

Minutes*

Senate Committee on Educational Policy

Wednesday, May 10, 2006

1 – 3 pm

238A Morrill Hall

Present: Richard McCormick (chair), William Bart, Vernon Cardwell, Maureen Cisneros, Shawn Curley, LeAnn Dean, Gail Dubrow (George Green), Josh Feneis, James Leger, Claudia Neuhauser, Mary Ellen Shaw, Donna Spannaus-Martin, Craig Swan, Doug Wangenstein

Absent: Paul Siliciano, Eric Ling, Sarah Tuttle, Joel Weinsheimer

Guests: Karen Zentner Bacig, Robin Helms, Paul Ruden, Gene Allen, Kathleen Sellew, Barbara Blacklock, Michael Rodriguez, Rick Orr

Other:

[In these minutes: (1) Award Dossiers; (2) ROTC Committee Report; (3) Office of International Programs Report; (4) Syllabi Statement & Disabilities Task Force; (5) Student Release Questions]

Professor McCormick convened the meeting at 1:05 pm

1. Electronic Submission of Teaching Award Nominations

Ms. Helms presented information regarding award dossiers, and said that they were tweaking evaluation data. She said that different campuses used different scales: for instance, with the data from the Duluth campus, rules constrain some data so it is difficult to have comparative data. To make it as fair as possible, they were working toward tweaking the current evaluation form so it is easier to use for everyone.

Ms. Helms discussed dossier submissions for awards and said they were trying to achieve uniformity in award nomination submissions. She discussed various changes in the submission requirements, and said that they were currently assessing recommendations. It was recommended that there be templates for nomination materials. Ms. Zentner Bacig said that these things would make the work of the committee easier. Professor Wangenstein asked when the process would be entirely electronic. Ms. Zentner Bacig said that there was no definitive timeline at this point, and that they were taking it step by step.

Ms. Helms and Ms. Zentner Bacig discussed the logistics of compiling dossiers for nominations. Professor McCormick noted that in making the process entirely on-line, it might end up only shifting printing costs and actually slowing the process down if care was not taken. shifted. The committee expressed its approval for the standardization of dossiers, and Professor McCormick said he felt it would not disadvantage people but rather level the playing field. Ms. Helms said they would keep the committee updated on their progress.

2. ROTC Committee Report

* These minutes reflect discussion and debate at a meeting of a committee of the University of Minnesota Senate; none of the comments, conclusions, or actions reported in these minutes represents the views of, nor are they binding on, the Senate, the Administration, or the Board of Regents.

Professor Paul Ruden presented an update on the ROTC Committee's work, and said that the three units, Army, Navy, and Marine Corps have had a successful year. Students are graduating with good GPAs and many ROTC students have received scholarships. In addition, students participate in many volunteer activities as well as provide color guard. Professor Ruden described personnel staffing in the Navy, Army and Air Force and cited some unresolved issues. He discussed the ROTC committee's activities and the committee composition. Among other things, the committee had reviewed and approved instructors nominated to serve as ROTC instructors. He said that there had been a great deal of discussion about diversity in the officers' corps and that ROTC was working toward achieving a diversity closer to what is seen in the enlisted ranks. Professor Ruden said that the Navy was emphasizing technical majors and certain language requirements.

Vice Provost Swan said that the Board of Regents' policy on ROTC was scheduled for review as part of the standard review policy, and he noted potential changes in the policy. Professor Wangenstein asked about the graduation rates for ROTC, and Professor Ruden said that there was some flexibility in the graduation time but by and large, students graduate in four years. Professor Cardwell asked if the delays were due to the ROTC commitments or academic challenges and Professor Ruden said both played a part.

Professor McCormick thanked Professor Ruden for his work on the subcommittee and the presentation.

Professor McCormick thanked the committee for its work over the past year. He reported on the Senate meeting of May 4 wherein the changes in student evaluations were approved. He discussed the joint subcommittee being formed with the Senate Committee on Faculty Affairs (SCFA), and its composition, saying that there would be P&A representation on the committee as well as coordinate campus representation. There will also be a need for student representation and they would be recruited in the fall. Mr. Orr suggested names from the Student Consultative Committee.

