

SENATE RESEARCH COMMITTEE*
February 24, 1995
Minutes of the Meeting

- PRESENT: Allen Goldman (chair), Eric Klinger, John Basgen, Kathy James, Rob Super, Jeylan Mortimer, Mark Snyder
- REGRETS: Susan Hupp, Paul Sackett, Mark Brenner, Tony Potami
- GUESTS: Fay Thompson (Environmental Health and Safety), George Robb (Institutional Relations)
- OTHERS: Fred Bently, WinAnn Schumi

Professor Goldman convened the meeting at 1:30 p.m.

Strategic Plan for Environmental Health and Safety

Professor Goldman introduced Fay Thompson, Director of the Department of Environmental Health and Safety (referred to as DEHS hereafter) who provided an overview of the mission statement, goals and strategies of the DEHS. Dr. Thompson distributed the planning document and the roles, responsibilities and requirements of DEHS. Before walking the committee through the documents, she pointed out that actions plans are not completed.

Dr. Thompson pointed out the indicators that help to describe the current magnitude and scope of DEHS.

- There are 58 regular and 7 student equivalent FTE employees
- The total budget is \$4.054 million
- The number of customers served totals 18,121 full time and 15,581 part time employees (FY '93 figures)
- There are 44 staff members who carry relevant certification or licensure
- The University's research budget is \$350 million (6th largest in the nation)
- There are 22 million square feet of building space and 2,500 laboratories
- Number of permitted radioactive material users - 400
- Value of radioactive materials ordered, surveyed and delivered - \$1 million
- Chemical waste collected - 290,000 pounds in 33,000 containers, necessitating 4,200 individual pick-ups (plus 3,000 rad waste pickups)
- State high schools and colleges served in Chemical Safety Day Program - 400
- Number of meals served annually in DEHS inspected facilities - 15 million
- Years since last food-borne disease outbreak - 19

Asking members to turn to page five of the planning document, Dr. Thompson directed their attention to Module 2 - Environmental Context - Stakeholder Analysis, major internal stakeholders. In terms of major internal stakeholders, the research community is at the top of the list. Major external

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stakeholders, ones that the committee would be most interested in, include regulatory agencies and granting agencies. More recently, she said, the granting agencies have begun to get involved. Right now, the Department of Energy and the Department of Defense are requiring a sign-off for individual grant applications to ensure that environmental health and safety requirements are being met both by the institution and the grantee.

Dr. Thompson briefly went over the services expected by customers, standards by which customers measure performance, how stakeholder requirements are changing, and changes in future stakeholders.

Dr. Thompson asked members to turn to the document outlining the roles, responsibilities and requirements of DEHS. It points out that there are health and safety responsibilities at all levels of the institution. The next step, she said, is to get the document circulated, accepted and to figure out how to best work with all levels, especially the department level. Information is now available through GOPHER, she said, and in time more information will be disseminated electronically.

Economics: Costs related to environmental management have exceeded the average rate of inflation ever since 1980, often by a factor of two to three. For example, hazardous waste fees and licenses, which were non-existent in 1980 and about \$1,000 in 1982, are presently running about \$45,000 a year. In general, DEHS relies on central funding for its programs. The only way to reduce that reliance, she said, would be to charge departments for services like waste collection, which simply shifts the cost to other central funds. There is also a negative aspect of charging for DEHS services; departments may choose to neglect their responsibilities in order to save money.

Political/Legal: Regulatory agencies (especially the federal Nuclear Regulatory Commission and the state Pollution Control Agency) look at the University as a separate political entity and view the University's Department of Environmental Health and Safety as the regulatory body for an "agreement state." DEHS has identified over 100 applicable federal, state and local laws, regulations and ordinances that are designed to protect the environment and people working and studying at the University.

Program quality assessment: Dr. Thompson said that a good environmental health and safety program has a lot to add to the research effort - they feel that the overall quality of the program is very good. A major weakness (identified in the document) across DEHS centers on systems to deliver information. Training materials need to be updated, train-the-trainer sessions need expansion, and the University departments need assistance in understanding their training needs and developing their own programs. DEHS needs a training coordinator to facilitate all of these activities.

Dr. Thompson pointed out four resource deficiencies that need to be addressed: 1) lack of personnel to develop and implement training resources and programs for all University personnel; 2) need for funding to complete asbestos survey of all facilities and to provide on-going asbestos and lead programs after the survey is completed; 3) need for funding to cover costs of injury reporting requirements; and 4) increase in funding for rent payment for Boynton space.

Relative to working assumptions, she said that the University will strive to remain a top research institution.

Dr. Thompson opened the floor for discussion and comments.

One member commented about the timeliness of waste pick-up. The reason it takes so long for pick-up, Dr. Thompson responded, is that they have to review every request.

Could pick-up information be submitted electronically, asked one member? Yes, responded Dr. Thompson, but you would still need to fill out the form that goes on the box.

