

Minutes*

**Senate Consultative Committee
Thursday, January 18, 2007
3:00 – 4:00
Room 238A Morrill Hall**

Present: Carol Chomsky (chair), Jean Bauer, Nancy Carpenter, Jacqueline Cottingham-Zierdt, Kristen Denzer, Stacy Doepner-Hove, Barbara Elliott, Megan Gunnar, Emily Hoover, Scott Lanyon, Judith Martin, Daniel Moore, Nelson Rhodus

Absent: Gary Balas, William Durfee, Mary Jo Kane, Jeni Kiewatt, Cathy Marquardt, Trent Senenfelder, James Skoog, John Sullivan, Jennifer Windsor, Margaret Wolff

Guests: Vice Provost Arlene Carney

Others: none

[In these minutes: (1) additional Senate meeting; (2) student learning outcomes]

1. Additional Senate Meeting

Professor Chomsky convened the meeting at 3:10 and began by inquiring if the Committee would support having an additional Senate meeting each year in the future, a meeting that could be either the Faculty Senate or the University Senate, depending on which body had agenda items to take up.

The Committee agreed there should be an additional meeting.

2. Student Learning Outcomes

Professor Chomsky turned to Vice Provost Carney to review briefly the student learning outcomes (that she had just reviewed at the Faculty Consultative Committee in the preceding half hour). Professor Chomsky said that the Faculty Senate would discuss and ultimately act on the learning outcomes, but that it will want to hear from CAPA and from the students. The Faculty Senate will adopt only the learning outcomes; how departments and colleges will implement them will play out over time—implementation need not be all figured out at this point. The learning outcomes will be on the February 15 Faculty Senate agenda for discussion, perhaps come to the April University Senate for discussion, and then the Faculty Senate will act on them in May.

Several points were made in the discussion.

-- Adopting learning outcomes is a way for us to set a foundation for assessing student learning in an appropriate way, in a climate that is increasingly demanding some kind of accountability on learning. There will be no 100-point multiple-choice test administered to graduates to see what they know.

* These minutes reflect discussion and debate at a meeting of a committee of the University of Minnesota Senate; none of the comments, conclusions, or actions reported in these minutes represents the views of, nor are they binding on, the Senate, the Administration, or the Board of Regents.

- There is a senior exit survey, which might be changed in order to elicit opinions on the student learning outcomes.
- If adopted, the learning outcomes will be explained to freshmen at orientation.
- Many of the professional schools have established learning outcomes for accreditation purposes.
- There are three levels of accountability for learning outcomes: students, the department/college, and the dean/provost.
- Many places around the University already have learning outcome goals and what is needed is simply that they be articulated; the process will not be as onerous as it might seem.
- There will be concern about implementation particularly with respect to instructors and tenure-track faculty: how will performance on learning outcomes be evaluated and counted? This again raises the question of student evaluation of teaching and the uses to which it is put. (Dr. Carney said the instructor will have much greater control over questions, and the basic questions on teaching required of everyone will be substantially improved. She noted that promotion and tenure is part of her portfolio of responsibilities, including evaluation of teaching, and she has concerns about evaluation of teaching. The question is how to retain evaluation of teaching to make it more consistent across units and more informative for decision-making purposes.)

It was agreed that Dr. Carney would meet with CAPA and the Student Senate Consultative Committee to discuss the student learning outcomes.

Professor Chomsky thanked Dr. Carney for joining the meeting and adjourned it at 3:50.

-- Gary Engstrand

University of Minnesota