February 12, 2003
1:00 – 3:00
238A Morrill Hall

Present: Martin Sampson (chair), Wilbert Ahern, Victor Bloomfield, Vernon Cardwell, Shawn Curley, Scott Ferguson, Steve Fitzgerald, Gretchen Haas, Frank Kulacki, Marsha Odom, Karen Seashore, Mary Ellen Shaw, Mary Sue Simmons, Craig Swan, Douglas Wangenstein

Absent: Dale Branton, Carol Miller, Kim Pinske

Guests: Karen Zentner Bacig, Laura Koch (Office of the Executive Vice President and Provost), P. T. Magee, Judith Martin, James Perry, Dan Svedarsky (Academy of Distinguished Teachers); Tracy Smith (Office of the General Counsel)

[In these minutes: (1) credits and class contact hours; (2) the teaching mission in a time of budget crisis; (3) legal issues in instruction; (4) electronic grades; (5) students called to active military duty]

1. Credits/Contact Hours

Professor Sampson convened the meeting at 1:05 and reported that the amendment to the semester conversion standards the Committee had approved (there will NORMALLY be a 1:1 ratio between credits for a course and contact hours per week) had not been approved by the Faculty Consultative Committee or the Student Senate Consultative Committee. The faculty were concerned that this could be inflammatory and that the relationship between credits and contact hours is essential to a high-quality institution. They did not believe this is the right time to have a debate over that issue. In his view, Professor Sampson said, this was a minor change in the policy.

Professor Kulacki asked if the Consultative Committees had reviewed the minutes of the SCEP meeting. Professor Sampson said he thought they had not but that it will be important to work with the Senate Consultative Committee if there are objections to the change.

2. The Teaching Mission in a Time of Budget Cuts

Professor Sampson began this item by noting that the agenda of the last meeting included a discussion of the Pawlenty Commission report, which praises the overall direction of the University, lauds its accomplishments and importance, and challenges the University to increase its four-year graduation rates as well as to rise higher in the rankings of research universities. The graduation rates are among the concerns of this Committee, and the Pawlenty Commission challenged the University to improve its four-year graduation rate.

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In recent weeks it has become clearer and clearer that a budget crisis at the state level will exact very significant cuts in the state's financial support for this University. With the significant budget pressures the University will experience in the near future, it seems appropriate to take stock in a preliminary, general way of where the teaching mission of the University is at the present time and where the Committee wants it to go.

Professor Sampson said he personally saw this meeting as a place to think aloud about the University's teaching mission: what has happened in recent years, what needs to be accomplished in the near future, what the vulnerabilities are. The underlying question is what is the Committee's sense of the University's responsibilities and what is its vision of how good its teaching mission can be. No group of people is better situated to think with SCEP about this than the Academy of Distinguished Teaching.

Part of his concern, Professor Sampson said, is his sense that research universities in general do not articulate their teaching missions very clearly. Second, at this particular University, in recent years numerous things have strengthened the undergraduate teaching mission. The Provost's office has been extraordinarily supportive of good teaching and has contributed to a momentum of improved undergraduate education that the Committee would prefer not to lose. This momentum, too, has probably not been articulated very clearly as the Committee has focused on questions of how the University can do better.

Under such conditions there is always risk that endeavors that do not articulate themselves well lose visibility in the discussions about how to adjust to a huge change in circumstances.

So, he concluded, this is a meeting to think aloud and to begin to develop some clarity about the teaching mission that might otherwise be lost in the shuffle.

Professor Sampson then welcomed the representatives from the Academy of Distinguished Teachers and asked them to help the Committee reflect on what has happened in recent years with respect to teaching and what the implications of the pending budget cuts might be.

Professor Perry began the discussion by noting that the University has invested heavily in the teaching mission for the last ten years and teaching is better rewarded than it had been. But there has been no systematic collection of convincing evidence that undergraduate and/or graduate education have improved, nor that we in this Research I land-grant institution are offering an educational experience that is unique among institutions in the state. We have both the opportunity and the responsibility to offer to the administration metrics of quality teaching at both the graduate and undergraduate level that can be used to help the administration make informed decisions at this time of significant change.

