

Minutes*

**Senate Consultative Committee
Thursday, March 2, 1995
12:30 - 2:00
Room 238 Morrill Hall**

- Present: John Adams (chair), Carl Adams, Joel Bergstrom, Thomas Burk, Sheila Corcoran-Perry, Lester Drewes, Virginia Gray, Kenneth Heller, Robert Jones, Harvey Peterson, Michael Steffes, Rabun Taylor, Barbara Thompson
- Regrets: Sara Evans, James Gremmels, Geoffrey Maruyama
- Absent: Roberta Humphreys, Brandon Lujan, Jason Mork, Donald Ness, Chad Reichwald, Tim Stanislawski
- Guests: McKinley Boston (Director, Men's Intercollegiate Athletics), Acting Vice President Mark Brenner, Professor Mary Lou Fellows (Chair, Assembly Committee on Intercollegiate Athletics)
- Others: Maureen Smith (University Relations), Ulrike Midunger (DAILY)

[In these minutes: Discussion with McKinley Boston of men's athletics and the student development vice presidency; discussion of Graduate School issues with Mark Brenner]

1. Discussion with Men's Athletic Director McKinley Boston

Professor Adams convened the meeting at 12:30 and welcomed Dr. Boston and Professor Fellows. He asked Dr. Boston to say a little about the men's athletic program as well as on his view about the position he will be assuming on July 1, Vice President for Student Development and Athletics.

Dr. Boston thanked the Committee for the opportunity to meet with it, and recalled that he had also done so about three years ago. At that point he had talked about his approach to the men's athletic program; at this meeting he said he wished to review the past three years and talk about the transition to the new position.

Dr. Boston explained to the Committee how his philosophy of athletics and student development had evolved since the days he had played professional football. He related his experiences at what was then Montclair State College, an urban predominantly white, upper-middle-class college, and especially his experiences being mentored while attending graduate school and teaching.

His approach to the management of college athletics was unique, he thought, in that he started out

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as a faculty member in physical education. He also coached at a very different level, NCAA Division III, after playing at Minnesota in Division I football. His experience at Montclair included managing the affective undergraduate student experience; football and athletics were only a small part of his work experience.

About ten years ago, he had to make a career choice: he could continue to pursue a career in teaching, in athletic administration, in student development, or in coaching. He chose athletic administration, with the goal of being at a Division I school; it became possible for him to integrate the four career choices into a unique approach to managing athletics at Division I. There are only two or three programs that offer an approach to athletics that has a strong student development emphasis. The program at Minnesota operates under the Center for the Development of Student-Athletes, a program developed by him and Vice President Marvalene Hughes that is working quite well.

Dr. Boston then played a video for the Committee, a combination recruiting tape and description of the Center for the Development of Student-Athletes. The cost of the video was donated. He then described how the Center works, drawing on resources from across the University. There are many stereotypes about athletics, he noted, and people often use them to condemn the program. He said he is satisfied the department is doing things the right way, based on successes the past three years. The average GPA for male student-athletes is at an all-time high (2.8); the graduation rate has been 45-48%, which does not reflect what he has done, because it is a six-year rolling rate. But the emphasis on graduation among student-athletes is a priority.

There are four reasons why a university would want to sponsor an athletic program, Dr. Boston said. One is that it does provide entertainment, and he said no one should have to apologize for that. Entertainment is an individual choice; no one has to attend events. The department generates about \$18 million per year, and--along with funds privately raised--is paying for the \$41-million facilities upgrade. Many people, however, use those athletic facilities, and the face-lift has transformed that end of the campus.

College athletics also provide for a sense of community, and can drive positive or negative emotions. In 1992, Americans spent over \$100 billion on sports; in the GNP of the United States, the only expenditures that exceeded it were those on health, education, and welfare, and defense. It is a part of the American way of life; whether the money should be spent elsewhere is not for him to decide, he told the Committee; it is up to the larger society.

Another reason colleges should sponsor athletics is because of development; the men's program raised \$6 million to support the bonds to pay for the facilities renovation. This year, the department raised \$2.3 million to support scholarships for athletes. For the period 1989-93, there were 1,033 people who donated \$1000 or more to collegiate units; 517 of them were donors to men's athletics.