How is the budget set, queried another? About 70% of the waste handled is research waste - 70% of the waste program costs come from indirect cost recovery. Fifteen percent comes from O&M and approximately 15% comes jointly from the hospital and the external program that is operated for the high schools, she said.

Another member stated that she thought the most pressing issue is training. The specific training of individual departmental level activities is an important issue, Dr. Thompson responded. She cited the College of Veterinary Medicine as an example of a unit who has recently upgraded the activities of training. There is no question, she said, that there can be a lot of variation from one laboratory to the next. It depends on the individuals involved. She added that more uniformity in training is a goal they would like to strive for.

Additional comments may be forwarded to Dr. Thompson.

1995-97 Partnership Proposal - U2000

George Robb, Institutional Relations, began his presentation by apologizing for Vice President Mel George who was unable to attend. He provided the committee with background information about himself and said that he has been involved in many of the planning documents since "1985 and Beyond."

The purpose of the presentation was to talk about two aspects of U2000: 1) the external campaign to get people to understand and support U2000 and, 2) the partnership proposal.

Six weeks after the President first talked about U2000, he started on a series of U2000 conversations. He or other members of the administration met with 60+ stakeholder groups across the state to discuss the U2000 plan. After Vice President Mel George was hired he "put the pressure on" to simplify the message for external audiences. This effort became what we now call the Partnership Initiative. There are five points that speakers can talk about to the external audiences. They are:

- The University of Minnesota is a vital institution, the long-term solution, and the state of Minnesota's oldest and most productive partner, solving the problems and developing Minnesota's economy and culture.
- External changes and new expectations for services and accountability pose new and difficult challenges.
- The University of Minnesota has responded with the clear focus of University U2000 to strengthen the University so it remains one of the nation's premier research, land-grant universities, while improving undergraduate education, becoming more user-friendly, and improving diversity.
- Achieving U2000 requires hard choices on the part of the University AND partnership support, in particular from state government, but also from all Minnesotans.

- "This place is important for each of us to own.."

Mr. Robb said a greatly expanded effort is underway to build the alumni legislative network, changing from about 700 members to 2,500+. Also, University representatives are giving speeches about U2000 to as many community leadership groups as possible and having stakeholders speak on the institution's behalf.

He distributed copies of the prepared speech that individuals speak from and touched on some of the main points:

- a quick review of basic facts about the University
- an overview of the University's contributions
- a description of current challenges facing the University
- the response of the University to these challenges

Mr. Robb also distributed copies of the 1995-97 Partnership Proposal.

Internal communications are still problematic, he said. In terms of process, U2000 is integrated into the legislative request, capital budgeting, annual budgeting, the reorganization process and is working quite well, he added. As a product and specifics, we are in continuing problems. People on campus are saying . . . "we want specifics." U2000 could not begin with specifics, it is a process and out of the process will come the specifics. While it is getting better, we still have lots of people, he said, who either don't understand and support or won't understand and support until they know "whose ox gets gored." This will not change until they are secure.

Mr. Robb opened the floor for comments and discussion.

Why is it not possible for the faculty to lobby the legislature, asked one member? Part of the reason is that we are a very decentralized University, Robb said. While it is not prohibited, it is not encouraged.

One member questioned whether the plan could ever work in the sense of what has happened in the last 3-4 years in terms of legislative appropriations and what is likely to happen now. At some point the University is going to have to bite the bullet and make a tough decision. Two or three percent across-the-board cuts year after year makes any pretense of a program like this producing excellence in anything is a sham. This looks like a tremendous exercise that is not going to improve anything . . . the faculty know that and that is why there is lack of support.

Members spent some time discussing the politics involved in obtaining funding and the impact that lack of funding will have long-term. Until the University starts identifying specific impacts on specific programs and has a strategy, the legislature will not pay attention, commented one member. Would that be a self-fulfilling prophecy, it was asked? You have a choice of being smaller and better or being about the same size and truly mediocre, another member commented.

We have a very small student population from outside this state, it was observed. Why don't we attract more outstate students? We probably export the best students from the high schools in this state.

With minimal expense, we would greatly increase the income from tuition and serve the purpose of undergraduate education, with a campaign to attract outstate students.

Non-resident tuition has not been ignored in the planners thinking, Mr. Robb responded. There is a problem with Minnesota culture with turning this into a non-resident campus and turning away Minnesota students.

Has the administration written off the faculty in this plan, questioned another member? What does the administration plan with respect to the faculty? There is rhetoric about excellence and diversity, but the reality is that we are losing faculty and there are not enough graduate assistants. There is considerable communication with the governance groups, but beyond that it drops off, Mr. Robb responded. There is a huge effort from the administration to communicate, but it seems that it is not getting through, he added. It's not that it is not getting through to the faculty, it's because they are seeing the deterioration and the day-to-day reality, retorted the member.

Members spent some time discussing distance education information technology and the changes that may come with it. One member pointed out that U2000 does not address the problem of investment and instructional technology, specifically.

A brief discussion ensued about general public attitudes toward the University and what it provides.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:00 p.m.

- Vickie Courtney

University of Minnesota