Professor Seashore said that on this topic, all knowledge is local, within the unit or department. One can see in course syllabi an increased emphasis on teaching. Her concern is that there are two pressures that would derail that increased emphasis. One, the University has made huge strides in the use of technology and has created expectations that were not there before. Will it all disappear? It is very expensive; what will happen to the technology as it needs to be replaced? A cut in the budget for technology for classrooms would be an implicit lowering of instructional quality. Two, the easiest way to fix the budget problem would be to admit a lot more students--but that would

certainly not help instructional quality. What can the governance system do to help think about these pressures?

Dean Bloomfield recalled that Executive Vice President Maziar has often said that when the University raises tuition, there is essentially a bargain made with the students that instruction will improve--or at least not get worse. He said he believed that instruction would be an administrative priority in upcoming budgets. He also said there were a couple of themes from the last decade: (1) the use of technology, and (2) small-scale teaching (freshman seminars, smaller classes, more attention to UROP, and more attention to individual students). Redirecting attention to masses of students would be cheaper, he observed, but would harm quality. What is also not articulated is the continuing development of new courses to reflect new knowledge; that happens a lot in the Graduate School.

Professor Martin said that with respect to teaching at a research university, there must be a much better explanation of what is better or different compared, for example, to MNSCU schools or private liberal arts colleges. The University must do a better job of saying what the value is for a student who comes here, because the University is different from every other institution in the state in terms of what one can get here.

The biggest ally of the University is the students, Professor Martin also said. They can articulate why they came to the University, what they are getting here, and what they understand that their friends who attend other kinds of institutions are not getting.

Mr. Fitzgerald said that there have been tremendous strides in improvement of the teaching infrastructure in classrooms and there is support in place for faculty and classrooms. There is a solid record of achievement over the last four years that can be quantified. That progress is vulnerable. The faculty have invested a lot of time learning how to use technology in the classroom, but that equipment has a definite lifecycle; if the funding for the technology dries up, will faculty go back to using paper and the blackboard?

Dr. Swan reported on some results from a survey of graduating seniors taken last spring. He pointed out that despite some glitches in the transition to PeopleSoft (e.g., delays in delivering financial aid and billing), despite the fact that Coffman Union was closed for three years, the number of students who reported being satisfied or very satisfied increased from 69% in 1989 to 78% in 2002. Other data he reported, comparing results in 1989 to 2002, were:

Would "definitely or probably" start over at the U
58 to 70%
Quality of instruction in 1xxx classes rated very good or excellent
18 to 26%
Quality of instruction in major rated very good or excellent
44 to 56%

There was a strong improvement in the rating given to the balance of types of instruction.

The proportion of students who said they knew three or more faculty well enough to ask for a letter of recommendation increased from 32 to 47%.

These are very positive results, he said, and help document the case that the University has improved its undergraduate education. The results also suggest the University has very hardy undergraduates, Professor Seashore commented.

Professor Perry commented, however, that while these are positive data, and document considerable improvement at the University, by themselves they do not draw any distinctions between the University and MNSCU or other kinds of schools. Someone needs to mine the data to identify what is different about the education at a Research I university.

One thing the University has done well is the civic engagement initiative, Dr. Simmons said; civic engagement has been embraced by the administration and colleges. It is a small initiative now but is being embedded in the curriculum; she said she would not want to see it shrink. A lot of students have a very local vision about their education; by engaging in civic work outside the University, they enrich their learning within their majors.

Professor Svedarsky, chair of the Academy of Distinguished Teachers, said that the activities of the Academy are one of the most exciting and fulfilling activities he has been involved in during his 35 years at the University. He said he was grateful to former President Yudof and then-Provost Bruininks for creating the Academy and providing the support for it; he said he would not want to see its activities diminished. He said he is thrilled with the synergy between teaching and learning and believes the overall quality of the University is affected by that synergy. The Academy, he said, is prepared to do what it can to help ensure that synergy is not lost.

