

Minutes*

Senate Consultative Committee
Thursday, December 1, 1994
12:30 - 3:00
Room 238 Morrill Hall

Present: John Adams (chair), Carl Adams, Thomas Burk, Sheila Corcoran-Perry, Lester Drewes, Virginia Gray, James Gremmels, Kenneth Heller, Roberta Humphreys, Geoffrey Maruyama, Donald Ness, Harvey Peterson, Michael Steffes, Rabun Taylor, Barbara Thompson

Regrets: Linda Pham, Gerhard Weiss

Absent: Robert Jones, Chad Reichwald, Tim Stanislawski

Guests: Professor Thomas Scott

Others: Lincoln Kallsen

[In these minutes: A search committee; strategic planning; tuition policy, housing policy, study space]

1. Search Committee

Professor Adams convened the meeting at 12:30 and announced that in accord with the protocol concerning participation in searches for selected administrative positions, the Committee is asked to submit recommendations for search committee members. Inasmuch as Patricia Mullen, Director of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action, has announced her retirement from the position, a search committee will be appointed.

Committee members made a number of suggestions; Professor Adams noted them and said he would assemble a list.

2. Report to the Legislature on Strategic Planning

Professor Adams next welcomed Professor Thomas Scott, who has worked on strategic planning for Academic Affairs for the last two years, to inform the Committee about a report being submitted to the legislature on the University's strategic planning activities.

Professor Scott distributed copies of the report and related how the strategic planning process had evolved over the two years he had worked with it. With some false starts and mistakes, he said, the University has now come close to meeting the goals it set when it began the process. There is now a strong sense of how it ought to be done and what should be accomplished over the long term; there is a

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process in place that will help the University change course so it becomes a more effective and successful institution. The President originally described the process as similar to changing the direction of an aircraft carrier; it takes time and requires thought. The process has tried to be faithful to the University's strengths as a complex institution and to help understand what is likely to come along in order to position the University to deal with those eventualities.

The objective was a process that is:

- cumulative, not periodic
- based on colleges, campuses, and departments, not the central administration
- as consultative as possible
- performance-oriented, so measures and objectives will be developed to evaluate progress over time
- linked to resource allocation and evaluation.

Those fundamental objectives are near achievement. People like to look for "the" strategic plan, but there will not be one; there will be strategic directions to be revisited on an annual basis, a continual recycling of the process with the three phases of planning, budgeting, and evaluation.

Part of the process will include a planning office, in Academic Affairs, currently under the leadership of Associate Vice President Kvavik.

Planning has been complicated with the reorganization and the introduction of the provosts. There will be planning at the institutional, provostal/chancellor, college, and department levels; there will have to be compromises between the institutional planning and the other levels.

The document he provided today, Professor Scott reported, is a small piece of the process. The report is provided in response to a legislative directive call for the University (and the other systems) to report every other December on its short-and long-range plans. This year's report is an overview of the strategic planning process and follows the same format the colleges were requested to use.

Professor Scott reviewed briefly the major sections of the document; he also reviewed the calendar for planning in the upcoming months. It was suggested that the report emphasize that the strategic planning process will be iterative and that it outline the PROCESS, and that the document be provided to the units as an example.

A good plan is a wonderful thing, said one Committee member, but it has to have money to go with it if it is to be realized; how will that linkage occur? That is one of the primary objectives of the process, Professor Scott said: to link planning with resource allocation. Part of the reason for adopting the process was due to frustration with the way things were done before; there was too much emphasis on budgets and cuts and not enough on planning. Now planning, budgeting, and evaluation will not be episodic; plans will be available to central officers so they can agree what units will do and can consider financial implications, and can use them in making budget allocations. The idea is that each step will inform the one that follows.

The plans should include comments about how units will acquire and use resources, it was said.

This will be a critical credibility question to the units, said another Committee member: do you have the resource acquisition and allocation mechanism that makes this a credible plan? This must be discussed so it is known how a plan "hangs together." What has harmed planning for the last 10 or 20 years is that it has been mood music unrelated to the budgeting process. Professor Scott noted that units have been asked for their assumptions, including financial, and agreed those questions must be resolved as implementation is discussed. It may be, he said, that they will discover in the discussions that this part of the process has not been made explicit enough.

To the extent this document serves as an example, it was said, the administration should lead by example: the University must think about resource acquisition if it is to match plans to resources. Professor Scott agreed.

