

Minutes*

**Senate Research Committee
Monday, April 17, 2006
1:15 - 3:00
238 Morrill Hall**

Present: Steven Ruggles (chair), Dianne Bartels, Lyn Bearinger, Richard Bianco, Kathy Bowlin, Christopher Cramer, Dan Dahlberg, Penny Edgell, J. Stephen Gantt, Paul Johnson, James Luby, Tim Mulcahy, Mark Paller, Brian Reilly, Thomas Schumacher, Charles Spetland, George Trachte, Barbara VanDrasek,

Absent: Mark Ascerno, Arlene Carney, James Cotter, Sharon Danes, Robin Dittman, Genevieve Escure, Jake Granholm, James Klaas, Maria Sera, Virginia Seybold, Michael Volna, Jean Witson

Guests: none

Other: Melissa Sewell, WinAnn Schumi

[In these minutes: (1) Outside Commitments Policy; (2) Alfred E. Mann Biomedical Engineering Foundation]

Professor Ruggles convened the meeting at 1:20 pm.

1. Outside Commitments Policy

Associate Vice President Richard Bianco presented information on changes to the outside consulting policy. He reviewed the information distributed, and highlighted some changes and additions. Associate Vice President Bianco noted that they had combined three Board of Regents' policies into one policy. The committee discussed various aspects of the policy. Professor Luby asked about various activities that may not conflict with activities in their unit but might conflict with activities in other units of the University, such as those classes that faculty taught elsewhere but not at the University. Associate Vice President Bianco said that they didn't feel they could reasonable impose limits on those. He added that there will be ad hoc exemptions, and the Provost could also grant exemptions through an appeals process. Mr. Schumacher said he felt it was a very flexible policy. Professor Johnson asked if there were aspects of the policy that were unresolvable. Associate Vice President Bianco said that he felt that this dealt with most of the major issues that he deals with in his role as a compliance officer, and that most of the bases had been covered. Professor Ruggles thanked Associate Vice President Bianco for the information.

2. Alfred E. Mann Biomedical Engineering Foundation

Vice President Tim Mulcahy discussed the Alfred E. Mann Foundation and the invitation it has extended to the University of Minnesota to be considered as a possible site for an Alfred Mann Institute.

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He said that the Mann Foundation was looking for a legacy endowment at various institutions to augment technology transfer in the general area of biomedical engineering, The Foundation had invited fourteen universities, the University of Minnesota among them, as potential sites for an institute. Dr. Mulcahy discussed the process and said that the Foundation would disclose details of a potential arrangement when they visited campus later this month. The April visit represented the University's opportunity to get more information about the possibility of an Institute being established. Vice President Mulcahy discussed the possible parameters of such an arrangement and said that it would have to be in keeping with Board of Regents' policies as well as state and federal policies. He noted that at this point there were many unanswered questions but the visit with officials from the Foundation would be an opportunity to discuss those unknowns. The purpose of the initial meeting is best described as "mutual fact finding". If after the initial meeting there is general agreement that siting of an Institute is compatible with policy and in the University's interest, further discussion with faculty and relevant campus groups would take place. Should a decision be made to pursue this opportunity, a follow-up site visit would be arranged at which time members of a site selection committee would evaluate the University's candidacy. Dr. Mulcahy said the idea was that funding would be used to establish a foundation to further grow select technologies. The committee discussed the possible shapes the arrangement might take. Vice President Mulcahy discussed the Foundation's invitation process, and Professor Johnson asked how it might benefit the University. Dr. Mulcahy said that the Mann Foundation was looking to improve the process of translating university technology into the marketplace. The committee discussed how other institutions had entertained or declined the opportunity.

Professor Paller said that although the terms may be unclear at this point, outsourcing this kind of development was nothing new and this sort of structure has had mixed results in the past. Vice President Mulcahy noted that the University of Minnesota has a lot to offer and would be an attractive site, considering the strength of the Institute of Technology, health sciences, clinical trials capability and the relatively close proximity of the relevant departments. He stressed that any agreement of this type must not alienate or disenfranchise faculty as their creativity represents the heart and soul of the University, and that it must respect the core values of the University. Vice President Mulcahy said he would update the committee as more information became available.

Professor Ruggles asked Vice President Mulcahy for updates on the task force reports. Dr. Mulcahy said that the preliminary reports had been published, and he asked the committee to look at the latest round on the website and make comments. He said that these versions addressed some important issues, and that the deans were reviewing them and developing their perspective. Following consideration of feedback and an analysis of specific recommendations, identification, prioritization and timing of initiatives will be decided. Ms. Schumi added that a retreat had been planned over the summer to focus on implementation. Professor Johnson asked when funding for the initiatives would be discussed, and asked how faculty should think about that. Vice President Mulcahy said his sense was that funding would involve commitment of new resources as well as reallocation of current resources. The committee discussed how the new budget model reflected reallocation of resources. Dr. Mulcahy said that the budget model included some central funds as well as the funds that will be returned to academic units. He indicated that implementation of strategic initiatives will likely involve commitment from both sources and stressed the transparency in the process.

Professor Ruggles adjourned the meeting at 2:15 pm.

-- Mary Jo Pehl

University of Minnesota