Professor Koch observed that there are other initiatives outside the classroom, such as the living-learning communities, that enhance learning. Those should be used to help foster relationships between students, faculty, and staff.

Dr. Shaw noted a DAILY opinion piece suggesting that the General College is not needed. She said the General College serves as a teaching laboratory, provides instruction in teaching and learning, showcases good instruction, and enhances the University's teaching mission.

Professor Magee said that in his 15 years at the University there has been a noticeable improvement in the atmosphere with respect to teaching. There are a number of faculty development programs that signal that change. It would be a shame if those improvements were abandoned, he said.

Professor Seashore reported that her college (Education and Human Development) is facing a 20% budget reduction. They cannot achieve those cuts unless they get rid of all adjunct faculty (which is not a good idea for applied programs) and increase teaching loads for those who remain. What happens in a research university when faculty, especially younger faculty, when class sizes are increased and they must teach more courses? She said she was worried that local (unit) decisions could undermine central administrative support for teaching; there is a disjuncture between the resources provided by the administration and the pressures on departments. She said she would not want to see the University lose its long-term investment because of a one- to two-year budget crisis.

It is an interesting thought that if students are asked to pay more, they are entitled to more in the classroom, Professor Sampson said. The University has tried to do its best with the available

funds. There is great worry that reduction of funds will jeopardize important recent steps that have been taken to improve undergraduate education.

Professor Cardwell said that as the University looks at restructuring itself, there will be effects not only on the quality of instruction but also on the overall quality of programs. With the likely retrenchments, there will be a lot of programs with low student numbers that will be seen as vulnerable--but it is often those programs that make the University a research university because they offer expertise that no other institution in Minnesota has. The University must be careful to protect low-enrollment programs.

The institution is going to change seriously, Professor Magee predicted; he said he feared there will be less diversity (both ethnically and financially) if tuition increases substantially and financial aid does not keep up. If that happens, students of color or who are poor will be driven out and the University will look more like an elite private university. The changes must be managed in a way to avoid that outcome.

Good teaching is a characteristic of the faculty as a whole, Professor Kulacki said, and it will be important not to diminish the University uniformly. The administration must identify priorities, say what they are, and follow through. That will mean the University will be very good in some areas and will need to eliminate programs and shape the faculty to match those priorities. Perhaps the Graduate School does not need a lot of new programs--they cost, if only in faculty time, and it may be necessary to focus on the best way for faculty to spend their time. Dean Bloomfield commented that the Graduate School is sensitive to these issues.

There has not been a great deal of talk about the possibility of offering small, specialized courses cooperatively among schools. There have been a few such courses in the Big Ten, and it may be worth the effort to explore these in more depth, Dean Bloomfield said, in order to keep the specialized courses.

Professor Perry said that this Committee should advise the administration about strategic changes in the University and what should be protected. The Academy wants to know how it could help, what it could provide in the way of data and information.

Mr. Ferguson said that he would not support cutting small programs, which in many cases are probably the only ones in the state. Students come to the University for the small programs and they should not be cut.

Dr. Shaw asked if there is a mandate to the Committee to work on the evaluation of instruction. It is still important to look at rewarding teaching, she said, if the promotion and tenure process is oriented to research.

Budget cuts will not change the Committee's agenda, Professor Sampson said. He commented that he was struck by the discussion of how far the University has moved in improving instruction and how important the implications are if those improvements are lost. The Academy symbolizes what the University has always had--good teachers--but now provides an arena for them to speak. The Committee is also responsible for saying where teaching should end up in the University's priorities and can do so in concert with the Academy.

What is the next step, Professor Sampson inquired of the Committee? Another meeting to explore further the points made? A small group to gather information about the points made? A focus on priorities? Is there a feeling that the instructional mission of the University is going to be permanently harmed, Professor Kulacki asked? (It is difficult to say without knowing the size of the cuts.) There is a need to look at what faculty do with students on a daily basis and to let the administration do what it must. Small programs are very vulnerable to elimination or merger because there are cost implications to small programs. Such decisions would not reflect on faculty. Is their role as teachers under attack?

