

Minutes*

**Senate Consultative Committee
Thursday, January 9, 1996
12:30 - 3:00
Room 238 Morrill Hall**

- Present: Virginia Gray (chair), Victor Bloomfield, Susan Giovengo, Russell Hobbie, Stephanie Kjonaas, Laura Coffin Koch, Amy Mertl, Don Ness, Jarad Niemi, Jeannine Pluhar, Rob Vanasek, Mary Jane Sommerville, Matthew Tirrell
- Absent: Carl Adams, Jesse Berglund, Carole Bland, Gary Davis, Sara Evans, Bret Hoerner, Michael Korth, Fred Morrison, Harvey Peterson, Michael Steffes, Craig Swan
- Guests: Vice Provost Louise Mirrer, Provost W. Phillips Shively (Arts, Sciences, and Engineering)
- Others: Maureen Smith (University Relations)

[In these minutes: additional improvements to undergraduate education and funding therefore; Senate voting requirements; other business]

1. Undergraduate Initiative II

Professor Gray convened the meeting at 3:15 and welcomed Vice Provost Louise Mirrer to discuss the Undergraduate Initiative II.

Dr. Mirrer began by noting that this proposal followed on the heels of the Undergraduate Initiative phase I, developed in 1990, that has funneled about \$10 million into undergraduate education in the last several years. Phase II targets several specific areas that require additional development as well as to shore up the research endeavor by providing funding for additional teaching assistants and additional faculty lines so that the distribution of courses among faculty can be more balanced. This means that new faculty lines would not be dedicated to undergraduate teaching, but it would allow departments that are short-staffed, and otherwise unable to offer undergraduate teaching, to do so.

Dr. Mirrer then highlighted elements of the proposal. One area needing additional investment is writing instruction. The liberal education requirements adopted several years ago included a writing-intensive requirement; that element of the requirements has never been implemented. This proposal would include implementing it. At the same time, the concept is to improve writing at all levels, and do it right. The initiative calls for investment in assessment of student abilities and performance, a holistic assessment that would depend on portfolios and works that students would have completed throughout their careers at the University. It also calls for investment in TAs--disciplinary TAs, not people dedicated to writing schools--who would come from departments across the campus and would be assigned to

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enhance courses in the disciplines that would be designated as writing-intensive. These are expensive, and the investment would be significant.

The most radical proposal in the initiative is a new requirement labelled "expanding worlds." While local employers rate the University very high in terms of undergraduate skill levels when they graduate and enter the workforce, there has been a resounding complaint that these undergraduates do not have enough experience with diverse populations or environments. This requirement would call on all undergraduate students to participate in study abroad, an academic internship, community service, undergraduate research, or a special academic project. Most Twin Cities undergraduates do now participate in one of these activities, but are not required to do so. There would be special funds available for students to study abroad, because that is expensive and often difficult to arrange, but it is a valuable part of an undergraduate experience.

The funds would also be used to double the size of the current undergraduate research opportunities program (UROP) and to invest enough in service learning experiences and enough additional faculty lines to make it possible for faculty to work with the community in setting up the experiences.

A seminar for new students was also a requirement that has never been implemented. The freshman seminars are envisaged as a smorgasbord; some would focus on academic and disciplinary areas while others would be more akin to orientation/developmental seminars.

There is also a call for a technical literacy requirement for all students in the Minnesota Transfer Curriculum; the University has not implemented one. This requirement would have to be fleshed out before being presented to the appropriate committees.

There are several other elements to the proposal as well.

The Undergraduate Initiative Phase II called for an investment of \$10 million. The current budget discussions with the Governor and legislature suggests that there will be money forthcoming for investment in at least a portion of the initiatives.

Mr. Ness noted that the proposal is for the Twin Cities campus, and that coordinate campus requests would be added. How would distribution of funding for the campuses be determined, and what programs would be implemented on the other campuses? Dr. Mirrer said she understood the coordinate campuses to be submitting their own proposals, with budget requirements; her office has been in touch with them. Distribution of funds will depend in part on the plans developed, but she has not yet seen them.

