

Minutes*

Senate Committee on Educational Policy
Wednesday, February 28, 2001
1:00 – 3:00
238A Morrill Hall

Present: Wilbert Ahern (chair), Prince Amattoey, Shawn Curley, Khaled Dajani, Christina Frazier, Gordon Hirsch, Frank Kulacki, Geri Malandra, (George Green for) Christine Maziar, Carol Miller, Kathleen Newell, Marsha Odom, Mary Ellen Shaw, Rita Snider, Craig Swan

Regrets: Steve Fitzgerald, Emily Hoover, Thomas Soulen, Steven Sperber, Rachel Sullivan

Absent: Karen Seashore

Guests: Professor Lillian Bridwell-Bowles, Laurel Carroll, Professor David Frank

[In these minutes: (1) award winners; (2) academic work per credit; (3) report from the Council on Liberal Education]

1. Morse-Alumni and Graduate/Professional Awards

Professor Bridwell-Bowles presented the nominating committee's recommendations for Morse- Alumni Awards for Contributions to Undergraduate Education.

There ensued a brief discussion of the nomination process. Dr. Swan asked if were there parts of the University that should be nominating people that had not. There were, for example, no nominees from Crookston; Professor Odom said they have now recognized the need to establish a committee to work on building the dossiers. Professor Miller requested, and the Committee concurred, that a commendation for the great work of Karen Linquist be noted in the minutes.

It was moved and seconded to approve the eight nominees for awards and invitations to join the Academy of Distinguished Teachers. The motion was unanimously approved. Professor Ahern will telephone the awardees and letters of notification will be sent later in the week. Committee members were advised that information about the awards is confidential until next week.

Ms. Snider expressed appreciation for her coworkers on the nominating committee for the Graduate/Professional Teaching Awards, and presented their recommendations.

A motion to approve awards for the eight nominees was seconded and unanimously passed without further discussion. Professor Ahern noted that the same notification process and need for confidentiality applied for these awards.

* 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.

2. Revision to Semester Standards: Academic Work Per Credit

The Committee took up the proposed motion to amend Section 4A of the Semester Conversion Standards, which had been distributed before the meeting. After a brief discussion, Professor Kulacki moved to strike any reference to "average student" and "average grade." The motion was seconded by Mr. Amattoey. After further discussion, Dr. Green offered a friendly amendment, accepted by Professor Kulacki, which left some references to "average." The final version of Section 4A which was proposed for adoption was as follows:

SECTION 4A: The Senate affirms the standard (first adopted by the University Senate on February 16, 1922, and reaffirmed subsequently) that one semester credit is to represent, for the average University of Minnesota undergraduate student, three hours of academic work (including lectures, laboratories, recitations, discussion groups, field work, preparation of assignments, study, and so on), per week, averaged over the term, in order to complete the work of the course. Enrollment for 15 credits in a semester would thus require approximately 45 hours of work per week, on average, over the course of the semester. All grades for academic work are based on the quality of the work submitted, not on hours of effort. It is expected that the academic work required of graduate and professional students will exceed three hours per credit per week.

Instructional units should periodically review course syllabi to determine whether the course credit is appropriate.

The motion carried with one opposed.

3. Report from the Council on Liberal Education

Professor David Frank distributed the Council on Liberal Education Annual Report for 1999-2000 and gave his views on the status of the Council's goal of carrying out the mandate of the "Howe Report":

- The establishment of "themes" did work, but there is a problem of "credit creep."
- The structure for writing-intensive courses is good, but there is a tendency for the amount of writing to fizzle out. There is a great incentive for a department to propose one of these in order to get more students. Ms. Carroll added that some courses have been decertified. The Howe Report envisioned that resources saved by eliminating upper-division composition courses would be redistributed to the writing-intensive courses. Professor Frank knows that CLA captured that money, but it is not clear where it went. Dr. Swan responded that his office has allocated money to some courses outside of CLA and is monitoring them. Ms. Carroll reported that over 500 courses have been approved, and there are some in every department.
- The establishment of "cores" has generally worked well, but perhaps there are a few too many. This may be partly due to the initial major concern about whether the University would be able to provide enough seats.

- The global structure is not what the Howe Report envisioned; it is a good time for CLE to start discussions with the Committee because we are moving into the review phase.

Professor Odom noted that the North Central Association had concern about assessment of student learning, i.e., how does the University show achievement in an area it has not defined (the "themes")?

Professor Frank opined that the University needs to take a more global approach: look at ALL of the courses and then decide which ones are really "core" according to the Howe Report mandate. According to the Howe Report, the core courses are to be specifically designed for the purpose; the intent was not to simply take an introductory course and tweak it. Professor Frank suggested that the review would result in a certain amount of "pruning," but not a lot.

4. Other Business

Agenda for March 7, 2001 meeting:

- a. Athletic Issues -- Spring Sports Team Schedules (copies of letters to Professor Ahern from Senior Associate Athletic Directors and FAOCIA Chairs were distributed at this meeting)
- b. First-year Seminars
- c. Peer Review

With no further business, Professor Ahern thanked all in attendance and adjourned the meeting.

-- Mary Kosowski

University of Minnesota