

Minutes*

**Senate Consultative Committee
Thursday, April 4, 1996
12:30 - 3:00
Room 238 Morrill Hall**

- Present: Carl Adams (chair), John Adams, Joel Bergstrom, Victor Bloomfield, Bruce Bromberek, Virginia Gray, James Gremmels, Russell Hobbie, Roberta Humphreys, Jeff Isaacson, Laura Coffin Koch, Fred Morrison, Harvey Peterson, Michael Steffes
- Regrets: Carole Bland, Lester Drewes
- Absent: Paul Kluge, Melissa Lind, Helen Phin
- Guests: Professor John Dickey, Chair, Senate Committee on Social Concerns
- Others: Martha Kvanbeck (University Senate); Maureen Smith (University Relations)

[In these minutes: Committee membership; resolution on boycotting Mitsubishi; provostal governance; Twin Cities Undergraduate Course and Curriculum committee; consultation on reorganization proposals]

1. Membership

Professor Gray convened the meeting because Professor Adams had been slightly delayed, and welcomed Professor Dickey. Professor Adams then arrived and began by explaining that Professor Hobbie, one of the newly-elected members of the Committee, had agreed to assume his seat early in order to fill one of the seats vacated by the resignations of Professors Jones and Maruyama. Professor Sara Evans, the other newly-elected Committee member, has indicated she is unable to assume her seat early because of other commitments. Professor Matthew Tirrell, elected by the Committee to fill the vacancy, has indicated he is willing to start immediately, but said he has some commitments that will preclude attending every meeting.

Professor Hobbie noted that he is on sabbatical this year and will also not be able to attend all scheduled meetings, but will attend as many as possible.

2. Mitsubishi Resolution

Professor Adams then turned to Professor Dickey to present a motion from the Social Concerns Committee. Professor Dickey explained that he has been teaching astronomy at the University since 1982, and has increasingly felt confronted by a dilemma for the institution. In astronomy they talk about the atmosphere of earth and how it changes over time, and try to get students to appreciate that our civilization can change the entire ecosystem of the earth. Others teach about the destruction of the

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

ecosystem as well, including biologists and geologists. They want students to have a sense of the importance of the issue as well as a sense of empowerment to make decisions that affect the ecosystem. Most, however, seem to leave with a sense of fatalistic pessimism that civilization is doomed, or cynicism about the situation. One reason they come to those two wrong conclusions is because the institution takes no action to modify behavior.

He said he was pleased when two students in Natural Resources brought to the Social Concerns Committee a resolution about the Mitsubishi Corporation and its activities causing deforestation. Professor Dickey distributed a map showing the places on the globe where Mitsubishi figures in deforestation. Their shadow looms large all over, he said.

The resolution was first passed last spring, and then again unanimously this February. It calls for a boycott of Mitsubishi products until its deforestation activities are stopped or ameliorated, and calls on the University to stop purchasing Mitsubishi products until three especially egregious practices are stopped.

Similar resolutions are being considered at other schools; in Colorado, such a resolution has been presented to their Board of Regents.

Professor Dickey said he has discussed the resolution with the Director of Purchasing. In fiscal year 1994 the University only bought \$11,000 in Mitsubishi products. The University could put a restriction on University-wide contracts, and on those that exceed \$2000, but cannot implement a complete boycott because Purchasing does not control departmental purchases.

One Committee member expressed support for the resolution but inquired if it is the business of the Senate to adopt such a resolution. There is precedent, however, for a boycott on the basis of social purpose; actions with respect to South Africa were similar. The role of this Committee should be to put the issue on the docket for University-wide discussion, not to decide the merits of the issue.

Is Mitsubishi the only large corporation responsible for deforestation, asked another Committee member? Does this propose taking on the biggest offender to set an example? Are there others doing this as well, with less impact? Professor Dickey said there are others, but the Rainforest Coalition has identified Mitsubishi as doing far more than the rest and the corporation against which action should be taken.

Another Committee member expressed support for the intent but suggested that instead of directing the administration to take action, it should ask Purchasing to make sure every purchaser is made aware of the statement by the Senate. This would have the same effect, but in less inflammatory terms.

Another Committee member supported the resolution and agreed that the function of this Committee serving as a steering body should be to put items on the calendar at appropriate times but not pass on the merits. Proposals from committees should not be amended.

