

Minutes*

**Senate Consultative Committee/
Assembly Steering Committee
Thursday, May 16, 1996
12:30 - 3:00
Room 238 Morrill Hall**

- Present: Carl Adams (chair), Joel Bergstrom, Carole Bland, Victor Bloomfield, Bruce Bromberek, Lester Drewes, Virginia Gray, James Gremmels, Roberta Humphreys, Laura Coffin Koch, Fred Morrison, Harvey Peterson, Michael Steffes
- Regrets: John Adams
- Absent: None; the meeting was scheduled on short notice
- Guests: Vice Provost Louise Mirrer
- Others: Martha Kvanbeck (University Senate); Maureen Smith (University Relations)

[In these minutes: May 30 docket items: Twin Cities course and curriculum committee; new "expanding worlds" liberal education requirement; merger of the existing University College with CEE; resolution on mergers and reorganization; critical measures; scheduling of classes]

Professor Adams convened the meeting at 10:00 and, before turning to Professor Koch for items from SCEP, cautioned that time constraints would have to be considered as the Committee considered possible docket items for the May 30 University Senate, Twin Cities Campus Assembly, and Faculty Senate dockets; there must be sufficient time set aside for the Faculty Senate to debate changes in the tenure code.

1. Twin Cities Undergraduate Course and Curriculum Committee

He then asked Professor Koch to introduce the proposed Twin Cities Undergraduate Course and Curriculum Committee (TCUCCC).

Professor Koch recalled that when last presented to the Twin Cities Campus Assembly, there were insufficient number of Assembly members present to vote on the proposal (a bylaw amendment), but there were a number of questions raised on the floor during discussion. The proposal has been changed to reflect the concerns expressed.

The TCUCCC as proposed would establish guidelines for use by college curriculum committees in reviewing courses for semesters. After the change the semesters, the TCUCCC would only deal with

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disputes brought to it, and might consider (if possible to do so by electronic review of bulletins and catalogues), possible overlap in courses across the campus.

The concern of Assembly members, recalled one Committee member, was that the TCUCCC would be Big Brother telling the colleges what to do. There is a concern about centralized authority. Professor Koch said the TCUCCC would be more regulatory before semesters and less so afterwards.

One Committee member reported that the CLA Council of Chairs voted that a group such as this is needed.

2. Adding an "Expanding Worlds" Twin Cities Liberal Education Requirement

Professor Adams invited Vice Provost Louise Mirrer to join the table to explain the proposed change in Twin Cities campus liberal education requirements. Professor Koch told the Committee that SCEP supported the proposal.

Dr. Mirrer explained that the proposal arose from a concern about how best to provide an advantage to students who graduate; ideally, it would equip them to function better in a world that is more diverse and pluralistic; practically, it will provide them an advantage in the job market. Students choose from one of three options (community service, internships, or study abroad), and many programs already offer these options, so this is not new, but not all students are required to participate in one of them.

Committee members offered several comments and questions.

- What would the number of credits for the activity be, and how would it be related to the current requirement for a practicum? The practicum would be dropped, Dr. Mirrer said, but the new language would permit the practicum to meet the requirement. The proposal would not require additional credits for graduation; these would be double-dip courses that could incorporate one of the theme requirements, for example.

Would these be separate courses or activities tagged on to an existing course? If the latter, they would be a lot more work for faculty. If they would be separate, they would be a resource drain; faculty can lecture to 300 students or deal with 20 who are meeting this requirement. To the extent it substitutes for the practicum, there would be no change in workload, but that is not now required of all students. This is more resource intensive.

It would be, Dr. Mirrer agreed, which is the reason why the Provost would like to incorporate it in the next biennial request. It would be better to redo the entire package of requirements under the semester, it was suggested.

- The way the report of the Task Force on Liberal Education has been implemented has been a burden on students, with the themes and course requirements. This would be a tremendous bind for faculty and students. With 800 graduates each year in one college, each faculty member would have to supervise five students meeting this requirement. This is well-intentioned but a poor idea.
- This is a noble goal that cannot be implemented. In one program it already takes about five years to graduate, and a senior research project is required. This would be a great burden on students.

There is a difference between voluntary internships and a requirement.

- In terms of support, the colleges would decide how to use it; the needs would vary by field, Dr. Mirrer said.
- This proposal has not been approved by the Council on Liberal Education, although the Council has been consulted generally about the Undergraduate Initiative II, of which this is a part. It is an effort by Arts, Sciences, and Engineering to get more funding to undergraduate education, repeating what happened with the first undergraduate initiative.
- Asked if there had been as much criticism in other venues, Dr. Mirrer said there had not, and that most groups had welcomed the proposal.

