

Minutes

Senate Consultative Committee May 4, 1989

Present: Mark Brenner (chair), Paula Faraci, Eric Huang, Warren Ibele, Katie Jodl, M. Kathleen Price, Jim Schoon, Burton Shapiro, W. Phillips Shively, Carrie Simenson, Michael Steffes, James VanAlstine

Guest s: Senior Vice President Shirley Clark, Martin Conroy (Morris Freshman Council), Gayle Grika (Footnote), President Nils Hasselmo, Dean Harold Miller, Professor Jean Montgomery (Calendar Committee), June Perkins, Laura Schelin (MSA Course Information Project), Maureen Smith (Brief), a Daily reporter

1. Reports of the Chairs

Professor Ibele reported on the agenda for the Senate Finance Committee which follows this meeting; they will discuss the budget decentralization proposal, indirect cost recovery funds, and will receive an update on the status of the 1989-90 budget. The committee will also discuss the civil service survey; it was suggested that to the extent marketplace factors are used in considering civil service salaries, they should be used for specific job levels or areas rather than in the aggregate.

Mr. Huang reported that the Student Senate Consultative Committee had listened to a presentation by Vice President Heydinger on the communication plan, had discussed students on search committees, how the appointment of SSCC members could be changed and how students could be more involved in governance, and planning for a new course information project.

Professor Brenner reported that the Faculty Consultative Committee had elected Professor Ibele as FCC/SCC chair for 1989-90; they had also talked with President Hasselmo about tuition levels and the formula used to set them.

2. 1990-91 Calendar

Professor Brenner welcomed Professor Montgomery, chair of the Calendar Committee, to the meeting and asked her to explain the options she had outlined for revising the unpopular 1990-91 calendar. She did so, and the Committee then voted unanimously to recommend to the Assembly a change which would call for Friday and Saturday night finals and the elimination of Study Day for Winter Quarter, 1991, and a 5-day Spring break. It was noted that some arrangements should be made for public transportation for those students who must rely on it, because there is little available at 9:30 on a Friday or Saturday night.

3. 1991-92 Calendar

The Committee unanimously voted to accept and recommend to the Assembly the proposed 1991-92 calendar, which had none of the problems associated with the 90-91 calendar.

Professor Brenner passed on to the Committee a concern raised by IT about years when the calendar pushes the starting date of Fall Quarter earlier into September than normal. IT has a training

program for TAs which requires a week; they are not appointed until September 16, so if classes begin earlier than normal they do not have the full week. Professor Montgomery responded that the Calendar Committee was unaware of this concern and that they have typically tried to set up long Winter breaks. The Consultative Committee concluded that this was more a budgetary than calendar issue and that the calendar should not be driven by the need to have 5 training days available; rather, IT should seek to establish a budgeting process to permit the appointment of TAs as early as needed to meet their training schedule.

4. Ratio of Credits to Class Hours

Professor Brenner called to the attention of the Committee a resolution from the Senate Committee on Educational Policy (SCEP) which, if adopted by the Senate, would establish as University policy a ratio of 1:1 between class hours per week and credits awarded for a course; the resolution contained language recognizing that exceptions would occur and that laboratory sessions would not meet this criterion.

One of the Committee members noted that the college which would most feel the impact of such a policy was CLA. Information was not available to the Committee on how the faculty of CLA would feel about such a change; while they may be opposed to what will be seen as an additional contact hour, it is not known if that opposition is strong or widespread. Committee members expressed an interest in knowing if SCEP had consulted with any of the deans or faculty as it formulated its resolution.

Several other points were made in the ensuing discussion:

- The original change, from 3-credit to 4-credit modules, was made in response to students objecting to their course work being splintered into 5 3-credit courses per quarter; at the time the change was made, in 1972, there were flagrant abuses of how it was to be implemented--for many courses, the number of credits awarded went from 3 to 4 without any change in the requirements.
- There was disagreement on whether or not holding classes in longer blocks of time (e.g., M & W for two hours each session) would be better than holding five 45-minute sessions; longer but fewer blocks of time would better accommodate the need for students to work, but reservations were expressed about the boredom that can set in during a long class period.
- In the view of one Committee member, the flexibility permitted by the policy was no virtue; it would lead to creative evasions and just make us feel bad about ourselves; it was argued that exceptions should be exceptions and the present language makes it a policy that doesn't mean what it says. The change should be given wide notice on the campus and then implemented with widespread support.
- One of the factors which motivated SCEP to support the resolution was the comparative data from other institutions; Minnesota appears to be almost alone in awarding more credits for a course than there are contact hours for that course. At other places, with 50-minute class periods, a 4-credit course meets for 200 minutes per week; at Minnesota a 4-credit course meets for 135 minutes per week.

- There is widespread variation among the colleges in terms of hours and credits. The applicable Regents' policy calls for three hours of student work for each credit awarded-- but it provides no strictures on how those three hours are to be structured.
- The University should be seeking to expand modes of instruction and the faculty should not be bound to the more rigid vision of teaching embodied in the SCEP resolution; students appreciate the opportunity to take advantage of active learning rather than simply sit in classes.