Another reason to support the program, and one that separates it from other programs around the country, Dr. Boston said, is because he believes that sport builds character. The research on the question is mixed, but there is evidence to support the proposition; he believes it. They have designed the program at the University to ensure that character-building is an outcome.

Dr. Boston recalled that his appreciation for, and involvement in, student development was at a

time when "in loco parentis" was the driving philosophy. The approach to developing student leaders was hands-on, which is one element he still believes in. He hopes to share that philosophy with those in student development. Dr. Boston stressed that the people critical to a successful student development program are faculty members.

Multiple missions, such as at the University, sometimes create unique problems for the academy. Most of the research and exit interviews suggest that students who have a positive experience coming out of college have had positive experiences with the faculty. He said he hoped that the academic community could be engaged to work closer with student development professionals to enhance that experience.

Student leaders are also a critical component in campus life. He said he hoped that professional staff worked closely with student leaders and groups, in a nurturing and supportive way. When on the staff at Montclair, he recalled, they felt a strong responsibility to help students provide leadership to the student body. When there is strong guided leadership in the student body, campuses are vibrant and create a sense of excitement. Trust is the dominant theme, not a built-in adversarial relationship. Under his leadership, the notion of student development will be dominant, rather than that of "managing affairs." He said he does not view himself as a manager of student affairs, but as a professional educator strongly committed to the notion of student development. If there is a theme that would be consistent under his leadership, it will be one of nurturing and supporting student leaders.

Dr. Boston offered one final observation that he wanted to get off his chest. The recruiting process with Florida State, he said, was one that he would have preferred been done differently. He wished his visit to Florida State could have been private, but he did not have that choice. He said he was embarrassed by the attention; he did not desire it, he is a private and introverted person. Managing in a glass house is part of the industry, much though he would prefer otherwise. He would also have preferred a private meeting with the President, where they could have discussed the situation. The whole matter could have been private; unfortunately, it was not, and it was annoying and frustrating to have his private life become an open book. It is interesting to have other people talk about these events, but they don't realize the personal nature of them. "It was my family's choice to visit. I didn't want the whole world to know I visited!"

Professor Adams asked if there were any questions. One Committee recalled being on sabbatical at a heavily residential institution and noting what a difference that made. A lot of faculty believe that a major contributor to the negative aspects of this campus is the fact that so many students commute, and are off campus for much of their time. Does he have any ideas how to address that in his job as vice president?

Dr. Boston said he shared the perception, and observed that research demonstrates the college experience can be enhanced by living on campus. As part of U2000, and in his conversations with the President, there appears to be a commitment to taking a hard look at increasing residential living for the campus. Part of the discussion of U2000 and the restructuring has been about where Housing should report--Finance and Operations or Student Development? His belief is that Housing is one area where the University can have a significant impact on a large number of people; if U2000 is going to be successful, part of it must include increasing the opportunities for residential life for students. He said he hoped the University would give Student Development the responsibility for Housing in order that it could have an effect on those students.

One possibility might be joint reporting to both Finance and Operations AND Student Development, suggested another Committee member. The same structure might be considered for the "enrollment management" functions, such as admissions and the registrar. Dr. Boston was encouraged to pursue that option.

Professor Adams recalled that Senior Vice President Infante had distributed to the Committee earlier a chart describing current thinking about the reorganization of Academic Affairs; a more recent version had been provided at this meeting. One question, he said, as the restructuring proceeds, is whether what will be included in the vice presidency is being discussed? How is he involved in that discussion? When people talk about these things, the discussions tend to focus on undergraduates, since they are the majority of students on campus, but there are graduate and professional students here as well. How are these matters being talked about? Is the job description being written with his participation?

Up to now, the answer is "no," replied Dr. Boston, because he has only recently entered the picture. The only candid discussion has been about Housing. He was part of the Transition Task Force, and had the opportunity to participate in discussions, but from a different vantage point. The Task Force and its subgroups have done an outstanding job in getting political turf issues out on the table for discussion in a very civil manner--and that is not always the case. The job description may not be complete; he and Dr. Infante have agreed to continue to discuss it. He does not drive the agenda, he pointed out.

Athletics may build character, as he has said, observed one Committee member, but there are many other activities that produce the same result, but which are not as well supported (e.g., building solar cars, judging teams, and so on). These kinds of activities should also be supported centrally, even though they are subject-matter based; right now they're fragmented. Does he see himself playing a role in development of these activities, perhaps on the same model as athletics?