Professor Koch noted that SCEP understood the proposal would not be made a requirement until the funding was available. Nor will the funds be requested until it has been approved, Dr. Mirrer commented.

- There would be an approved list of community service activities; many are already in place, Dr. Mirrer said.
- Whether or not a senior project or thesis would count toward meeting the requirement would depend on the nature of the project or thesis.
- This is something handed down from on high that will be a burden to faculty and students as it has been articulated; if one were an undergraduate looking at land-grant universities, this requirement might make them think about going elsewhere. And one is suspicious about the provision of funding to departments if obtained from the legislature. This should only be offered if individual faculty members say they want to do it.
- The University would be the first public institution to have such a requirement, Dr. Mirrer reported. A lot of smaller institutions require it, and students do select those schools. The idea is how to provide students an ADVANTAGE. They have looked at data and heard anecdotal evidence; there are complaints that students do not have a broad enough experience. This would give them more breadth, and establish a hallmark for University graduates.

Good students do choose institutions that require non-class experiences. Alumni, when polled, invariably say the best thing they did as undergraduates was this kind of thing, and it would be good for the University to require it. An undergraduate research project would also be a good way to fulfill the requirement, rather than having to go to a community across the ocean.

- The faculty workload issue is a concern. Even if there were \$500,000 available to provide to students, that would not address the faculty workload. This proposal says faculty should devote more time to undergraduate education, which by implication says they should devote less to graduate education and research.

Study abroad would not take more faculty time, Dr. Mirrer said. Internships and community work could take more time, but the intersession and summer sessions could be ideal times to meet the requirement, even for engineering students.

-- It would be helpful to know the reaction of the Council on Liberal Education to the proposal.

One Committee member moved that this item not be placed on the agenda of the University Senate. If it is not approved, Dr. Mirrer said, it would probably not be included in the biennial request. One Committee member noted that the Committee had discussed its role with respect to agenda items properly coming from properly-constituted Senate committees, but the motion was not withdrawn, and it passed.

The proposition, concluded one Committee member, is sufficiently unclear in implementation that it is not ready for consideration. What it means in terms of faculty workload and what it is to accomplish needs to be made clearer, and whether or not undergraduate research can meet the requirement should be considered. The proposal should be brought back to see if can be approved in such a way that it can be used to seek additional resources, said another Committee member.

3. Policy on Classes and Scheduling

Professor Koch distributed copies of a proposed policy on classes and scheduling under semesters that will be presented to the Senate and Assembly for information this spring and for action next fall.

4. Merger of University College and CEE

Professor Koch then provided copies of the proposed merger plan between the existing University College and CEE. She reported that SCEP had approved the plan; after the last discussion at the Senate Consultative Committee, at the request of Professor Adams, she had made inquiries about the plan, and found no significant concern. They had expected to receive a report from the President, but it now appears such a report will not be forthcoming. Kent Warren, of University College, has suggested holding the proposal over, however, until it can be given more consideration, it was reported.

The objection, if any, is a procedural one, said one Committee member. This does not have the right ring to it, said another Committee member. It was agreed without objection that the proposal would not be placed on the Senate docket.

5. Reorganization Resolutions

Professor Adams then noted that there were two related statements before the Committee having to do with reorganization. One came from SCEP, indicating that SCEP did not have sufficient time or information to decide whether the various reorganization and merger proposals would have an impact on educational policy, and asked that the changes be delayed in order to permit proper consultation.

A similar proposal had come from the Student Senate, asking that there be additional consultation and that any changes be presented to the University Senate for its endorsement. The Student Senate also

asked that there be some kind of policy established whereby proposals for collegiate, campus, or provostal restructuring would be brought to appropriate governance groups for consultation prior to announcement of the plans or presentations to the Board of Regents.

Professor Adams recalled that he has emphasized the point that college reorganizations, as falling across collegiate lines, is an appropriate concern of the Senate and of SCEP. Some believe there is a process now in place for such consultation, but others apparently do not.

There is a consultation process, Professor Koch observed, but it has not been timely. The proposal for the merger of Education and Human Development and Human Ecology was only sent out the day before this meeting; SCEP cannot bring anything to the Senate when it has not received the information. The same thing is true for the University College proposal; there has not been time to consider the proposal in a proper way.

Ultimately, said one Committee member, college reorganization is the purview of the Board of Regents, but it would be a good idea to set up a mechanism for consultation. It must be done so with the understanding that the governance system will act promptly and will not be permitted to talk things to death. If the administration and Board follow the rules, the governance system must also.

It was agreed that Professor Koch and Mr. Bergstrom would work on combining the two statements into one that could be reviewed by Committee members by email.