Yet another Committee supported the resolution, calling it one tiny step, but said the larger concern is student awareness of environmental problems. There should be a category in liberal education requirements dealing with the environment. It was noted that there is such a requirement on the Twin

Cities campus.

One Committee member noted that the use of a boycott is an act of desperation; they are not especially effective, but may be the only thing that can be done. They do not work well, even in international politics, but that does not mean they should not be used. The carefulness with which the mechanism has been chosen must be recognized, however, in order to help obtain support from those who might be skeptical about it.

One suggestion was that rather than having the boycott stay in effect until the committee lifts it, it might be better to have an automatic date at which it is ended, at which time the committee will revisit the issue. One concern that should be removed from the discussion is that things sometimes go on and on without reconsideration.

The Committee then unanimously approved placing the resolution on the Senate docket, for some meeting between April 18th and May 16th.

3. Provostal Governance

Professor Adams next turned to Mr. Bromberek to introduce a proposal from the students for provostal governance.

Mr. Bromberek distributed a proposal and said that the students had retained the same wording and concepts that had been in the proposal to the Assembly in February. The change is that there would be provostal consultative committees (hereinafter PCCs) composed of an equal number of students and faculty members, and that the two groups could meet separately as needed.

One Committee member recalled that the original proposal taken to the Assembly, to create provostal faculty consultative committees (PFCCs), had failed only because there was an insufficient number of people at the meeting to act. The Committee on Committees, in the meantime, has begun developing slates and conducting elections for the PFCCs pursuant to FCC action to establish them as "subcommittees" of FCC pending Assembly action.

In terms of the student proposal, there are two ways to go, it was said. There can be separate committees, in which case they can have equal numbers of students and faculty, and they could meeting jointly as events suggested appropriate. The other possibility is a single PCC, but then the faculty should constitute two-thirds of the membership. The proposal for an equal number of students and faculty on the same committee is unacceptable. Two committees are preferable, this Committee member said; they could be directed to meet jointly from time to time.

The students would not oppose a separate structure if the committees were directed to meet together on occasion, Mr. Bromberek said. They liked the idea of an equal number of students, because student participation is hard to obtain, and recognize that even with equal numbers, the faculty would probably be in the majority most of the time. As for a quorum question raised by another Committee member, it was pointed out that these are consulting bodies to give and receive feedback, not decision-making bodies.

One Committee member noted that under the proposed bylaw, the PFCCs are established in the bylaws but are RESPONSIBLE TO the Faculty Assembly Steering Committee [the Twin Cities subset of FCC]; they are treated as subordinate to the Steering Committee, not just loose entities floating in the University. All of the provostal governance structure, if interpreted that way, reports to the Faculty or Assembly Steering Committee.

In terms of membership, it was said, there are two possibilities for combined student/faculty membership: the two-thirds/one-third ratio of faculty to students that prevails on most Senate and Assembly committees, or the ratio on this Committee, which is "equally" divided between faculty and students--except that the faculty have one more member. There is no precedent for totally equal numbers, however.

The Committee must also be sensitive to the fact that while it is an action of the governance system to establish the PCCs or PFCCs, it also wants the provosts to welcome their creation. The provosts made it clear they do not want large committees. Perhaps each PCC could work out that issue; they could decide whether to meet jointly or separately, depending on what works with the provost. To make it work, there may be a need for one over-arching group, with one chair, that can subdivide (as with this Committee).

It was also noted that the faculty are moving ahead on the PFCCs; the committees should be in place by early May. It is important not to let that process be delayed until fall.

One Committee member said that the more students there are on the committees, the better a student perspective there will be. There is trouble in getting students to attend meetings, and having a large number on the committees permits SOME to be involved.

Another Committee member took issue with this view, pointing out that students do NOT show up. They should not be blamed for this; they are paying for an education and this takes time. This is an issue that people dance around, but one must be blunt: there should be a couple of students on the committee, students who participate, but no more. To say the numbers should be equal does not make sense. Faculty in the past have disassociated themselves from committees because student attendance and activities have made it hard to conduct business.

One Committee member also voiced opposition to equal numbers of students and faculty, but said one solution might be to have separate committees, with the chairs of each serving on the other. The two committees could also meet jointly, as needed. This would permit faculty and student concerns to be addressed.

One possibility, if the concern is with students who do not show up, is to appoint alternates, so have a larger number who could be available to attend meetings. This is not currently permissible under Senate rules, it was noted.

