

Minutes*

**Senate Consultative Committee
Thursday, March 16, 2000
2:30 – 4:00
Room 238 Morrill Hall**

Present: Fred Morrison (chair), Sabeen Altaf, Susan Brorson, Mary Dempsey, Meggan Ellingboe, Roberta Humphreys, Jed Ipsen, Leonard Kuhl, Joseph Massey, Jeff Ratliff-Crain, Jason Reed, Tiffany Stedman,

Absent: Linda Brady, Les Drewes, Stephen Gudeman, David Hamilton, Mary Jo Kane, Reid LeBeau, Judith Martin, V. Rama Murthy, Kevin Poppel, Paula Rabinowitz, Chaz Rice, Aaron Street, Mark Uszenski

Guests: Professor Sara Evans, Professor James Carey

Others: Maureen Smith (Institutional Relations)

[In these minutes: new Senate committee on diversity; bookstores task force; Fees Committee; Twin Cities athletic committees]

1. Diversity Discussion Group

Professor Morrison convened the meeting at 2:40 and welcomed his predecessor, Professor Sara Evans, to the meeting to present a proposal concerning a new Senate committee. He noted that materials related to Professor Evans's proposal had been provided to the Committee.

Professor Evans reported that the effort began a couple of years ago to look at the possibility of a Senate committee charged with examining issues related to diversity. The initiative came from the Committee on Committees, which pointed out that the Senate had committees on women and on disabilities but nothing on racial or sexual identities. Professor Evans reviewed the membership of the Diversity Discussion Group (from the existing committees as well as from other interested groups) and noted that it had been charged to advise the Committee whether or not a change in the Senate structure was advisable.

The Discussion Group considered many possibilities and concluded there were two options: add a number of new committees for various unrepresented groups or change the Senate structure. The Senate already has two committees (Equality Opportunity for Women and Disabilities Issues) that have been performing very well; EEOW has a long track record while Disabilities Issues, after a period of dormancy, has revived in recent years and done a great deal of work.

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The Discussion Group does not bring an absolute consensus to its recommendation, but there is broad agreement that the Senate must have a place in which to voice concerns about diversity issues. The Discussion Group proposes that the Senate create a Committee on Access, Diversity, and Equity, which would replace the two existing committees. Because the two committees have been doing such a good job, however, the Senate must be sure that the good is not undone by this proposal. She urged that the Senate include in its proposal a requirement that the new committee be reviewed in two years in order to be certain it is attending the full range of issues with which it is charged.

Professor Evans reviewed the draft charge and the membership of the new committee and referred the Committee members to the letters from the chairs of the two existing committees. Professor Marti Hope Gonzales, on behalf of EEOW, endorsed the proposal; Professor James Carey, on behalf of the Disabilities Issues committee, opposed it. She said that Professor Gonzales's letter could be seen as an elaboration of what the Discussion Group proposed: there would probably be active subcommittees of the new committee, and task forces that cut across the groups on the committee. The Discussion Group, however, decided it should not prescribe how these groups and issues might be addressed.

The Disabilities Issues committee dissented from the proposal because its members fear their issues will be eclipsed in the new committee. That is a concern any group could voice, Professor Evans said, and she said she understood the concern. Unless the new committee were to have hundreds of members, however, not every group with an interest in the issues could be represented on the new committee, and the Senate office could not provide staff support to a multitude of new committees.

Professor Morrison next turned to Professor Carey. Professor Carey reported that a majority of the 14 members of the Disabilities Issues committee voted against the proposal from the Diversity Discussion Group but also that they were not vehemently opposed. They applauded the work of Professor Evans's group and do not disagree with the intent of the proposal; the majority of the Disabilities Issues committee is concerned that the passion people bring to issues will be diluted in addressing the larger issues of diversity and could result in a reduced commitment to issues of concern. There could be active subcommittees; the Disabilities Issues committee is concerned that that may be a step down in presence, lead to loss of staff support, and add a layer of organization in which to get issues heard. The coordinate campuses are similarly concerned with possible lack of passion people will bring to disabilities issues and the possible compromise of their activities because of the extra step to get to the Senate.

Professor Morrison inquired what kinds of issues have come before Disabilities Issues recently; Professor Carey said they included transportation and parking, building access, and curriculum.

Ms. Altaf asked if there would be overlap between the new committee and existing Senate committees. Professor Evans said there would be, but for example, Social Concerns tends to be more outward looking while the Access, Diversity, and Equity committee would look more

inwardly. She said she could also envision the new committee occasionally presenting items to the Committee on Faculty Affairs, or create joint task forces with other committees. The Senate staff also helps to coordinate the flow of work and avoid overlap and duplication.