Professor Martin said that she did not believe teaching is under attack, nor that budget cuts would be directed at teaching, but that there would be collateral damage. The issue for her, for example, is that she is already teaching big classes. She could teach more; most of the faculty probably COULD teach more, but then they would have to give up other things. Would research suffer, she asked rhetorically? In terms of what the Committee could do, she pointed out that Dr. Maziar has developed a set of principles to guide how budget decisions should be made; the Committee could look at them and think about the impact on the instructional mission. This Committee is in a better position to have that discussion. The Faculty Consultative Committee, she added, should not decide budget priorities, but this Committee can offer advice on the instructional mission vis-à-vis the budget principles.

Professor Cardwell agreed that this Committee should have a major role in looking at the implications for the teaching mission. He urged that it do so ahead of the curve; it should be part of policy development in order that the University can come out with the strongest possible teaching programs. He also agreed there will be collateral damage, in part from retirements and competitive losses of faculty to other institutions; if units cannot replace those faculty, programs and morale will be damaged. The Committee must take an active role in promoting the educational mission of the University.

Dr. Simmons related that her program deals with prospective students, many of whom are shopping around and who look at cost (such as the difference between the University and MNSCU). In their program they talk about the benefits of the University. The Pawlenty Commission report also mentions MNSCU, she recalled; where is the overlap between the two systems? Can the Committee see a list? There is a list, Dr. Swan said, and it suggests there is minimal overlap--and where there is, it is in high-demand programs such as nursing and business. There has been talk about higher education in the whole state, he added, so there would be one campus with history, one campus with psychology, and so on--which is completely antithetical to all notions of education.

Is it possible to ask Dr. Maziar for increased specificity on the list of budget principles, Professor Seashore asked? The Committee is not prepared now to make recommendations to the administration unless it wanted simply to make platitudinous statement. The Committee needs to know if certain topics are coming up or if the Committee is only reacting because decision-making must occur so quickly that deliberation will be difficult--or because some decisions will be so political that deliberation will not be possible. It may be that decisions that do not appear to be directed at teaching will nonetheless have implications for teaching; that is where the Committee could have a role, although how it would do so is not clear. She emphasized, again, that many decisions that could

affect teaching negatively will be "below the Morrill Hall radar"; the administration should be alerted about such decisions and it should say that units cannot do that.

Professor Cardwell said he was concerned that departments that receive budget cuts will be less willing to support collaborative teaching and will say that faculty are needed in the department classes. That is likely to happen unless there is both financial and moral support for joint and collaborative programs--which are part of the strength of the University.

Professor Svedarsky agreed that smaller programs are ones that a research university is uniquely able to offer. The budget principles from Dr. Maziar call for promoting efficiency; it could be argued that small programs are not as efficient as 500-student classes. But it may be that the small programs are what a research university can do uniquely.

Professor Kulacki said that the central administration will issue directives and there will likely be little time for the deans to engage the department heads and faculty in meaningful discussion. Typically, the turnaround time for implementing budgets is very short. He suggested the Committee prepare a white paper that captures the Committee's sense about the integration of the research and instructional mission. It could establish a philosophy about the way decisions should be fashioned in a fast-moving environment. It would also provide faculty and students information about what the Committee is thinking. It might also present hard cases of what the University should do if it is to retain top rankings in its nationally-leading programs. Professor Odom seconded Professor Kulacki's suggestion.

The importance of making choices is key, Dean Bloomfield said. The Committee cannot just say it supports teaching. There will be cuts; the University must make decisions about what it will do and what it will not do. No one is saying the University should give up good teaching; what it must do is give up some teaching so the rest can be saved--or it could say it should give up research in order to support teaching. He said the second option was unacceptable but there must be a balance between teaching and research. It would help if the Committee could articulate bases for making choices: What teaching is most important to maintain and what should be given up?