[Subsequent to the meeting, the Committee adopted the following resolution:

WHEREAS recent announcements concerning structural reorganizations within the University preceded broad discussions with students, faculty and staff in colleges and provostries, and

WHEREAS the members of the University Senate believe procedures must be followed to ensure such consultation,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Senate requests that the University administration develop and follow a policy whereby both preliminary and final proposals for collegiate, campus, or provostal restructuring shall be brought to the appropriate Senate bodies and committees, including, but not limited to, Educational Policy, Finance and Planning, and the Student Senate for discussion by students, faculty and staff prior to announcement or formal presentations to the Board of Regents, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT all proposals be brought forth in a way that allows the committees adequate time for thoughtful discussion, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT such proposals shall be brought to the full University Senate for endorsement.]

6. Critical Measures

Professor Koch next reported that SCEP had considered the proposed third-phase critical measures. Professor Adams noted that for the first two phases, the measures were presented to the Faculty Senate; these should probably be presented to the University Senate, he suggested. Several committees have been reviewing the measures.

Professor Morrison reported that the Finance and Planning Committee had reviewed them and had a desultory discussion. This set of measures is much more ambiguous and undirected; the committee made no recommendation about them.

It appears the committees are not ready to endorse the measures, Professor Adams observed, but the administration is trying to move them to the Board of Regents in June and July.

There is no proposal before the Committee, no piece of paper that identifies the proposed measures. Professor Koch said she was uncomfortable with the process. SCEP twice discussed the measures; one time SCEP considered the reputational measure, about which it had a great deal of concern; much of the measure was then revised, but SCEP has not really seen the changes. The other measures were considered only briefly, and SCEP would like to see any changes that have been made.

There is no document to bring to the Senate, Professor Adams noted, nothing that the administration can bring to this Committee and say it had been consulted upon and can be presented to the Senate. Professor Morrison pointed out that the Finance and Planning Committee had not been asked to make recommendations, only to provide comments. It was noted that the committees of the Senate did not take action the last time the measures were before them.

The Committee needs a completed set of measures once the consultation is complete, Professor Adams said; it could then decide what to put on the docket. In terms of timing, he said there are clear prerogatives on the part of the Senate, and there are things that should come from the Senate to the Regents, not from the administration. He said he would write to Mr. Bosacker and to the President about this, and ask that consideration of the critical measures be taken off the Regents' docket until the Senate has had time to act.

7. Presidential Service Award

The Committee briefly reviewed a proposal from the All-University Honors Committee to create a presidential service award, which would be granted to current or retired faculty or staff for outstanding service to the University. Since the award recipient would be selected by the President, it was agreed that this proposal did not require action by the University Senate.

The dockets of the Twin Cities Campus Assembly and University Senate were then unanimously approved.

8. Other Business

One Committee member then noted as a warning two items that would almost certainly be coming forward. One is that the Senate Research Committee has passed a resolution about the increasing

graduate assistant fringe benefit rate; it will be 62% next year and perhaps 75% the following year. This will put many GAs out of work.

Second, it has been reported that SCEP has considered and will announce that there will be a computer program to assign classes to rooms, and that it will automatically schedule 40% of classes in the afternoon. The lack of flexibility in such a system is a cause for concern.

Professor Koch reported that SCEP had taken no such action. Another Committee member commented that the Registrar's Office wished to use a program it had purchased for class scheduling, and wanted more classes in the afternoon, because classrooms are not being used effectively--and the fact that these late classes are not convenient for customers apparently carries no weight. The plan is to start using the program in the fall of 1996.

Professor Drewes reported that there is a similar program being used at Duluth, and after some initial concerns and rough spots, it now appears to be working well. It might be worth consulting with the staff at the Duluth campus, he suggested.

Professor Adams observed that this is both an issue of better use of facilities and of educational policy. Professor Morrison was quick to note that it is primarily educational policy. It is amusing that in the discussion, people support saving money and a reduced need for classrooms and not building new classrooms; this policy will mean that some classrooms are vacant all of the time rather than having all classrooms vacant some of the time.

It was agreed that SCEP would take up the classroom use and policy issue.

Professor Adams then noted the Committee needed to nominate a vice chair for the Twin Cities Assembly and a vice chair for the University and Faculty Senates; by recent practice, the former is a student and the latter is a faculty member. It was agreed that the faculty would support whomever the students chose to nominate at the meeting later in the day; the Committee then unanimously agreed that Professor W. Andrew Collins should be nominated for vice chair of the University Senate (which, upon election, would automatically make him vice chair of the Faculty Senate as well).

Professor Adams then adjourned the meeting at 11:20.

-- Gary Engstrand