One Committee member offered several comments. First, if one compares the language about graduate and professional education with the language about undergraduate education, one is strong and one is weak. The undergraduate language is more about administrative superstructure and not about the real issues. Second, all of the diversity discussion is oriented to people "of color," as though there are no other kinds of diversity. Third, the graduation rate is a composite rate of two different groups--those who attend and graduate and those who never graduate at all. There is a 38% graduation rate, but half the students who come to the University NEVER graduate. If, moreover, one wants to improve the graduation rate, there is an easy way to do so: restrict admission to students in the top 10% of their high school class. That would immediately increase the graduation rate.

The University should be wary about what it writes in these reports, said one Committee member, given the interest in some states in performance budgeting. Is Minnesota contemplating performance budgeting? Professor Scott said he did not know.

Asked about the student involvement in planning, budgeting, and evaluation, up to the level of the dean, Professor Scott noted that the instructions to each unit ask for a description of participation and calls for substantial and appropriate consultation with faculty, staff, and students. Last year the consultation varied, because the process was rushed. It was also suggested that students contact Associate Vice President George Copo, who is leading the effort to develop critical measures; it was also pointed out that Senate committees are explicitly identified as groups to be consulted, and they all have student members. Professor Scott added that that was part of the intent; rather than create a new planning apparatus, the existing governance system would be used. Within units, some consultation processes may need to be fixed. The Senate committees are being used for institutional level planning.

Professor Adams thanked Professor Scott for joining the meeting.

2. Other Items

Professor Adams inquired of Mr. Taylor, Chair of the Student Senate Consultative Committee, after the major agenda items they were dealing with. Mr. Taylor and Mr. Bergstrom, Chair of the Student Senate, reported on several items.

- Proposed revisions to the Board of Regents' tuition policy: The existence of a draft revision of regental policy came as a surprise to faculty members; it was agreed that the Committee on Finance

and Planning would also take up the proposed revisions.

The important issues in the policy relate to banding and to a single upper division rate (by 1998-99). The Minnesota Student Association has declined to endorse the single rate because the proposal also calls for levying fees in courses with special expenses; the students are afraid that these fees could be a way to hide tuition increases and that these fees could proliferate.

One Committee member pointed out that at present, low-cost programs subsidize high-cost programs; is this not fairer in that it moves actual costs to users? And not affect student selection of majors because of tuition differentials, asked another? The students agree that the proposal is educationally sound, and that fees are not intrinsically unfair, but they remain very concerned about using them to hide tuition costs.

- Proposed changes in graduate and professional student tuition waivers and tuition remission: A report on these has been prepared for discussion; it was agreed that this would also be taken up by the Committee on Finance and Planning.
- Housing policy: Present policy requires that students be enrolled for six credits or more to qualify for space in a residence hall (the six credit requirement was a reduction from previous policy, the change made to accommodate graduate students). This, it was said, encourages taking ten years to graduate, which doesn't make sense when the University is trying to increase its graduation rate. The students are looking at the policy with an eye to reconsidering the number of credits one must be enrolled for and may propose a change back to 12. Another possibility, said one Committee member, would be to impose a four-year rule.

This is one example of a good rule that works against the critical measures; it almost encourages students to under-register. Senior Vice President Infante has previously expressed dismay that freshman advisors routinely tell students to under-register--so they are AUTOMATICALLY behind. And normally, students follow that advice.

- Study space: It remains a continuing concern of students that the University does not support any 24-hour study space (unless one is in a residence hall) except during finals week. The top academic institutions all have such space, it was said, but at Minnesota, for example, Friday and Saturday library hours here are being reduced. It was agreed that this issue should be taken up the Committees on Educational Policy and Library.

When one thinks about the time schedules of students, with jobs and families, this is an interesting issue. If there is to be talk of a full-time university, it must include evenings and weekends.

Students like to use the libraries for studying, it was reported, because it is quiet. One Committee member reported that at her undergraduate institution, one of the colleges provided study space, classrooms, and vending machines for all students at the institution, and it was always packed.

The use of facilities to support teaching and research is important and not something one hears a great deal of discussion about. Classrooms are now being surveyed, but that is a different issue. If students are going to pursue this issue, it was said, they will need good information; a general

statement is less helpful than specifics.

- Reorganization of positions: Students are reconsidering the leadership positions in the Student Senate and the Student Senate Consultative Committee, and will likely bring to the Committee an amendment to the Senate bylaws later in the year.

Professor Adams, in response to a comment, said that the task force on governance would be reconvened later in the year, and then adjourned the meeting at 1:50.

-- Gary Engstrand

University of Minnesota