His plans now are to talk with deans and appropriate faculty members, as soon as practical, to get a sense of what they view as important and the linkages that are necessary. Some things disturb him, he related; distressing as the graduation rate at the University is, he has never heard the faculty take any ownership in the poor graduation rate. The responsibility for it rests on everyone, and everyone should be integrated in both the successes and the failures. What he hopes, as discussion and debate on U2000 takes place, is that all who value the University will value its products and byproducts in such a way that everyone can be extremely proud of the institution. He is very proud of the University, and his description of his commitment on the video was no accident. He said he does not come into the job with a lot of answers, but does enter it with a major commitment of energy, of building relationships, and with a belief that there are a lot of bright people on the campus who can take pockets of successes in the colleges and enlarge them.

The Regents have spoken with him about expanding the successes; he said he has had to remind them that he is the Director of Men's Athletics and it isn't part of his job to work on expanding college activities. In traveling around the state, he prefaces his remarks by saying that he is the Director of MEN'S athletics; the video was all about men--because that is his job, he pointed out. There are people who "beat up" on him because the video is all about men. He tries to explain it. But he's excited about working on creating the kind of campus described in the U2000 effort.

One Committee member asked how he would apply more broadly the successes in the Center for the Development of Student-Athletes. The Academic Counseling office has done a very good job; perhaps services like it can be provided to other disadvantaged students who happen not to be athletes. His notoriety, even though not of his own choosing, provided an opportunity to raise funds for programs at the same time money was being raised to support him.

Dr. Boston said he would like to provide greater support to undergraduate programs. He recalled a dissertation that examined the retention rate of African-American students at a predominantly white land-grant university; the literature suggests that there are non-academic, non-cognitive factors that affect the graduation rates of these students. Many African-American students who come to predominantly white institutions, especially those at risk, do not have a realistic self-appraisal: their choices of major, for example, may not be appropriate, given their academic backgrounds. Dealing with that kind of situation requires one-to-one counseling, so they become comfortable with their own self-esteem and accept the fact they have to make realistic choices.

Other factors that enhance self-esteem are the ability to deal with racism and engaging in community service. Part of their program is a requirement that all student-athletes do 15 hours of community service in order to earn a letter. The research clearly shows that students who are engaged in the community and on the campus are more academically successful than those who are not, so the program requires it. They do not allow intercollegiate athletics to be their only extra-curricular experience; the students can too easily become isolated. Dr. Boston said he hoped he could build on that experience in a broader context. Much of what they do in the men's athletic program clearly has philosophical implications for the larger campus. He cautioned that he will be new to the position, however, and that such activities need to be put in context and a consensus about their desirability will have to be built.

Professor Adams thanked Dr. Boston for joining the meeting and expressed appreciation for the efforts he proposes on behalf of the University.

2. Discussion with Acting Vice President Mark Brenner

Professor Adams welcomed Dr. Brenner to the meeting and said the Committee would like to talk with him about the functions of the Vice President for Research and Dean of the Graduate School as well as his views about the timeline for the Conflict of Commitment policy. He noted that Dr. Brenner also wanted to respond to comments in an earlier set of FCC minutes about the responsibilities of the Graduate School for administering graduate education.

Dr. Brenner said he was concerned about the comment in FCC minutes that the Graduate School had washed its hands of some of its responsibilities. It has not, he said. When he agreed to serve as Acting Vice President and, in particular, Acting Dean of the Graduate School, it was with an understanding that Graduate School activities would be a significant part of his responsibilities. He has tried to be as energetic as possible in carrying them out; so have the other members of the Graduate School staff.

They feel duty bound to make the Graduate School a strong enterprise, and be responsive to the needs of graduate education. Are there issues, suggested by the comment in the minutes, that the

Graduate School should be addressing? They need to know what those issues are. He noted that Professor Adams had spent an hour the previous day with the Graduate School Executive Committee discussing the role of the Graduate School in the reorganized administrative structure; they realized the discussion needed to continue.

The Executive Committee is committed to strengthening the Graduate School's activities, rather than seeing them diluted, as the reorganization proceeds. They believe it would be inappropriate to have those functions chopped up and distributed to deans and provosts.