Professor Bloomfield inquired whether SCEP had seen the proposal; Dr. Mirrer said it has, and additional opportunities have been incorporated in the "expanding worlds" requirement as a result of meetings with SCEP and other committees.

The writing intensive instruction is key, Professor Bloomfield said, and has been difficult to figure out how to do; is she optimistic that it will be accomplished, he inquired? Dr. Mirrer said she was; it is likely they will try pilot programs of the proposal even before the funding is obtained. They hope to be able to deliver by 1998 what is promised.

Professor Hobbie recalled Dr. Mirrer's reference to a portfolio; would it be a portfolio for assessment at the end of the freshman year, rather than for graduation? It would be the former, Dr. Mirrer said; the statistical difference between students are assessed on the basis of a high school portfolio and those assessed on the basis of a combination of grades and ACT or SAT is not large, and not sufficiently large to warrant large investment in portfolios at that stage.

Professor Hobbie repeated his concern about making the "expanding worlds" requirement a REQUIREMENT, especially if the University is going to try to guarantee graduation in four years. This will simply add one more hurdle that may be difficult to satisfy for some students. He said he would be enthusiastic about it if it were to be an elective, but is hesitant about it as a requirement.

Dr. Mirrer said she understood the reservation. Making it a requirement was a tactical decision, and one based on what some believe is very sound pedagogy. It will enhance the attractiveness of University graduates to have completed one of the requirements proposed. They have expanded the opportunities to fulfill the requirement so that for most students, it should not add to what they would otherwise do. In terms of good faith efforts to do what the state believes the University should be doing, this is a good idea.

With the various ways to satisfy it, one could even stay in residence and do a research project in lieu of a regular course, Professor Bloomfield pointed out. That would help a student's education, and if it substituted for classroom credit, it should not be a hurdle to graduation.

It should also fulfill other requirements, Dr. Mirrer said. The question of faculty time came up when this subject was last discussed with the Committee, she recalled; the Provost's office is absolutely committed to NOT phasing in this requirement unless sufficient resources are in place. They are reasonably confident that faculty lines WILL be added, so the extra work can be absorbed.

The Committee has not talked about the four-year graduation guarantee, Professor Gray noted. What are the resource implications of it, she asked? Dr. Mirrer said they are not major, and have mainly to do with course access. Those problems are close to being solved.

At this point Provost Shively joined the meeting; he agreed with Dr. Mirrer. What he likes about the four-year guarantee is that external constituencies see it as a reassurance, and it helps the University in recruitment of students, and with legislative support. Even more attractive is that the guarantee makes the University face up more seriously to the problem of course access than it has in the past. Since students are receiving a guarantee, it means the University had to look at course access--and it wasn't doing as well as he had thought, Dr. Shively said. What Dr. Hopkins put in place had moved the University 90% of the way to where it needed to be, but the last 10% was sort of forgotten.

Where the University might lose a little money would be if it fails on the guarantee and has to pay off, but Dr. Shively said he expected that to be a very small amount; it will not happen very much.

Professor Hobbie raised again the issue of the "expanding worlds" requirement, saying he supported it as an elective but said it would be onerous if it were a requirement. So many programs are started on a shoestring, and then never adequately funded, that he is not reassured by an underlined

sentence that says the program would be phased in only as necessary support infrastructure is put in place. He thinks of the engineering students, who must do a lot of double-dipping to meet current liberal education requirements. This would add another requirement. IT graduates slightly over 800 students per year, and awards about 40 UROPs per year, so it is a long way from meeting the requirement.

IT also has a fair number of coops, Provost Shively pointed out, and those should also be able to satisfy the requirement. They are not in all the majors, Professor Hobbie responded. Dean Davis is satisfied with the requirement as it is now structured, Dr. Shively reported, and believes that IT might move from perceiving UROP as something special for a few students to viewing it as something a lot of students will do. Professor Tirrell noted that the activity not fall formally under UROP, but would be the equivalent.

