

Minutes

Senate Consultative Committee October 5, 1989

Present: Warren Ibele (chair), Karin Alexander, W. Andrew Collins, Martin Conroy, Steve Ebel, Lance Flores, Eric Huang, Gunnar Johnson, Norman Kerr, Matthew Kirkwood, Lynnette Mullins, J. Bruce Overmier, Ronald Phillips, M. Kathleen Price, Charlotte Striebel, James VanAlstine, Tim Wolf

Guests: President Nils Hasselmo, Rod Jorgenson (chair, Student Senate), Barbara Muesing, June Perkins/Nobbe, Maureen Smith (Brief), Rabun Taylor (Footnote)

1. Report of the Chairs

Professor Ibele began for the Faculty Consultative Committee and proposed that the order of the meetings be reversed. The Committee approved switching them for the two remaining meetings of the quarter to see how the practice worked out. Professor Ibele then recounted the discussions which had taken place during the FCC meetings.

Mr. Huang reported that Matthew Kirkwood had been elected SSCC representative to the Senate Finance and Planning Committee, that he--Mr. Huang--had been elected chair of SSCC, and that SSCC had heard a presentation and discussed peer counseling offered through the Sexual Violence Program. On the latter, he said SSCC was upset about the proposed elimination of peer counseling and wanted to know what they should do about it; the decision had been made within University Counseling Services and was not directly accessible to the governance system.

Committee members spent time discussing the possible merits of peer counseling and the information which it would be necessary to have to make a judgment; it was suggested to Mr. Huang that he and SSCC gather the information and then send a letter to the Acting Vice President for Student Affairs calling the decision to his attention.

On the matter of graduate student representation, Mr. Huang reported that the COGS General Assembly would be reviewing proposals; either they would be accepted or mediation would be sought.

One other subject dealt with by SSCC, TA training, elicited the comment that periodic evaluation of TA training should be conducted--to see if the training is having any effect and if TAs are effective teachers.

2. The Single Point of Entry, Twin Cities Campus

Committee members took up the "Implementing a Common Entry Point" report and offered a number of criticisms. Chief among them was the failure to adopt the single entrance college; the report called for a unified admissions office instead. It was argued that the way the process would be structured should cause all of the non-freshman admitting colleges to begin admitting them as soon as possible; it was also suggested that the report assumed, quite erroneously, that incoming freshman know what fields in which they wish to major. With rejection of a structure which would permit exploration of the curriculum, the upper division colleges would want to begin admitting freshman in order to

provide them counseling and guidance about the disciplines in their colleges--rather than let that counseling come from other units. The criticisms of the University College Assembly were also pointed out to the Committee members.

The members of the Committee seemed to share a conviction that incoming freshmen must be allowed to explore across the colleges, without having to apply and with a minimum of red tape; one possibility was a course itself on the diversity of opportunities among the colleges.

Student members of the Committee were unanimously in favor of a structure or arrangement which would permit maximum flexibility in exploration of college curricula, recognizing at the same time that students would have to meet the liberal education requirements during the course of curriculum exploration; this need not be "lost time." It was urged that there also be flexibility in the time required be spent in a freshman-admitting collegiate unit, so a student could stay for perhaps as few as two quarters and as long as two years.

It was agreed that the chair of the Implementation Report should be asked to provide SCC with a more extended rationale for discarding the freshman-admitting college; Committee members also asked that they receive copies of the earlier reports on which the Implementation Report was based.

It was also decided that this entire issue should be taken up with Senior Vice President Kuhl as soon as reasonably possible, inasmuch as the Board of Regents adopted some time ago a resolution calling for the single point of entry by Fall Quarter, 1991.