One Committee member maintained that with major changes in faculty workload conditions being discussed, there is a need to get this done so the provosts can be given advice. If the students wish to bring a separate proposal, that is fine, but this item, creating the PFCCs, should go on the docket. People have been working on this since September and something has to be put in place. The ballots are going

out for the PFCCs, and it would look stupid to change that now. The PFCCs will go forward with or without Assembly action, Professor Adams agreed, and the ballots will be distributed as scheduled.

Students are paying the faculty a compliment by saying they want to be with them, but it is correct to say that there have been difficulties with student attendance. If the two-thirds/one-third ratio were considered, the proposed PFCCs could be enlarged by 50% to incorporate students. Is this a concept that people agree on? The technical language cannot be prepared for the April 18 docket, but it could be acted on later. And the possibility of alternates may be a good idea. Can the Assembly act on the proposal to create the PFCCs, with the understanding that a proposal for providing for students will follow shortly?

Mr. Bromberek said the students do not want to hold up the establishment of the PFCCs, and want either a joint committee or separate committees with a provision for joint meetings.

In this environment, said one Committee member, it is better to have undiluted voices of faculty and of students consulting with the administration. Another said it is imperative there be a faculty-only forum for talking with the provosts; these are critical issues and the faculty cannot lose any more time.

Professor Adams concluded that the proposal as it stands does not have the support of the Committee, and there appears to be no agreement on how to handle the issue of student participation. Mr. Bromberek said he would return in the future with a proposal for a separate committee structure, a mirror of the faculty proposal; he said he understood the need for an undiluted voice for faculty and students.

One Committee member expressed support for the idea of allowing alternates for student members of the PCCs, and suggested that the principle should be applied to all Senate committees. Another Committee member expressed doubt about the idea, noting that it takes people a long time to get up to speed on committees and that alternates would be totally ineffective because they would not understand the issues. It is more important to have good student members. It would be better, it was agreed, to have two good students participate regularly than eight appointed and three show up sporadically.

Professor Gray then said she wished to propose an amendment to the PFCC bylaw proposal in light of the announcement of the proposal to close General College. There is no mechanism to handle collegiate changes, so she proposed that the Faculty Assembly Steering Committee be given the authority to redistribute the membership of any PFCC where there are structural changes within a provosty. This does not presuppose such changes will occur, but there must be a provision for dealing with it if it does.

The Committee voted unanimously in favor of the amendment Professor Gray proposed.

Following short debate, it was also agreed that in the future, Senate docket items would carry the name of the committee that is bringing it, not the name of the Consultative Committee. The Consultative Committee may take a position on a report, each item might carry a section reporting Consultative Committee action, and the Consultative Committee must make the decision whether or not to put an item on the docket, but it should not amend or revise a committee item. It may discuss items, and could ask a committee to work further on a proposal, but the item will come from the particular committee, not the Consultative Committee.

3. Twin Cities Undergraduate Course and Curriculum Committee; Semester Conversion

Standards

Professor Koch then distributed a revised Senate docket item on the Course and Curriculum Committee, responding to questions raised at the last meeting of this Committee; the item was approved unanimously.

Following explanation of slight clarifications in the Semester Conversion Standards, they also were unanimously approved for the docket.

4. Consultation on Organizational Change

Professor Adams then distributed the draft of a memo to the President concerning the proposed organizational changes on the Twin Cities campus, including the closing of General College. The purpose, he explained, is to make it clear what the governance system expects in the way of consultation on these changes; it called for the administration to allow the appropriate two to three months for review of the proposals and possible recommendations, and denoted the Committee on Educational Policy as the lead committee on collegiate reorganization.

One Committee member expressed ambivalence about the memo, agreeing that since SCEP has dealt with so many details, it should also be permitted to take on the big items, but also expressing reservation that this will allow any proposal for major change to be talked to death in any committee. GC is under the Arts, Sciences, and Engineering provost; what is the role of a University-wide SCEP versus a provostal SCEP?

This memo draws on the Senate constitution, which calls for Senate involvement in matters inter-collegiate. Is college change of interest to the Senate? This memo says it is, and is an educational policy issue. There are a lot of changes going on within colleges; while the Senate is not uninterested, it is not normally empowered to address issues inside colleges. It does have a responsibility for matters that affect more than one college, and a change in colleges falls in the second category, Professor Adams concluded.