In terms of phasing in, Dr. Shively said all he could do was provide a personal guarantee; he would be the one implementing these proposals, and "I will not implement any of the things in the Undergraduate Initiative unless the necessary resources are in place for them." These are good things, and what has been done so far has made the campus a better place for students (registration procedures, housing, making sure students did not have to stay around an extra year). These proposals, most of them in the original liberal education task force report adopted by the Twin Cities Campus Assembly, will make the University a place where students will work with faculty in ways that they should at a fine university--small freshman seminars, working with faculty through the "expanding worlds" program, integrated teaching and writing. This is great, but will require heavy involvement of faculty and TAs who are ALREADY heavily involved, and will require additional resources. "I just won't do it," he assured the Committee.

What is the relation of IMG to these proposals, Professor Gray asked? To take the "expanding world" requirement for example, one cannot have a lot of students in an internship course. The incentive will be for departments to offer instruction in classes of 300 and not to offer internships or small seminars. How will those two things mesh?

The other part of IMG financing is the distribution of the state subsidy; that is why the University is asking for state funds to implement the Undergraduate Initiative II. Dr. Shively said he envisions staffing the freshman seminars by asking colleges to offer a certain number, in return for which he will provide additional faculty lines (with recurring funds) to make it possible. This applies the state subsidy to a University priority which would not pay for itself by generating revenue. This is the same as supporting a small foreign language program or whatever else the state subsidy might be used for.

Professor Bloomfield said he wanted to follow up on the point. Arts, Sciences, and Engineering colleges have been told to expect to cut 2.5% from their budgets each year for the next five years. Colleges will have to scramble to keep even, and probably will not be able to do so. How realistic will it be, under that circumstance, to bring in new positions so people can do supervised research, etc.?

It will be feasible, Dr. Shively said. The 2.5% each year from the colleges will likely be needed for reallocation, or if not, it can be used for investment in Arts, Sciences, and Engineering. If the money must be given up because of cuts, and the faculty is shrinking drastically, it is conceivable that the shrinkage could be added back, so there would be the same size faculty but with a new set of obligations. That is worrisome. In all of the cuts, last year he did not accept shrinkage of faculty or TA lines in the

Arts, Sciences, and Engineering colleges, and he will try to maintain that position in the future.

There is a lot of faculty support developing for improvement of what is increasingly a shabby infrastructure, Professor Bloomfield said, and to slightly shrink the faculty while improving the working conditions for those who remain. Students would be taught in better classrooms and in labs with more advanced equipment, and so on. If this group of faculty--representing a broad spectrum--were to vote on whether to add more faculty to do this extra teaching, or to spruce up the classrooms and labs and network wiring and so on, it would vote for the latter. How does he feel about that?

Dr. Shively said that both items are being sought in the biennial request. This proposal is NOT just to hire more faculty and TAs to do more teaching; it is to make the University a much better place for undergraduates, a place that is offering the fine university education people want. It is not only doing well for students as well as for the entire research enterprise by bolstering the faculty to do it, it also builds the political and financial support for the University that it needs. The first thing that people think of when they look at the University is that it teaches the children of the state. There are all kinds of good reasons for doing this, and it is not an either/or proposition. The state understands both needs, and the University can do both. Dr. Shively said he did not accept that as the trade-off.

There are other things he would change before doing away with this proposal, Dr. Shively said, rather than facilities and infrastructure. Professor Bloomfield said he was impressed with the optimism.

Dr. Mirrer responded to a question on TAs by explaining the program to help make TAs better teachers. The structure already exists; the intent is to keep it going. This is different from evaluation, in that it tries to make people better teachers from the beginning. It is a more thorough and deep evaluation than one gets from student evaluations in classes, Dr. Shively added. There is also a lot of TA training before people step into the classroom, Professor Gray observed. The focus is not just on evaluation.

Professor Gray thanked Drs. Mirrer and Shively for joining the meeting.