3. Office of International Programs Report

Professor McCormick welcomed Gene Allen and Kathleen Sellew, Office of International Programs (OIP), who presented an update. Mr. Allen reviewed the information distributed and cited goals and progress of the program. He highlighted aspects of external environment for international education and the internal environment for international education. He noted that the visa situation for international students had much improved from two or three years ago. Mr. Allen referred to the Regents Policy on international education and said it was part of the policies under review by the Board of Regents. Mr. Allen and Ms. Sellew discussed the task force recommendations with the committee. Ms. Sellew and Mr. Allen discussed exchange agreements and international degree programs at the University. Ms. Sellew said that the University is a national model in integrating study abroad programs into the undergraduate curriculum. Mr. Allen described site visits for faculty to study abroad sites, and two new University awards. The committee discussed various relationships within the University to the Office of International Programs. Mr. Allen said that it wasn't desirable for all international programs to be approved through OIP but that the office did need to be aware of them to serve a resource to the university at large. The committee discussed various aspects of the report. Mr. Allen said that a major issue in recruiting international students was competition, primarily from Australia and the UK. Vice Provost Swan praised Mr. Allen for his work in OIP, and said that his leadership was evident in the report. Professor McCormick thanked Mr. Allen and Ms. Sellew for the report.

4. Syllabi Statement & Disabilities Task Force

Professor McCormick welcomed Barbara Blacklock, Provost's Committee on Student Mental Health, who discussed the committee's work and its composition. She distributed the proposed Mental Health Services syllabus statement and offered background on mental health issues at the University. She said the goal of the committee was to increase awareness about such issues. She said that the committee regarded it as a public health issue and wanted to provide ways or students to seek out assistance. To that end, the committee had come up with a mental health syllabus statement and Ms. Blacklock was seeking the committee's feedback and endorsement.

Professor Curley asked why the statement would be on the syllabi as opposed to other means of distribution. Ms. Blacklock said that the committee thought that by having it on the syllabi, all students would see it and it would lend itself to normalization. The more students can be made aware the better, and many students are not aware of the resources available. Professor Cardwell said that the statement itself is good but that he would prefer to have it under the banner of "barriers to learning" and not as strictly a mental health issue. It should be couched in a package of services available to students. Professor Neuhauser said that it was a good idea in general but that services differ from class to class as do syllabi. Professor McCormick summarized the discussion that SCEP had previously had about the issue and said that the committee appreciated the efforts to raise awareness. However, the committee was concerned about adding something to syllabi that might seem like more "boilerplate." The committee discussed various concerns. Ms Whyte asked if the statement was too long and asked where else students could access information. Professor McCormick suggested the Provost's Committee on Student Mental Health develop a resources sheet listing various "barriers to learning" and resources for overcoming such barriers, but perhaps listing mental health issues and resources first. This resource list might be a component that could be added to syllabi, but it should also be distributed in other ways (as a bookmark, as a flyer, etc.). He recommended that the issue be revisited at a later date.

4. Student Release Questions

In April 2005 the Faculty Senate authorized SCEP to make the final decision on the student release questions to be added to the newly revised forms for student evaluation of instruction. Over the course of 2005-06, SCEP has allowed the Student Senate to work together with Professor Rodriguez from Educational Psychology to develop the best versions of the questions and then to test them in a pilot survey. At the meeting today, Professor Rodriguez presented an analysis of the pilot survey of the student release questions that he had run. He noted that the Student Senate had approved the revision of the questions that had been tested and had given SCEP the authority to approve the revised questions. Professor Rodriguez referred to materials distributed and discussed the process in developing questions and highlighted the diversity of responses. He was generally satisfied that the survey results demonstrated that the release questions were effective questions. Professor Rodriguez had one suggestion for improving the wording in one question; he suggested replacing "agree" and "strongly agree" with "somewhat agree" and "agree," which would also parallel the wording in a related question. Professor Cardwell made a motion to adopt the student release questions with the revision to the language that Professor Rodriguez had suggested to be consistent in terminology. Professor Wangenstein seconded the motion. The committee discussed the information and changes in terminology. The motion was approved.

The meeting adjourned at 3 pm.

--Mary Jo Pehl

University of Minnesota