They have conducted an analysis, and learned that two-thirds of graduate programs report to more than one department. Over half report to a provost; about one-third report to more than one provost. Fifteen percent report to three provosts. The preponderance of graduate programs are multi-disciplinary. The cross-cutting nature of the programs is important to their vitality as well as to how the Graduate School has operated.

One Committee member said that any criticisms made have been directed more at previous activities and the ways that certain Graduate School functions had been decentralized following recommendations of the Johnson Committee report. The discussion has also been motivated by fears that arise when people say that a good way to save money would be to abolish the Graduate School. Many think it extremely important and want to see it preserved and strengthened.

Dr. Brenner agreed, but said it is also important to understand any fundamental concerns that exist; an undercurrent of negative comments is not healthy. He would like to address any questions with facts, but has to know the questions. It is important to examine the role of the Graduate School, he said; while convinced that the University needs the Graduate School, that does not mean it has to be status quo. If things need to be done differently, that is fine.

One change he has heard criticisms about, a change recommended by the Johnson Committee, was to alter the admissions process. The admissions decision is being transferred to the programs; the Graduate School continues to process the paperwork and keep records. The responsibility of the Graduate School is to reach agreements with the 170 graduate programs about what their expectations and practices will be for admissions, and to then monitor outcomes rather than every piece of paper. There have been arguments over about 200 files a year, and perhaps 50 that are serious, out of 15,000 applications. That is a very small percentage, but it is important if it happens to be "a student you want to get in." People are unforgiving; they still hear about incidents from 20 years ago. Is there another way to handle the admissions process? After a lot of thought, it was agreed when Anne Petersen was dean that programs would be authorized to make admissions decisions--after the programs have submitted a detailed management plan identifying the criteria by which they will make decisions. The Graduate School only becomes involved if a program proposes to admit a student who falls below the line the program has established. Beyond that, the Graduate School will be monitoring the performance of students in the programs.

How is the program review process connected to the monitoring of the application of admissions criteria, asked one Committee member? What if one learns, five years later, that the quality of a program appears to be deteriorating while at the same time large numbers of students are being admitted? One might wonder why students would want to come to such a program, but there are stories of not-very-

strong programs that appear to recruit and admit students, some of questionable promise. How are these processes connected?

There are two parts to the process. One is the review process, to which the Graduate School is committed, that examines programs about every seven years; the third cycle of such reviews is just beginning. With the change in the admissions process, raw data about the student experience and the quality of students will be considered much more carefully than in the past. There is also an expectation that the Graduate School data office--which is receiving more emphasis--will be doing more internal tracking, which is another recommendation of the Johnson Committee. The Graduate School must monitor programs on a continuing program, not just wait for the review every seven to ten years. The question is whether the Graduate School will be able to identify meaningful criteria to evaluate how well students are doing in a program. One measure might be the grade point average; another might be attrition (which they have NOT monitored but which is essential).

One Committee member said it is not clear that a graduate school is needed; some places do not have them. Part of the problem may be that most people do not know what the Graduate School does; the idea of focusing on its mission is a good one. Is its mission to monitor? Would that function be better fulfilled by the provosts? The mix between the Vice President for Research and the Dean of the Graduate School is also confusing. The University NEEDS a strong vice president for research; combining it with the Graduate School may be a diversion.

As have all academic and support units, Dr. Brenner said, the Graduate School has been through the planning process. They took it seriously, and spent a lot of time on developing the planning document. It identifies activities that clearly belong in the Graduate School, activities that are clearly research-related, and a number that are complementary. There is synergy in having the programs working together. The document will be shared with the Committee, he said, and SCEP may wish to consider it further.

There were discussions with the Policy and Review Councils as the planning document was developed; it has not been shared with the deans, but it will be. The idea is that collegiate and Graduate School activities should complement each other. Many graduate programs cut across departments, but not all; one's perspective on the Graduate School may vary on that basis. In some colleges, where there is considerable overlap between departments and graduate programs, faculty look at the Graduate School differently from those who are in programs that bridge a number of departments.

Seeking to ensure quality is only part of what the Graduate School does. It is involved in recruiting outstanding students and creating a supportive environment for them; serving as one voice for activities, such as in tuition remission and benefits for graduate students; provision of a teaching opportunity program for graduate students, and other such services. These should be institutional rather than collegiate programs. Fellowship money moves around, following quality, and does not stay in any particular college. The Graduate School provides funds for quality programs, and having this funding provided centrally makes the University more mobile and responsive.