2. A Virtual Senate

Professor Gray turned to Professor Bloomfield for explanation of a proposal to change voting in the Senate. Professor Bloomfield distributed copies of a document prepared by Ms. Kvanbeck about mail balloting and an email message on rationale. He noted that Professor Koch has been frustrated in her efforts to get a sufficient vote on a campus-wide curriculum committee; it has been frustrating because as a by-law change, it requires a majority vote of the members of the Assembly. After initial discussions, the vote has been lopsidedly in favor, but there have never been enough voters present to achieve the required majority.

Essentially, whenever there is an issue that requires a bylaw change, a majority of the members of the Senate must vote in favor of it. Because of poor attendance, that is usually not possible, so sometimes important issues are stalled.

His initial idea was a vote by mail ballot, which was translated into an email ballot, and thence to a virtual Senate. That was not the intent; the intent was to identify a way to get enough votes cast to come to a decision. Ms. Kvanbeck looked more carefully at the constitution and bylaws, and obtained

information from other Big Ten universities; there are two basic proposals that come out of that inquiry. One is that mail ballots are generally considered not to be a good idea, and are not usually used on important issues, because voting should be informed by debate. Most institutions, however, have a different voting requirement: two-thirds of Senators in attendance, not an absolute majority of the membership of the Senate.

His proposal, to be taken to the Senate, is that the constitution be changed, because it sets the rules for changing the bylaws, to require a two-thirds vote of those present and voting. There would always be a floor vote.

There are two refinements. These are for changes to the bylaws, which are less important than the constitution. Constitutional changes also require a two-thirds vote; what is different is that they must also be approved by the Board of Regents. That has been left in place, so bylaws have a less stringent standard.

The tricky part is how to get the constitutional change voted on? It has to come to the Senate, and must have either a two-thirds vote at one meeting or a majority at two meetings. The attendance does not permit those numbers to be achieved.

Ms. Kvanbeck reported on attendance over the last several years. Typically, over two-thirds of faculty attend all meetings; the range for student attendance is from 30% to 50%, and that is based on seats filled, not positions available. Combined attendance equalled roughly 70%. It is necessary to get students at meetings to have action taken. She noted that Robert's Rules discourages requirement of absolute majorities for large bodies (as the Senate now requires), and recommends majorities of those present and voting.

It was voted unanimously that the Committee would consider this proposal and decide if it wished to bring it to the Senate. A change will be drafted and presented at the next meeting.

Asked how to get students to attend, one Committee member pointed out that IT students have academic commitments on Thursdays that they cannot avoid. Another problem is that students are intimidated at Senate meetings, so after the first meeting, they go to the Student Senate meeting and then, because they are frustrated by University Senate meetings, they do not attend. What can be done to improve that is not clear.

3. Appeal for Reinstatement of Senate Membership

Professor Gray next read a letter from a faculty member of the Senate who had lost his seat because of absences, who explained why, and who appealed for reinstatement. Membership forfeited may be appealed to this Committee.

Ms. Kvanbeck reported that every Senator who misses a meeting receives a letter with a reminder of the rule, so this individual would have received two such letters (faculty seats are forfeited after three missed meetings without excuse and without an alternate). In the college this faculty member is in, any faculty member eligible to vote for a Senator may serve as a substitute.

If the individual is not reinstated, the Senate office contacts the Dean's office; they have the option of selecting the next highest vote-getter in the last election or holding a special election. Typically colleges use the former alternative.

In the case of the change in voting requirements, Professor Bloomfield inquired, what is the basis for counting? It is the number of positions filled, Ms. Kvanbeck affirmed.

After brief additional discussion, the Committee voted 6-5 to deny reinstatement. Professor Gray asked that Ms. Kvanbeck draft a letter to be sent.

4. Other Business

Professor Gray reported that she has received letters about Incentives for Managed Growth, one from Professor Koch, on behalf of the Senate Committee on Educational Policy. Ms. Sommerville has also raised issues of concern to the Committee.

