

SENATE RESEARCH COMMITTEE*

March 13, 1992

Minutes of the Meeting

PRESENT: Irwin Rubenstein, Albert Yonas, Anne Petersen, Essie Kariv-Miller, Eric Klinger, John Basgen, N. L. Gault, Sara Evans, Kenneth Reid, Jonathan Wirtschafter, Danita Carlson, WinAnn Schumi (for Toni Potami), Mark Brenner

REGRETS: Paul Sackett

ABSENT: Signe Betsinger, Nick LaFontaine, Dan Sargent

GUESTS: Robert Anderson, Judy Garrard, Bob Jeffrey, Robert Kane, Thomas Louis, Fred Morrison, Mark Nesbit, Barbara Spradley, Bill Toscano, James White

The meeting was called to order by Irwin Rubenstein, Chair of the Senate Research Committee. Several faculty and administrators from the Health Sciences area attended the meeting. Professor Rubenstein asked that everyone introduce themselves.

Professor Rubenstein began by explaining that the purpose of the meeting was in response to a draft memo concerning collaboration of faculty and research that originated in the School of Public Health. He said that several faculty members suggested that it would be beneficial for the Research Committee to look into proposed policies regarding research collaboration and their impact on academic freedom.

Professor Rubenstein asked the group to turn to the questions that were distributed prior to the meeting. Before opening the floor for discussion, he pointed out that it was his understanding that the proposed draft policy had been retracted and basically did not exist. Professor Rubenstein went on to say that it was important to have the discussion to clear the air of any questions the faculty may have relative to this issue.

The following question was discussed:

-- Is there a policy, official or unofficial, regarding the fostering of collaborative arrangements within the Health Sciences and other University units? If there is, what is it?

Dr. James White, Associate Dean of the Medical School referred to the Board of Regents Policy on Conflict of Interest. He said that the policy urges faculty to collaborate both within and outside the University and mandates one day a week for consulting outside of the University. He went on to say that this is the University's policy and does not think that another one is needed.

One faculty member commented that the question was not whether people are in favor of collaborative research, rather whether any power might be exercised that would limit the right of the investigators to choose her/his collaborator.

* 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.

Vice President Anderson responded that choosing a collaborator is like falling in love--it's hard to program or mandate it. He went on to say that he could not imagine mandating collaboration. The University's success in research, he said is based upon the productivity of the interaction.

The faculty member asked if it would be appropriate for a University administrator to require an investigator to demonstrate efforts of internal collaboration before that individual were permitted to collaborate with people outside the University.

Vice President Anderson responded that there is an attitude that suggests you look inside before you look outside because it is better for the institution, but you cannot mandate collaboration. He concluded that there is no policy or mandate that requires faculty to justify their collaborative arrangements.

Considerable discussion was given to the concept of fostering institutional collaborative research in a positive sense.

Motion was made and seconded to disband the meeting.

-- Vickie Courtney

University of Minnesota