3. Discussion with President Hasselmo

The President joined the Committee meeting and distributed two documents, one a draft resolution on enrollment and the other a set of presidential goals and objectives. The latter has been prepared for the Board of Regents, as part of his contract, and will constitute part of their evaluation of him as president. He explained that the document largely reflects University priorities and that many of the issues will require long-term attention; he said he chose, with this first set of goals, to not write a one-year agenda. He led the Committee briefly through the items in the document and suggested that it be discussed at his next meeting, after Committee members had a chance to digest it. One point made, however, was that the language about and listing of students needed some attention; the President responded that if Committee members see his administration flagging in its commitment to students they should let him know firmly.

The enrollment resolution, to be presented for Board of Regents action, would confirm the 1987 enrollment targets--and the sole purpose for doing so is to ensure quality in the education delivered. The targets, he pointed out, are system-wide, and there is no assumption that UMD and UMM will need to reduce enrollment below 1989 levels. At present the University is within the targets so no action to restrict enrollment is required. With higher preparation standards and improved undergraduate education, retention rates might increase; predicting whether or not enrollment will stay within the targets is difficult to do.

Committee members pointed out once again that the likely impact on tuition rates is a factor which causes great worry, and which may serve as a constraint on new programmatic funding requests.

Also mentioned was the possibility that the legislature will be reluctant to provide improvement funds the University seeks--at the same time the community colleges are bulging at the seams. The President agreed that both of these were critical considerations. The President also clarified that he would amplify on a number of issues in his statement to the Board, copies of which would be available.

Professor Ibele told the President that it was his sense that SCC was in accord with the sense of what the President was seeking and the direction in which he was moving. One faculty member on the Committee, however, registered a dissent, and said that the President should not have the idea that the faculty are unanimous in support of enrollment targets. There is a sizeable group which believes declining enrollment is poor policy, primarily because the legislature is unlikely to provide the funds necessary to improve quality. The changing balance of undergraduate and graduate students will also have a deleterious impact on the financial burdens of both groups. Another Committee member disputed these contentions, arguing that the entire educational system of the State had changed over the past 40 years and that the University must define, by agreement with the State, what it will do and what it alone can do. President Hasselmo added that the legislature has, thus far, acted contrary to historical patterns: It has approved increased funds for fewer students.

It was also contended that the legislature understands what needs to be done (rather than being deceived). One Committee member warned, however, that unless there were demonstrable results from the slimming down with more money, support for the University would wane and those who dissented now would ultimately be proven correct. The President concurred and said he will suggest that graduation rates be used as one rough measure of success--although he accepted the proposition that tuition increases caused by program improvements might so burden students that they will still have to work and probably continue to slow down their educations.

The point was made once again that even though the conventional wisdom is that the formula-driven method of determining tuition, with students paying one-third of instructional costs, is unlikely to be changed, every effort should nonetheless be made to do so. The President said the University would try everything it could to relieve the pressure on tuition. He closed by expressing his thanks for sharing the hand-wringing with him.

4. Task Force on Support Services report

Professor Ibele welcomed Professor Larry Bowers, Chair of the Assembly Committee on Support Services (ACSS) and member of the Task Force on Support Services, to the meeting, and told him that SCC was concerned about how the recommendations of the Task Force would be implemented. Professor Bowers said he could only offer his own thoughts because ACSS had not yet met. He offered the view that since ACSS has such a broad charge, it could only begin by tackling a few specific problems.

One project ACSS may take on is to ask the support service units to rewrite their mission statements so that they reflect the service mission they are supposed to play; some have wandered off and practically become their own companies. Another specific problem that ACSS might look into is security, a concern which crosses many units; yet another, a unit which ACSS might review, is Personnel. Some problems, he pointed out, have taken a long time to develop and will take a long time to solve.

He also said he would like to see continued the Task Force conduct of surveys of faculty and other users in order to determine whether or not progress is being made. It was suggested, too, that oversight committees mentioned in the report need to be created or, where already in existence, to be reviewed.

It was agreed that SCC would steer recommendations to the appropriate bodies and that SCC will be anxious to be kept abreast of how the implementation of the recommendations is coming.

The Committee adjourned at 3:00.

--Gary Engstrand

University of Minnesota