It was agreed that the SCEP resolution should be presented to the Senate this Spring for information and that Professor Clark should be asked to speak to it. This would permit time for notice and discussion; the resolution could then be placed on the agenda of the Senate next Fall for action.

5. Discussion with President Hasselmo

Course Information Project Ms. Simenson began by presenting information and distributing materials concerning development of a course information survey which MSA is sponsoring; the Committee was joined by Laura Schelin, chair of the MSA student affairs committee. The primary purpose of the survey would be to provide information for freshmen and sophomores. President Hasselmo said he believed the survey was a worthwhile undertaking but that it should be done in cooperation with the administration; it was also suggested that the Senate Committee on Educational Policy should play a role in its development. Committee members also commented:

- That representative samples of students must be obtained (two possibilities to ensure this are to obtain the instructor's permission to enter the class and administer it to everyone and to do a random sample mailing);
- That there should be no more than one course evaluation done in any one class, and efforts would need to be collaboratively worked out with departments which already use such instruments; and
- That expertise in the construction of such surveys should be sought; Dr. Darwin Hendel in Academic Affairs has been involved in these projects in the past and should perhaps be consulted now.

Change to Semesters Professor Brenner reported that SCEP had met with the President last week to discuss the proposal to change from quarters to semesters; the committee had then voted 7-3 to oppose a change to semesters. He also noted that FCC had discussed the issue briefly earlier and the Committee now wished to hear from the President. One point upon which all seemed to be in agreement, however, was that whatever was decided should put the question to rest for a period of five to six years; there is a need for stability so the issue will not continue to affect curriculum decisions (by delaying them).

President Hasselmo observed that the SCEP discussion had recapitulated 25 years of debate on the issue; he said that he could not come up with cogent reasons which compelled a decision one way or the other. Whichever decision is made will need strong constituent support, especially the one which would change from quarters to semesters. The other systems are watching the University, he pointed

out, and also noted that the legislature is considering a bill which would suggest that all of the systems review their calendars and develop a joint approach.

The President said he would ultimately make up his mind but acknowledged that he has difficulty finding that either system has a large advantage over the other. At this point, he said, it is his view that the burden of proof is on those who want to make the change; unless the advocates can enlist strong support it would not be wise to do so. There must be a decision, he added, given the other issues of curriculum and instruction which confront the University, but he admitted that he was squarely wishy-washy on the matter.

Several observations were made:

- It is not clear that either system is pedagogically superior; comments suggested that different class lengths work for different subjects. For some courses, 10 weeks is not enough but 20 weeks is more than is needed, and students in many cases could not devote two quarters to what is basically one course. In the Law School, which changed to the semester several years ago, it was noted that in some instances the quarter is being reinvented for certain purposes.
- The issue may be mixed up, in the view of some, with an early start/early finish; some are opposed to an early finish because, for example, field work must take place in May in Minnesota, so being on summer break is a hindrance to teaching.
- Some faculty like the quarter system because they group their teaching and research; fall and winter quarters might be devoted to teaching and spring and summer to research. A change to semesters would inhibit that flexibility.
- The best information available is that the faculty are split on whether or not to make the change and students generally oppose it.

Asked when a decision would be needed, the President said that early Fall would be the latest time. After considerable additional discussion, the Committee and the President seemed to reach agreement that given present sentiments, the University would stay with the quarter system. To say that, however, cannot mean that the University is bound by the decision for a period certain; with a new Provost, and a new Vice Provost for the Arts, Sciences, and Engineering, and with close study and action being contemplated on liberal education requirements, a single point of entry, the elimination of mandatory faculty retirement, the undergraduate curriculum, the question of a change could be revived. At present, however, a proposal to change will not be actively in front of anybody and the advocates of change will have to carry the burden of bringing the question up and making the case for semesters. It was suggested that the President should make a statement to the Senate to this effect.

Siggelkow Retreat One of the student members of the Committee reported to the President that at the recent Siggelkow student leaders retreat, during the deans session, only three associate deans attended--which creates a bad impression of administrative concern for students. President Hasselmo agreed that this lack of attendance was unfortunate and expressed the hope that it could be better in the future.

Tuition Study The President was asked about the status of the Tuition Study Group; he responded that a paper has been drafted to define the agenda. In the meantime, a decision for 1989-90 had to be presented to the Board of Regents in June--but that could only be an interim solution. The paper on tuition will identify the salient issues which must be addressed and then recommendations for the Board of Regents must be developed. This process will take several months, but the President said he wanted it ready in time for the 1990 session of the legislature. There are, he observed, a number of issues (such as quality of instruction, what the State can afford, access, and the internal structure of tuition) and there will have to be trade-offs. He has talked with the other systems, President Hasselmo reported, but they have less pressure and a lower cost of instruction; the University also has a decreasing number of students to share the cost of instruction. The issue will be brought to the legislature, the President concluded, although it is not certain that any changes will result; for the current year, the University has devoted its efforts to remedying the problems of high professional school tuition.