Professor Massey inquired if Professors Evans and Carey had tried to work out a proposal that both could endorse. Professor Evans said they had wrestled with the issues for a long time and finally reached the point that they would agree to disagree, with great mutual respect and without rancor. She said she understood the anxiety about what might happen; FCC and the Senate must assume the burden of ensuring that the new committee deals with all of the issues. There is also an Office of Disabilities Services, because the University must follow the law; the Senate committee can point out sore spots. Professor Carey said they respected the leadership of Professor Evans, and that if the concerns they have voiced can be reconsidered in two years, and found to have been addressed, they will be supportive of the new committee.

Professor Ratliff-Crain said that he had come to the opposite conclusion: that with a larger Senate committee, the issues of concern could have a larger voice, especially if there are subcommittees to give voice to concerns of various groups. The access issue could be separated, he said, because it could hijack all the other issues the group will be charged to deal with.

Professor Evans agreed that a single committee has the potential to be more powerful than a balkanized system of multiple committees. Issues rise and fall, she noted, become more intensive and less, and the committee could decide to appoint subcommittees on specific issues. The idea of subcommittees and task forces should be taken for granted, she said; the Senate has a lot of experience with subcommittees that are very effective. They can be a group that works on an issue, to which the larger committee then lends its voice. With respect to the possibility of one issue overwhelming others, she said it will have to be clear to the committee that it has a duty to attend to all issues, and people who are appointed should understand the full range of issues--and that they must learn to speak for a multitude of interests, not just what interests them. In addition, she pointed out, there are a number of administrators who support creation of this committee people who will keep the full range of issues on the table.

It was agreed that this Committee would reconsider the precise number of members on the Access, Diversity, and Equity committee and that it would not prescribe the creation of particular subcommittees.

Mr. Reed reported that the students want to establish a diversity council but said he was uncertain how it would relate to this new Senate committee.

Professor Carey inquired if there would be a way for a subcommittee, if frustrated in getting an issue heard, could come directly to the Senate or this Committee. Professor Morrison said that in this University, anyone can get to the Consultative Committee. He agreed, however, that in the two-year review of the new committee, there should be a special emphasis on the degree to which all groups have been taken into account.

The Committee then voted unanimously in favor of the proposal from Professor Evans and the Diversity Discussion Group. Professor Morrison thanked Professors Carey and Evans for joining the meeting.

2. Bookstores Task Force

Professor Morrison reported that the idea for a bookstores task force started in the Faculty Consultative Committee and drew attention to the draft charge that FCC had approved. The faculty believed that this is an issue of concern to students as well, however, and he said that he will proceed to set up a task force with faculty and students. There was no objection from the Committee to him so doing.

3. Fees Committee

Professor Morrison next reported that the Fees Committee is not a Senate committee, it is an administrative committee, and that the Faculty Consultative Committee is asked to appoint three faculty members. They have been appointed but have not been allowed to fully participate in the work of the Fees Committee; this situation has been noted by the administration, which is allowing it to unfold. His inclination, he said, is also to allow the situation to unfold but also to remind the administration that if it asks the Committee to appoint faculty members to groups, they must be allowed to participate.

Ms. Altaf said the faculty on the Fees Committee are ex officio. Professor Morrison rejoined that that is NOT the way the document reads, and that if that is the interpretation of the chair of the Fees Committee, then it is a dispute that must be resolved by the Board of Regents. If they are only advisory members, it is unlike the faculty (or this Committee) will wish to participate. The Office of the Vice President for Student Development and Athletics, he reported in response to a question, has not requested faculty members for appointment to the Fees Committee over the last several years.

4. Athletic Committees

Professor Morrison reminded his faculty colleagues that faculty may nominate or request appointment to either of the two athletic committees that have been chartered by the Twin Cities Campus Assembly. He noted that it is a Faculty Assembly Steering Committee responsibility to appoint the faculty members to one of them (in consultation with the President) and that it is the President's responsibility to appoint the faculty to the other (in consultation with the Faculty Assembly Steering Committee). It is the responsibility of the Student Senate Consultative Committee to appoint the student members of the Athletic Advisory Committee, and those appointments should be ready by early April so that the committees can begin work before the end of the year.

Faculty nominations should be sent to Nicole Boldt at boldt002@tc.umn.edu.

Professor Morrison adjourned the meeting at 3:30.

-- Gary Engstrand

University of Minnesota