BUSINESS AND RULES One item is the membership of the Business and Rules Committee. Ms. Kvanbeck explained the membership (from SCC, three faculty and one student; she serves as staff). It is a subcommittee of both FCC and SCC and is charged to set the agenda of the Faculty Senate and the University Senate meetings, with the proviso that controversial items should be reviewed by SCC or FCC, as appropriate, before being placed on the agenda. The faculty members of Business and Rules set the Faculty Senate agenda; there is no reason for the students to bring Student Senate agendas to Business and Rules. It takes items from Senate committees (and does not second-guess them), primarily; it does not make up agenda items, and anyone on Business and Rules, or on SCC, can insist on review of an agenda item. Professor Gray explained the background for designation of such a committee, and that it is intended to save time for FCC and SCC.

One suggestion was that all items for the Senate docket should be reviewed by SCC, but the Committee did not take up the suggestion.

It was voted that for the University Senate portion of Business and Rules Committee meetings to set the agenda, there should be two students rather than one.

INCENTIVES FOR MANAGED GROWTH Professor Koch next reviewed the letter from the Committee on Educational Policy on IMG, a subject that has been of concern to SCEP for a long time. The presentation by Associate Vice President Kvavik only reinforced the concerns, rather than allaying them, and SCEP's reaction was to drop the initiative altogether. The letter suggests that if it is not dropped, it be carefully monitored by appropriate academic and governance committees.

Among the concerns are: that colleges will seek to increase their enrollment simply to earn more revenues, even if they lack the appropriate classes and support services; the curriculum will be harmed because the goal will be to make money, not offer quality; there is now much cross-collegiate and cross-provostal work, and what will happen to those programs and efforts under IMG is unknown; colleges could begin to admit unqualified students in order to keep tuition revenue up; the University is striving to work together and encourage units to cooperate, while this will create an environment of competition; small colleges will not have the resources they need, or may be at the mercy of provostal whims for state

funding subsidies they need; there are no safeguards in the IMG document for dealing with potential problems. SCEP would prefer that IMG not be implemented, but that if it is, there be consultation.

Professor Gray reported she had received a letter from an interdisciplinary center director expressing concerns about the effects of IMG and how it might be adapted to help interdisciplinary work.

Professor Gray inquired what next should occur (SCEP has asked that SCC consider bringing action to the Senate), and affirmed that the governance system is only consulting on IMG, not approving or disapproving it. It was agreed that Professor Koch would draft a resolution that this Committee would consider at its next meeting for presentation to the Senate; the resolution will call for monitoring and evaluation of IMG, and that it should be delayed until the 1998-99 budget.

SEXUAL ASSAULT POLICY Professor Gray said there is some confusion about the document. The Student Senate adopted a motion expressing support for the policy against sexual violence, but Student Development issued the sexual assault policy as a statement and does not intend to bring it to the Senate. What should SCC do? Tell Student Affairs they cannot have a policy without forwarding it to the University Senate?

It was suggested that Senate action is required for the policy to be adopted by the University. Ms. Kvanbeck said Student Development wished to issue it as a policy statement, but that she had said doing so might be inappropriate; it is unclear what the difference between a policy and policy statement is, and that a policy should come through the Senate.

Professor Gray agreed, and noted that federal law requires a campus sexual assault policy. The action by Student Development cannot satisfy the requirements of law, irrespective of the text of the document. There was discussion of how to proceed, and it was agreed that the Committees on Student Affairs and on Faculty Affairs should take up the policy and act on it expeditiously.

POLICY ON SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND CONSENSUAL RELATIONSHIPS This is currently before the Committee on Faculty Affairs, and will probably approve it and forwarding it for Senate consideration. It may be that this policy cannot be acted on by the Senate until the union election is held.

AGENDA FOR THE YEAR One concern of students has been the lack of SCC meetings; Professor Gray promised there would be more frequent meetings, as long as the tenure issue stays put to bed. Students would also like to know about issues coming up and to be informed.

Another suggestion was that meetings not take place on the same days that the Board of Regents meet; doing so makes it difficult for University officers to attend committee meetings. It was agreed that future schedules would be set in an attempt to avoid conflicts.

It would also be helpful to receive materials before the meetings.

With no additional business, Professor Gray adjourned the meeting at 4:30.

-- Gary Engstrand

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January 9, 1997

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