The President said, in response to questions, that the issue would be brought back to the Committee, that students would serve on what will be a reconstituted tuition study group, and that for 1989-90 the options are extremely limited--the University will not be able to escape the formula-driven tuition requirements, which will lead to a 10% increase. There are basic philosophical issues involved, he commented; one extreme is the view that low tuition is what creates access and the other is that high tuition combined with high aid is most desirable. This institution must carefully consider where it wants to be, and that is probably not at either extreme.

It was pointed out that there is problem which may be greater in Minnesota than elsewhere: There are a lot of students living independently, who do not get aid from their parents, there is a strong ethic that parents should care for their children through high school and no farther, but regulations governing financial aid make it very difficult to obtain independent status--so students are in a bind. There is no easy solution to the problem but it has to be considered.

6. Integration of Day School and CEE Records

Dean Hal Miller of CEE joined the meeting for a discussion of the resolution from SCEP calling for rapid integration of CEE and Day School records. Dean Miller said that while he took exception to comments recorded in recent SCC minutes, he nonetheless supported the resolution without reservation. CEE, he said, has been patiently waiting for a long time for the integration of its records and registration with those of the Day School but have begun to move to automate their systems. One difficulty in determining how much the integration would cost is that the Day School systems are in flux.

Dean Miller noted that some integration is now quietly occurring and that there is a joint committee of representatives from CEE, Student Support Services, and AIS working on the development of an integrated system. The first priority, he told the Committee, would be integration of the records of those currently registering; they would then work backwards to integrate the existing records. Dean Miller also said that they want to be sure, whatever the system, that information can be downloaded so that there is only one transcript for each student.

The Committee voted unanimously to approve the SCEP resolution and to forward it to the

Senate for action; the only caveat the Committee wished to note was that integration of the systems should be understood to be a high priority (rather than the highest priority of the University, which was the tone of the SCEP resolution).

7. Improvement of Large Introductory Courses

SCEP had forwarded to the Committee a proposal from the Committee on Undergraduate Education which called for the expenditure of \$900,000 for the improvement of large introductory courses; the money would be allocated on the basis of proposals submitted and would be available over a 4-year period, after which departments would be expected to pick up any recurring costs of the course improvements.

Several objections to the proposal were raised. One Committee member noted that the one-shot nature of the support was not attractive and that it would be better to provide recurring funds to departments if they would promise to use it to improve large classes, although this was coupled with a concern that the money would simply disappear into department budgets with no noticeable improvement in courses. Another noted that the best solution to large classes is to have smaller classes. In the words of one, "something desperately needs to be done, but this is not the right way to do it."

Another line of opposition to the proposal was that this plan, like grants from the Educational Development Programs office, is predicated on the assumption that departments do not want to do their jobs well so you bribe them with these grants and then expect them to pick up recurring costs later. But the problem is that the departments do not have the money now, so they cannot pick up the expenses. The flavor of these proposals is that the department is the enemy; nothing, it was argued, has been accomplished by the EDP grants (with the possible exception of the Undergraduate Research Opportunity Program). Other Committee members concurred, saying that EDP grants have been non-productive and insulting and that departments are doing the best they can; they don't like large classes, they know what needs to be done, but they do not have the money to do it. Another commented that money is needed for ensuring that classes over a certain size are only taught in certain rooms, with the right equipment, and for cross-collegiate endeavors the colleges or departments cannot do alone.

It was also pointed out, with the concurrence of Vice President Clark, that the \$900,000 called for in the proposal is not presently available; it would have to be carved out of other efforts in order to be spent for this purpose.

There was agreement that this proposal should be returned to SCEP and that the concerns of SCC should be noted, in particular that there is a need for recurring funds, with appropriate safeguards to ensure its use for this purpose.

8. Students on Search Committees

Ms. Simenson told the Committee that there was a need for more specific policies to follow up on the report of the subcommittee chaired by Professor Phillips; she said that the students would like to see a policy brought to the Senate next year. She asked what came of the recommendation to add a question to the Form 16; another Committee member informed her that the Faculty Consultative Committee had endorsed the proposal but did not know what occurred thereafter. Vice President Clark said that she

would ensure that the recommendation was acted upon. It was suggested that it would be helpful if students could draft language which might be considered for inclusion on the Form 16 on how students can be identified.

Another issue which needs to be addressed is the role of the Student Senate Consultative Committee in the appointment of search committees; it should be clarified and publicized that SSCC is the body which nominates members to serve on University-wide committees. At present the procedure is haphazard, with students being chosen from all over the place. While SSCC should perhaps not select all students for various search committees, it should be the body responsible for coordinating the selection and insuring that there is appropriate representation, although it is not the intent of SSCC to serve as a monitoring body. It was suggested that SSCC might contact student groups to find out the names of those who might be interested in serving on search committees and that the staff to the Consultative Committee could play a role as a contact point to obtain students.

It was noted, too, that the nomination of members to search committees takes place under constraints from the central administration.

9. Designation of ex-officio members, Subcommittee on Physical Plant

The Committee unanimously approved for inclusion on the Senate docket, without deliberation, an amendment to the Rules of the Senate which sets forth the ex officio membership on the Subcommittee on Physical Plant and Space Allocation.

The Committee adjourned at 3:00.

-- Gary Engstrand