The fact that graduate programs overlap various units is not persuasive, it was said; so do undergraduate programs. That in itself does not justify a separate administrative arm to coordinate them; they can be coordinated within existing structures.

One argument that came up, said one Committee member, is that the Graduate School is one activity that is purely faculty. It is the faculty deciding what the faculty is going to do with respect to research and graduate education, and is outside of the normal lines of responsibility and reporting. It is free and flexible, within the complicated University bureaucracy, to pursue--with support from central sources--the things that a research university has to do. This adds force to the notion that if the Graduate School were not organizing these activities, the University would lose one of its main sources of faculty energy and facilitating faculty initiative.

One Committee member said it was good to hear of Graduate School attention to institutional tasks, such as TA programs (which are now in Human Resources). It may be that reshuffling some of these programs into the Graduate School, where they could support subject matter activities differently, would be a good idea. This needs to be clarified, because it is a new vision of a graduate school. There are a number of such activities, Dr. Brenner said, which are identified in their planning document. He added that he was excited about the Graduate School planning document; they worked long hours on it, and it represents the first time in his experience that they had thought as a group about the Graduate School's functions.

One Committee member expressed support for the Graduate School but related that a concern, among some faculty, that more responsibilities without resources will be placed on the faculty as functions are transferred from the Graduate School to the colleges. Dr. Brenner observed that in some instances, the change in processes has actually reduced the amount of work. In admissions, the Graduate School still assembles the paperwork; the departments are only asked to make decisions, and the Graduate School sends out the letter. They are also providing data management support for departments that should make life easier for directors of graduate studies. They are consciously avoiding making work for the DGSs, and are also providing training for them and their staff.

Not all DGSs have staff, observed one Committee member. Another pointed out that support for graduate education varies a great deal among colleges and departments.

The cross-disciplinary activities of the University are one of its strengths, said one Committee member. Will the move toward Responsibility Centered Management be an impediment to cross-disciplinary work? It all depends on how it is implemented, Dr. Brenner replied. This is an instance where the Graduate School will argue for putting in place a system that will preserve interdisciplinary activities. It is not obvious today how this will happen.

Asked about the principal functions of the Graduate School, Dr. Brenner said the first responsibility is to help recruit and retain high quality graduate students for high quality graduate programs, and to promote an environment where the students can move through in timely manner, earning degrees that will be worthwhile in the competitive marketplace. It may not be obvious to undergraduates and others that degrees are awarded by faculty, who in general live in home departments; for the most parts, undergraduate degree programs are also lodged within departments. When it comes to graduate programs, faculty take off their department hat and put on their graduate faculty hat; there may be faculty all around the campus involved in the graduate program in any field. That some are outside the college of the department, in the minds of some, requires the Graduate School to keep track of all this; others believe it could be done in other ways. Some faculty, moreover, are not members of the graduate

faculty in their own program.

Another function of the Graduate School is to keep track of the student experience, in part because graduate students are often employees as well as students, said another Committee member. There is support among graduate students, for example, for moving the graduate assistant office from Human Resources to the Graduate School. The Council of Graduate Students believes the Graduate School has an important role in defining the relationship between education and employment; a task force working on the issues has called for significant central involvement in them, including monitoring the marketability of graduate students and that programs can place their students once they have graduated.

The Graduate School is very concerned about the experience and environment of students, Dr. Brenner said. It played a role, in the last year, in the FICA issues, as well as in the tuition remission decisions in the past. There are pluses and minuses to the positions taken, but they placed the University in a very competitive position in recruiting outstanding graduate students. It played a major role in the development of health care for graduate students; it is beginning to take action in mentoring and in improving the environment for students of color.

There is a distinction between the graduate school and research functions, Dr. Brenner agreed. With respect to Duluth, it was said, the functions of the Graduate School are very important, in part because of the linkages with other people in graduate programs and because of the quality control it exercises. There would be a very adverse impact were the Graduate School functions devolved to the colleges.

Professor Adams thanked Dr. Brenner for joining the meeting, and adjourned it at 2:00.

-- Gary Engstrand

University of Minnesota