The Committee could produce a strategic vision, Professor Sampson suggested, which would (1) identify what to keep and how to avoid collateral damage and (2) include a statement about where the University is now and how far it has come. It should indicate the high water mark of instructional improvement and demonstrate to people what is at stake in the budget cuts. In particular, Professor Ahern added, a statement should explain that what has been done has not reflected an abundance of resources but rather an increased focus--and that the improvements are not a luxury the University can give up but that will be difficult to maintain in the face of substantial budget cuts.

Dr. Swan said that the "high water mark" would be a good introduction but that "keep" is the wrong mindset. There will be difficult choices and decisions; it would be helpful for the Committee to articulate principles and values, rather than saying "keep my program" or "keep all support staff," etc. There is need for a framework to help guide decisions--that is where the Committee could add value to the process. There should also be a statement, Professor Martin said, that it is necessary to pay attention to graduate education as well, because it is very expensive.

Any statement should be couched in terms of the values that must be respected as changes are made, Professor Cardwell said. The question is how to frame decisions so the University will be proud of its record in the future and not look back at the "good old days." He said he also supported the idea of a white paper but pointed out that the timeline is short and the Committee must have its best thinking in place soon to offer the best suggestions to the administration as it makes decisions.

What must also be part of the conversation is that the University is not in competition only with MNSCU but also with the private colleges and universities, Dean Bloomfield said. There is a strong sentiment among some in politics to move to a high tuition, high aid state and to let the dollars follow the students. The private institutions are strong advocates of this idea: if there is a lot of financial aid, it will not cost a student more (and may cost less) to attend a private institution than to attend the University. Students must see a high value in attending the University; for undergraduates, that will come from high-quality teaching. That is an argument for maintaining high-quality teaching and for the University seeing as important individual attention to students, attention that they can also receive at private colleges.

Professor Sampson said it is important that the Committee not become a partisan in zero-sum situations as the University reformulates its budget. The Committee's focus has to be the overall quality of the University's teaching mission. There are important things to articulate here, which may not be articulated if this Committee does not do so. He said he would send out an email soliciting interest in helping to prepare a white paper; he thanked the members of the Academy for joining the meeting.

3. Legal Issues in Instruction

Professor Sampson next welcomed Tracy Smith from the Office of the General Counsel to talk about legal issues in instruction. He commented that the University is operating in an environment where there are more legal issues than many realize; the General Counsel's office sees things and sees changes that the faculty need to be aware of. He asked Ms. Smith to identify implications for the educational programs of the University, to talk about issues that seem to surface more than they should, and to point out things that are coming down the pike.

The biggest issue in higher education right now, Ms. Smith observed, is the Michigan affirmative action case. But as that issue is not really related to the classroom, the focus of this discussion was on areas that intersect teaching, including privacy, student discipline, academic integrity, and non-discrimination. There have been no significant changes or developments in recent years, but there are a couple of new things that she said she would mention here. She said that her office sees lawsuits arising from teaching only very infrequently.

There are two laws that protect student privacy, the state Data Practices Act and, at the federal level, FERPA. What is critical about both is that students have the right to access to information about them and the right to limit access by others to a "need to know" basis. Students may see anything written down about them, including email. They have a right to privacy in their educational records.

There have been two pertinent U.S. Supreme Court cases recently on student privacy. In one, the Supreme Court held that it did not violate student privacy for a school to use peer grading (and thus share student papers with other students). The second case held that the schools and universities

is not liable for damages for violations of student privacy rights. That case is not very relevant to the University of Minnesota, since Minnesota state law does hold the University liable for breaches of student privacy. Students must give consent to disclose information about them to people outside the institution, and access is limited to a "need to know" basis to people inside the University. The consent students give must be in writing.