These matters should be discussed, another Committee member agreed; what is being overlooked is the collegiate reorganization of the Academic Health Center, and how that reorganization is spilling into the tenure discussion. Is the changed system compatible with the tenure code? The reorganization of the AHC has gone forward with great secrecy, and only a few know about it. The proposal has been articulated, but the deans have been told to make oral statements only, nothing in writing, so they cannot be held to it. Was this on the basis of advice from consultants, it was asked? Yes, it was said. There is a strong rumor, said another Committee member, that colleges and departments will be dissolved.

If so, said one Committee member, this adds to the precedent that the Senate is interested in the matter of college structures. The memo, it was said, should also note the interest of the Senate in any proposed or upcoming reorganizations, as well as those already announced. It was also agreed that other committees had an appropriate interest in the issues, but in order to avoid the problem of everyone having responsibility so no one has responsibility, SCEP is identified as the lead committee responsible for reviewing the changes.

Committee members then discussed the language of the memo and had a number of suggestions for

change. One Committee member then inquired what was expected of the administration. Professor Adams said it asks that the administration take no more action for a period of time, and let the governance structure review and comment on the proposals. It also acknowledges that changes in colleges are a policy issue. The administration will consult with a lot of people and groups, and will make the decision. He wants to be clear, Professor Adams said, that there is a lead voice in these issues; the administration can consult with everyone, but it may not pick and choose among those who it will hear. At the same time, he agreed, the consultation should take place and then decisions made and the University move on.

One concern about General College, said one Committee member, is if it is a final decision or if this is a period for consultation. President Hasselmo makes it sound like the decision is done, while the provost describes the next two months as a period for advice and consultation.

What is the issue, asked one Committee member? If the job of the Committee is to consult, one can argue about when that consultation should take place, but one can also ask why? What is its purpose? One of the most valuable things the Committee can do is make plain faculty and student views about administrative policy decisions. These recommendations were not crafted lightly, and the people making them are academics; because they are now administrators does not make that different.

What is the Committee supposed to do? It should enlighten the discussion; that is what Committee members have been elected to do. The administration did its homework, but wants to think about the issues publicly; this Committee should do so. The Committee is not an authority on combining or dissolving anything, but it does have a responsibility to say what needs to be done with respect to educational policy, finance and planning, and so on. The Board of Regents will pay attention to the discussion; if the Committee nitpicks the details and does not confront the hard issues, it hands the discussion over to the administration or uninformed groups. Rather than table issues, the Committee should think them over and use the committees to help tackle them.

Committee members deliberated over whether the proposals were in fact a "done deal" or if this was a period when alternatives would be considered, and how well thought out the proposals were. One Committee member maintained that if there is consultation before the decision is made, the governance system is caught up in the process and even if the decision is contrary to the advice given, the governance system is "part of the team," and can accept it. If the decision is made without consultation, the Committee is at liberty to deal publicly with the Board of Regents or any others and to give no deference to the decision, but to deal with the issue on the merits.

The Committee agreed it would review by email a redrafted version of the memo.

One Committee member then observed that in the last couple of years, it has been common for the administration to lay out things it is thinking about; the Committee has listened rather than tried to corner proponents or request more elaboration. Provost Allen has laid out the idea of institutes and said the provosts are thinking about it; it is puzzling that Committee members sat and listened. If the provost later makes specific proposals, he can say he brought it to FCC and no one said anything. It seems that people cannot or will not comment on something unless it is very specific; they do not talk at the policy level. The question of the reorganization of the University has been mentioned for the last several years and the Committee has been consulted about it. When administrators make suggestions, the Committee needs either to dig in or to ask people to return with more information on their proposals.

Another Committee member had a different memory of the meeting with Provost Allen, recalling that there were a number of comments. He presented the ideas as his own; Committee members had no idea the other shoe would drop so soon. That would have gotten people's attention. Another problem is that the business of the Committee is so tightly scheduled that Committee members do not have time to ask questions.

One Committee member said the program change is bothersome. At the February 1 FCC meeting, the President was asked about rumors of college or campus closing; he said he was not familiar with such rumors. Now one thinks the rumors may have had some basis. Committee members debated briefly what someone in a senior officer position should say when confronted by such rumors or when making plans for major change.

5. Senate Docket

Although the tenure issues require a great deal of time, it was agreed that the Semester Conversion Standards and provostal governance had to be voted on, and that other matters would be put off until Senate meetings in May.

Professor Adams then adjourned the Senate Consultative Committee and convened the Faculty Consultative Committee for a discussion of tenure.

-- Gary Engstrand

University of Minnesota