

Minutes

Senate Consultative Committee January 5, 1989

Present: Mark Brenner (chair), Tim Erickson, Warren Ibele, Lynnette Mullins, J. Bruce Overmier, Ronald Phillips, Jim Schoon, Burton Shapiro, W. Phillips Shively, Carrie Simenson, Michael Steffes, John Tackett, James VanAlstine

Guests: Gayle Grika (Footnote), Vice President Richard Heydinger, Professor Irwin Rubenstein, Maureen Smith (Brief), Steven Joul

1. Response to the Governor's Budgetary Recommendations for the University

At the request of Vice President Heydinger, Professor Brenner closed the meeting for a discussion of the status of the University's biennial request. Vice President Heydinger described the process that had and would take place, steps being taken by the University, and the possible response of the legislature. Committee members discussed with Vice President Heydinger the implications of the Governor's recommendation and possible responses to it.

Committee members continued to discuss the request after the meeting was opened. It was suggested that students contacting members of the legislature could have more effect than faculty, who are seen as self-serving--and it is the students who represent the future economic growth of the State. The point could be made, by students, that their futures are being jeopardized because of possible damage to the University caused by the failure of the State to appropriate sufficient funds to retain and improve the quality of the institution. The students, however, are concerned about the possible increases in tuition; they also need some response or feedback from the faculty about what will happen to benefit them with the increased funding. Students, it was pointed out, encounter TAs who do not speak English and professors they cannot see; the Consultative Committee will have to demonstrate reasons why students should support the request. Those who are in student government can understand why, but thousands of students are not privy to the information; for them, tuition will be the paramount issue.

Comments were made that the faculty and administration could perhaps make promises about certain items but that there should be no more faculty mea culpas; students need a statement on what is being purchased with the additional funding being sought but that there isn't a great deal more that the faculty themselves can do.

It was suggested that it seems that the faculty and administration are under the impression that students are more excited about attending the University than they actually are. Most Minnesota students are here because it's cheaper and more convenient, for example, than the east coast schools. One effort to gain student support in lobbying efforts might be to take some action to improve teaching practices of professors. One response to this idea was that when put in the form of a mea culpa, the poor teachers will ignore such a plan and the good teachers would be insulted by being asked to say, "I promise to be a better teacher." This response was echoed by several other Committee members. Another observation was that students at east coast colleges paid more tuition and the faculty were paid more. Because the University recruits faculty nationally and internationally, and competes with those

east coast colleges for faculty, it is imperative that it improve its faculty salaries. He added that if students had unlimited access to faculty that would be a sign that the faculty are not doing scholarship.

The Committee was asked to think of some good news for students. Have not things improved for students in the last ten years? The good things will continue to be good if funded properly and some better things may be added.

One faculty member said that if he were a student, he'd be crying out for more faculty. He doesn't understand why this doesn't come up in complaints about classroom sizes. Ms. Simenson responded that many students are taught by TAs rather than faculty their first years here so do not even know to miss them.

An inquiry was posed: If faculty have not made it clear to students that their salaries are inadequate then how can they make it clear to the legislature?

The discussion concluded with the observation that these exchanges, which were in response to Vice President Heydinger's request for a turn-around strategy, only raised problems. After some consideration of potential solutions, the Committee agreed to appoint a subcommittee to work on solutions. Tim Erickson, Eric Huang, Warren Ibele, Ronald Phillips, and John Tackett agreed to serve on the subcommittee; Carrie Simenson and Phil Shively will serve as alternates.

2. Search Committees

Professor Brenner informed the Committee that the Faculty Consultative Committee is responsible for offering a slate of nominees to serve on four search committees. The searches are being conducted for Provost, Vice President for Agriculture, Vice President for the Health Sciences and Vice Provost for the Faculty of the Arts, Sciences, and Engineering. He said that he has asked for nominations from the appropriate units; he also noted that there should be students on each of these search committees since each position affects students.

3. Reports from the Chairs

--Senate Finance Committee Professor Ibele reported on the items on the agenda for SFC, which consisted of continuing discussions on the expansion of the Morse-Alumni teaching awards, the budget process proposal, and a status report on civil service salaries. He also informed the Committee of the problem of the Grant in Aid research fund being overdrawn, an issue that the Senate Finance Committee will be taking up soon.

--Student Senate Consultative Committee Agenda items which SSCC has been working on, Ms. Simenson informed the Committee, include ROTC, a report on which should be available soon, the student regent candidate endorsements, and tuition. SSCC is also in the process of contacting other student groups in an effort to work with them on appropriate issues in an attempt to achieve more cohesiveness.

--Faculty Consultative Committee Professor Brenner said that December was a busy month for FCC; it had met with a Governor's aide and, at President Hasselmo's request, worked on developing an administrative structure for the University. The comments which had been

made by FCC on the proposed structure would be available next week.

4. Senate Committee on Educational Policy Items

Professor Brenner reported that SCEP has requested the leadership of SCC in its consideration of four current agenda items; the items, and comments, are these:

- Differential cost per credit across colleges: this will require a larger policy decision than is within the purview of SCEP; it is an issue that should be presented to the State and deals with whether or not there should be equal access throughout the University; groups which might be involved in looking at the question include Wellspring and the High Tech Council.
- Training of TAs: SCEP could make a point by saying that further TA training is necessary, for educational reasons, although it cannot determine the funding for such an effort; any additional work on the issue should take into account earlier efforts, such as the Wallace report; and this may be an implementation problem rather than a policy problem.
- Establishment of FASE: SCC is already actively involved in this issue.
- Fuller integration of CEE with Day School: many students come to the University through CEE, so it is important that it be a good experience; there are a number of problems in CEE at present, including registration nightmares and low quality of education--although in some cases, the quality of education in CEE is higher than in the Day School; integration with the Day School makes sense, although the flexibility of CEE is an advantage to many students and faculty.

The Committee discussed each of these issues individually and concluded that the priority items should be the second and the fourth since they, if addressed, would make this a better institution for students. Professor Brenner said that he would speak with Provost Clark about the position of Academic Affairs on additional training for TAs and that he would write to SCEP about possible policy development in integrating CEE and Day School.

The Committee adjourned at 3:00.

--Gary Engstrand & Kelly Craigmile