Dr. Swan said that faculty receive requests from students to write letters on their behalf; the request may come in an email. Ms. Smith said the students do not have to use a specific form to make the request; there simply must be some written record that they made a request. What about a letter that is very critical, that might say a student is not qualified to do graduate work? The student has a right to see the letter, Ms. Smith said, but the author is privileged even against a defamation suit if the letter was prepared in good faith for an appropriate purpose.

Do these requirements apply to promotion and tenure recommendations, Professor Curley asked? What about an outside letter solicited for a candidate? A department is considering a candidate for promotion or tenure and writes to an outsider to ask "what do you think?" Dean Bloomfield added. Did the Assistant Professor give permission to seek the letters? No, Ms. Smith said. If information is solicited from an outsider, that is not the University's information. Dr. Swan noted that in CLA, the promotion and tenure process includes obtaining outside letters.

Dean Bloomfield referred to the HIPAA regulations and health care information. These largely apply in clinical settings, he said, but they are also intertwined with teaching, research, and practice and there are serious issues about disclosure. Ms. Smith said that student data in our student files--outside of health care--are not covered by HIPAA but they are covered by FERPA.

Dr. Shaw related that Dr. Falkner had spoken with the General College about FERPA, and people realized that in well-meaning informal conversations about students they had gone beyond what they should have in revealing student information. They are being more careful now, but it would help if someone would articulate what one can and cannot say about a student. Ms. Smith said there is no statutory definition of a legitimate educational interest; the phrase needs to be understood in the particular circumstances. For example, in Student Judicial Affairs: To what extent should faculty know about troubles a student may have had in other classes? A professor might have a need to know about past violent conduct involving other professors, but have no need to know other past violations. These are very fact-specific cases, she said.

Students often reveal personal information, Professor Kulacki said; what should people do when students voluntarily reveal life experiences? A question only arises if that information is re-disclosed elsewhere, Ms. Smith said. Is this like confessing to a priest, Professor Kulacki asked? It is not, Ms. Smith said. Private information about students can be shared within the institution with persons who have a legitimate educational interest in the information—even without the student's consent.

For example, if one learns of sexual harassment by a faculty member, Professor Sampson observed, one is obligated to report that information within the University.. If one learns someone is suicidal, there may not be a legal obligation to report, but the faculty member should consult within the institution to help the student. The privacy right does not guarantee privacy if something must or

should be reported, Ms. Smith said. If a faculty member learns a student is the subject of sexual harassment, it must be reported.

What about the case of a third-party report of an off-color joke, Professor Kulacki asked? One needs to exercise judgment, but if there is a question you could call the Equal Opportunity office, Ms. Smith said, and that office can decide if the conduct needs to be reported; if it is sexual harassment, it must be reported, even if the information was provided "in confidence." We should take care to avoid promising confidentiality to students, but should work with them to get the appropriate persons notified when something needs further action.

Student discipline also intersects the classroom, Ms. Smith said. Because this is a public institution, students must be given due process, which the University does. She urged people to call Student Judicial Affairs, headed by Betty Hackett (which Professor Sampson described as "first rate"), because it is very helpful. People may worry about getting involved in some long process but the vast majority of the cases are settled without a hearing--and if there is a hearing, it is completely quickly. She also said there has been great consistency in treating cheating, with the sanctions proportional to the offense. Ms. Smith also referred people to the Office of Academic Integrity website, which is very helpful in setting expectations and providing information on how to deal with situations that may arise.

In terms of classrooms generally, Ms. Smith told the Committee, she has heard from Ms. Hackett that "acting out" problems have increased nationally and may reflect an increase in mental health issues on college campuses.

Ms. Smith also reported that has been a committee looking at the Student Conduct Code and it has proposed a separate violation for disruption of the classroom.

Ms. Smith also observed that another legal issue arising out of the classroom is disability discrimination, especially when faculty or administrators insert themselves into a student's mental health instead of dealing with the student's behavior. Classroom misconduct is a behavior that needs to be dealt with, and faculty should deal with the behavior. Occasionally, well-meaning departments find themselves diagnosing or assuming mental health problems as the cause of the behavior, but that is not an appropriate role for faculty or administrators. Faculty and administrators should address the *behavior* in these cases, while referring students to the Disability Services Office to determine whether there is a disability and any accommodations that are appropriate to help the student.

