

Minutes*

**Senate Consultative Committee
Thursday, January 18, 1996
2:00 - 3:00
Dale Shephard Room, Campus Club**

Present: Carl Adams (chair), Bruce Bromberek, Mike Davey, Virginia Gray, Paul Kluge, Laura Coffin Koch, Geoffrey Maruyama, Fred Morrison

Regrets: none

Absent: none; the meeting was called on short notice, and followed the ice and rain storm, so few were able to attend

Guests: Vice President Mark Brenner

Others: Martha Kvanbeck (University Senate), Maureen Smith (University Relations)

[In these minutes: Tuition remission for graduate students; provostal governance; protocol on committee actions]

1. Graduate Student Tuition Remission

Professor Adams convened the meeting at 2:00; he welcomed the student members of the Committee to what had been, until 2:00, an FCC meeting. He then turned again to Vice President Brenner to discuss tuition remission.

Dr. Brenner distributed a draft memorandum to deans and department heads concerning tuition remission for graduate students. He emphasized that it was a work in progress, subject to change. He reviewed the history of the tuition remission program and the fringe benefit recovery rates now required by federal regulations (for tuition remission alone, 30% in the current year, 42% next year; the total fringe benefit rate for graduate assistants for the current year is 45.3% and is projected at 56.7 for next year if the student is not FICA-exempt). There was a shortfall in recovery this year, which must be made up next year.

Dr. Brenner said the objective is to not undermine student progress both of graduate assistants as well as those who are paying their own way. He then reviewed the alternative means to recover tuition costs for graduate assistants, including continuing them as a fringe benefit or levying a direct charge on the employing unit. He touched on the various elements of each.

Committee members discussed the subject at length with Dr. Brenner, touching on a number of

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points related to graduate student credit loads, academic performance and workload, tuition banding, limits to the remission policy and so on.

Professor Adams inquired about the expected outcome from the discussion with the Committee. Dr. Brenner said it was to obtain views on whether or not anything is gained by a change in policy. It is a very expensive program, and will remain that way unless institutional funds are used to buy down the costs.

What would the University's competitive position be were a change to be made? Almost all the University's peers provide tuition remission, Dr. Brenner said; if it wishes to remain a tier one research university, it must have the program. There are several ways to recover the costs and there are ways to contain the costs.

It was agreed that this issue should be brought before the Tuition Subcommittee of the Finance and Planning Committee as well as to the Committee on Educational Policy. Professor Adams thanked Dr. Brenner for joining the meeting.

2. Provostal Governance

Professor Adams then explained the proposed changes to the Assembly bylaws that have been prepared to create provostal faculty consultative committees, and that the approval of the Assembly Steering Committee (the Twin Cities members of the Senate Consultative Committee) are required to place it on the docket of the Twin Cities Campus Assembly. He emphasized that the students are welcome to think about parallel legislation, whenever they have anything ready.

Ms. James reported that there is an ad hoc student committee that is considering provostal governance among other items; at present their concern is only whether some interim arrangements for students are also needed. Students would not see as rewarding the creation of a parallel but separate structure; both faculty and students would lose a lot, she said, and it would increase the workload. Rather, those issues of concern to both students and faculty should be identified, as well as those of concern separately to faculty and to students, and the two groups should meet jointly or separately, depending on the issue.

Professor Adams agreed that that ultimately would be the desirable structure, but the faculty do not want to wait. They do NOT wish to preclude a joint structure in the future, but do not want to wait on it. He assured the students that a bylaw change to accommodate students could be proposed at any time; this proposal will be voted on for the docket on February 1, and if students have something ready by then, the Committee could consider it.

Professor Gray noted that student representation from the Academic Health Center is a complex issue. As the AHC is downsizing, however, there was immediate need for a mechanism to represent faculty views, so the changes are being proposed quickly. Professor Adams assured the students there is no intent to preclude them.

3. Protocol on Committee Actions

Professor Adams noted that a protocol on committee resolutions and positions might be considered. A number of committees are charged with consulting with administrative groups; if they come to the Senate with a position on something, they must go through the Senate Consultative Committee. There is an ambiguity about whether they can take significant positions as committees that need not be cleared with SCC. Are such expressions from the committee or representative of the larger body?

One example might be the recent statement on athletics adopted by the Board of Regents; did the Committee on Athletics approve it? Should it have been brought to SCC or even the Senate as a whole? In cases when significant issues arise, committees should feel obligated to bring them to SCC. There is no clear protocol on this, however. The Senate Committee on Finance and Planning has a special delegation of authority to consult on financial matters, but other committees have no such dispensation. He asked Committee members to think about a protocol that would outline the limitations on positions committees could take. (In one instance, for example, a committee adopted a resolution calling on the University administration to take specific action, but no one in the Senate or most committees had heard of the issue.)

Professor Adams agreed that identifying a standard to use could be difficult, but suggested that one standard might be that if there is any doubt, the committee chair should check with the chair of the Consultative Committee.

Professor Adams adjourned the meeting at 3:15.

-- Gary Engstrand

University of Minnesota