

Minutes*

**Senate Consultative Committee
Thursday, June 2, 1994
12:30 - 3:00
Room 238 Morrill Hall**

Present: Judith Garrard (chair), John Adams, Mario Bognanno, Lester Drewes, Kenneth Heller, Robert Jones, Geoffrey Maruyama, Harvey Peterson, Sandy Pham, Shirley Zimmerman

Regrets: James Gremmels, Karen Seashore Louis, Toni McNaron

Absent: Amanda Geist, Love Goel, Erick Harper, Derek Jensen, Linda Pham, Irwin Rubenstein, Rabun Taylor, Dale Vathauer

Guests: Anne Sales

Others: Maureen Smith (University Relations)

[In these minutes: User-friendliness task force report; miscellany; teaching evaluation]

1. User-Friendliness Task Force

Professor Garrard convened the meeting at 12:35 and welcomed Ms. Anne Sales, chair of the SCC-appointed Task Force on User Friendliness. Ms. Sales reviewed the charge to the Task Force and its membership, noting that the breadth of the membership helped in the perspectives brought to the report.

She then noted the three areas in which the Task Force had made recommendations (academic progress, human resources and information systems, and physical plant and transportation) and that it had not tackled issues it knew were being addressed elsewhere in the University. She also pointed out three conclusions from the Task Force that followed from its work. First, it is important to do things, to have successes, that have an impact on the campus climate. Second, the issue of user-friendliness requires a home, an ongoing group to monitor campus climate. Perhaps there should be a group, charged by SCC. Third, people in front-line jobs feel alienated and there is a perception that the people at the top of the University do not connect with those at the bottom; there needs to be a higher level of interaction.

Several points were made in the following discussion:

- The provosts may be more appropriate individuals to assume some of these responsibilities, once a reorganization is in place.
- The Task Force did not cost out its recommendations, but purposely identified steps that

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would be of minimal cost.

- Senior officer involvement with and understanding of University employees is important for morale; employees value messages directed to them from the senior officers. The communication cannot be one way, however, and momentary boosts in morale may be offset when communication is not followed by any action.
- The work of the Task Force should be incorporated in the University's biennial request; SCC should raise these issues again Fall Quarter.

It was moved, seconded, and voted, with one abstention (because the one Committee member had not seen the report prior to the meeting) that the Task Force report should be endorsed by SCC and formally transmitted to the President and the Biennial Request Advisory Committee.

Professor Garrard extended the thanks of SCC to Ms. Sales and her colleagues for the excellent work they did in producing the report.

2. Announcements

Professor Garrard then made several announcements.

- SCC must designate a new chair of the Grievance Advisory Committee, the oversight committee for the new grievance system (Professor Bognanno has served as chair but has resigned upon taking the appointment in the President's Office). It was moved and unanimously voted to delegate to Professor Garrard the authority to appoint an interim chair, which appointment will be reviewed next Fall.

It was also asked that the minutes note that the Grievance Advisory Committee is elated at the way the new policy has been implemented and at the effectiveness of the Grievance Officer.

- The changes in the tenure code approved by the Faculty Senate setting timelines for administrative responses in tenure proceedings are being returned to the Faculty Senate because the administration cannot accept the limits. It appears that the administration wishes the times allowed to be greater than those proposed; it was agreed that Senior Vice President Infante should be asked to explain the issues to the Faculty Senate next Fall.
- Professor Garrard drew the attention of Committee members to the recent article in the Daily about the outgoing vice chair of the Senate, Sandy Pham, who will be graduating this year. The Committee extended its thanks and congratulations to Ms. Pham.

3. Teaching Evaluation Policy Revision

Professor Garrard then called on Professor Heller to introduce the proposed changes in the teaching evaluation policy that had been approved by the Committee on Educational Policy. The issue, he explained, is whether or not to add verbal "anchor points" to each of the seven numbers of the scale for

the five questions required by the Senate policy on evaluation of teaching effectiveness.

Professor Heller reported that SCEP had discussed this issue at great length, both when the policy was originally adopted as well as at its most recent meeting. The original policy called for anchors only at the ends of the scale. The recent discussion occurred at the behest of Vice President Hopkins, who had, on the advice of experts in the University Counseling Service, added a verbal anchor to the mid-point of the scale. SCEP, after deliberation, voted overwhelmingly to delete the existing anchors and to substitute a set of verbal anchors for all seven points of the scale--and to use the anchors that had been used on earlier teaching evaluation surveys.

Committee members discussed for some while the methodological implications of having or not having verbal anchors. Also touched upon were faculty views of the survey (primarily anecdotal evidence), student response rates and the importance they attach to the surveys (in some cases, as many as half the students in a course may not fill them out; faculty and chairs may take them more seriously than students); the (high) value of written comments, and the particular terms proposed by SCEP for the seven anchors.

It was finally moved, seconded, and unanimously voted to return the changes to SCEP with a request that it consider data from an additional year before proposing any changes. It was also agreed that the addition of the verbal mid-point was acceptable.

Professor Garrard then adjourned the meeting at 2:00.

-- Gary Engstrand

University of Minnesota