Dean Bloomfield noted that foreign students are now subject to a lot of reporting requirements: they are supposed to notify authorities when they move, if they go to another campus to do research, and so on. The advising responsibility of faculty with international students requires a lot of attention. They also cannot drop below a certain number of credits, Ms. VanVoorhis pointed out. These issues should be referred to the International Student office, Ms. Haas said. There have been articles reporting that the FBI is asking for information, Ms. Smith commented; the University will not release student information without an appropriate subpoena or court order, although there is a health and safety exception.

Professor Sampson thanked Ms. Smith for joining the meeting.

4. Electronic Grades

Professor Sampson noted that the question of submitting grades electronically had been raised by a faculty email. The Committee had not seen this as a policy issue so had not proposed taking it to the Senate. He asked, however, if there are safeguards such that policy issues are not raised as well? What is the Committee looking for, Ms. VanVoorhis asked? The electronic process is more secure than the previous system. The concern is more about faculty turning in grades without department review, Professor Sampson said.

The bubble sheets were not secure, Ms. VanVoorhis commented; without a password, one cannot get into the system. There is the option of granting a proxy to others to enter grades and specific individuals can be barred from entering the system.

There was a question about department chair review, Professor Seashore said; has that been resolved? The chair will not see the grades when entered unless the department itself enters the grades (which two do), Ms. VanVoorhis said. The supplemental grade change process has not changed, however, although they do want to make that process electronic as well, in the future. The system now generates reports, including who has not turned in grades and who is late. (She also noted that fall semester saw a record number of late grades; about 780 students lost financial aid because grades were turned in late.) Department chairs can get these reports and talk to faculty about turning in grades.

Professor Odom commented that UMC has been very good about getting grades in; departments understand that they must do that. She said she agreed with the electronic process but remained concerned about taking away the responsibility of the department head for signing off; will the Registrar's office then be responsible for collecting grades, she asked? It will not, Ms. VanVoorhis said. In the past her office has sent reports to deans and department heads about late grades; their ability to do that was lost with the conversion to PeopleSoft, but they can now once again provide these reports. Those who are interested can run the reports. Professor Odom maintained that if she as a department head need not sign off on grade reports, then her responsibility for them is lifted. Ms. VanVoorhis pointed out that previously they could not track who had not turned in grades; now they can and the system can send automatic email messages reminding faculty to turn in grades.

Professor Odom also said that automation of the supplemental grade change process should be reviewed by this Committee before it is implemented. There should be departmental sign-off on such changes.

Professor Sampson wondered if international students get in trouble because grades are not turned in on time. It COULD be a problem, Ms. VanVoorhis said, but the University has 30 days to report grades for international students. One problem, however, is that the INS rules allow a student 30 days to finish an Incomplete; the University allows one year. The federal government in this case is trying to dictate University policy. Professor Sampson commented that people should be aware of this problem; Incompletes are common in graduate programs but they could lead to deportation of a student. Ms. VanVoorhis said the University is sticking to its own policy.

5. Students Called to Active Military Duty

Dr. Swan said he wanted it noted for the record that there have been questions asked about how to treat students who have been called to active military duty. He said he wished to remind faculty again that they should be flexible because being called to duty is beyond the student's control. Faculty need to be reminded of the policy that allows such students to be granted an Incomplete, and allows them one year from date of release from military duty to finish the work.

The question is who should do what, Professor Sampson observed. Students called to military duty should come to the Enrolled Student Services office, Ms. VanVoorhis said, and see about a leave of absence, their financial aid, and so on. Her office will put these students in a group so that Incomplete grades do not lapse into F's. The students will have to show their papers from the military.

Professor Sampson adjourned the meeting at 3:00.

-- Gary Engstrand

University of Minnesota