

Minutes*

Faculty Consultative Committee
Thursday, February 20, 2003
11:00 – 2:00
3-300X Carlson School

Present: Dan Feeney (chair), Gary Balas, Muriel Bebeau, Susan Brorson, Tom Clayton, Gary Davis, Arthur Erdman, John Fossum, Mary Jo Kane, Candace Kruttschnitt, Marvin Marshak, Judith Martin, Jeff Ratliff-Crain, Martin Sampson, Charles Speaks

Absent: Marti Hope Gonzales, Marc Jenkins, Fred Morrison

Guests: University Librarian Wendy Pradt Lougee; Executive Vice President and Provost Christine Maziar

Other: Kate Stuckert (Office of the Chief of Staff)

[In these minutes: (1) budget and legislative matters; (2) the libraries; (3) discussion with Executive Vice President Maziar]

1. Budget and Legislative Matters

Professor Feeney convened the meeting at 11:15 and announced that the entire discussion of the budget and legislative matters would stay within the room. He said he did not want to see budgetary "trial balloons" released that could lead to reactions, either internal or political. He said the President has committed to being completely consultative on the budget and will work through the Provost's Budget Advisory Task Force (on which Professors Feeney and Speaks sit). There has also been agreement with the President that this Committee and the Finance and Planning Committee will each designate 3-4 people to serve as an ad hoc group to consult intensively on the budget; the President has assured him, however, that the results of all budget deliberations will come back to the two committees via the Budget Advisory Task Force.

The Committee then heard from, and discussed at length, a report from Professor Marshak about the regent election process in the legislature.

The Committee then turned to a discussion of budget options for the University. After reviewing a few of the items on the list, it was agreed that each Committee member would identify his or her "top ten" options for dealing with the budget cut; those top ten lists will be compiled and taken up at the meeting next week.

2. The Libraries

* 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 represents the views of, nor are they binding on, the Senate or Assembly, the Administration, or the Board of Regents.

Professor Feeney now welcomed Wendy Lougee, the University Librarian, to the meeting to discuss the Libraries.

Ms. Lougee began by noting her background (a graduate degree from Minnesota and 20 years in the Libraries at the University of Michigan) and then turned to the role that the Libraries play at the University and how those roles are being stretched. Presidents have a metaphor for the Libraries--they are the vital organ or heart of the campus. Ms. Lougee said she would prefer the metaphor of fabric--they are interwoven in what people at a university do, not just an organization that builds collections.

The classic functions of the Libraries do include building collections. In that context, however, much is changing. University presses are cutting back. Inflation in the Libraries is outstripping anything else the University deals with. Ms. Lougee recalled that she was told when she arrived at Minnesota that the Libraries needed \$900,000 in new funds simply to keep up with inflation. While the rate of inflation has declined more recently, into single digits from double digits, the Libraries have been cutting journals significantly. The journal cuts have hit the disciplines pretty evenly, she said in response to a query.

Publishers are moving to electronic publishing. Many assume that saves money but it does not, Ms. Lougee told the Committee; electronic editions of journals cost 15-20% more than print editions. All of the journals are acquired by license (i.e., contract) from the publisher; the campus is the user. While departments and individuals have dropped their subscriptions and use the Libraries' electronic versions, the Libraries do not see the money that has been saved on campus. The electronic journals, however, are used far more than the print editions, so the return on the investment is high. Collecting functions of the Libraries is increasingly stretched as the Libraries' expertise is tapped to help develop electronic content within academic disciplines. In some instances, Libraries have played a key role in helping launch alternative publishing ventures.

The changes in use of content and the changing behavior of students and faculty in accessing information provide challenges to the Libraries. As a new initiative to help create a more coherent digital environment for the Libraries, they are launching a digital development lab to work on integrating access to electronic information resources and also to better integrate the content with other services within and outside of the Libraries. While there is more and more electronic use of the Libraries' resources, there has not been a significant decline in the use of library facilities. Recent surveys nationally suggest 70% of faculty and graduate students use online library daily or weekly; while approximately 40% use the library physically with that same frequency. The Libraries need to invest in infrastructure in order to make the electronic content usable and to better support these "remote" users;

In terms of the services the Libraries provide, Ms. Lougee observed that the Libraries must respond to behavioral changes with respect to information access (captured in the reliance on tools like Google) as well as curricular changes that prompt very different needs with respect to information and the inquiry process. The Libraries are doing a number of things in this regard.

- They help people on line with email reference services and interactive consultations to help guide users through their navigation of content online.
- They have a pilot program in the sciences to send librarians with subject expertise to work within academic departments to help support instructional and research needs.

-- While the Libraries have some 16 facilities, there is no library targeted at undergraduate users. Many undergraduates experience difficulty in understanding how to use the highly distributed library resources. The Libraries are trying to put together a more coherent program to support undergraduate needs, everything from making them more comfortable within library facilities to helping them develop information literacy skills.

-- The Libraries hope, in the future, to provide more customized support for research environments. At one university, the Libraries have developed information communities: they work with specific disciplines, draw in specialized information providers, and create an environment with content and tools appropriate for the community. They would like to get more involved in helping research communities with similar customized approaches.

The Libraries do not, in other words, just buy books for the shelves; they collect and manage information wherever it exists in the world and try to make the content useful to both general and specialized user communities, Ms. Lougee said.

Given the budget situation, will the changes in the Libraries affect the quality of education at the private colleges or MNSCU, Professor Sampson asked? Are the Libraries doing more for the high schools? Are these organizations dependent on the University Libraries? Minnesota is the largest lending library in the country (although it does not have the largest collection). The University's licenses for electronic content are often leveraged for broader access by other colleges; the Libraries provide significant services to users unaffiliated with the University. However, the University charges far less for borrowing privileges by unaffiliated individuals than most of its peers.

Professor Erdman commented that he is the chair of the publications society in his field. They have 21 journals and it is a struggle to keep them afloat in an era of on-line journals and the competition with commercial publishers like Elsevier. While some publishers pay authors or reviewers, it is more common that faculty provide services to publishers without compensation. It Society publishers find it hard to price their content reasonably and still y solvent and keep their independence.

Does she see in the future that disciplines will be charged for the journals they want the Libraries to subscribe to, Professor Balas asked? Ms. Lougee said she did not. In the early days of RCM, Michigan considered a practice that would attribute specific Library purchases to specific departments. It became clear, however, that it was very difficult to assign primary usage to a particular field since most content is used broadly by multiple disciplines. It was hard to develop any good metric or formula to attribute library costs by discipline.

With respect to an undergraduate library, Professor Marshak commented, the problem this campus has is that it goes dead at 4:30 or 5:00. There is nothing to bring the undergraduates back in the evening. He encouraged Ms. Lougee to think about an undergraduate library, perhaps in or near Coffman Union. The Libraries are actually very full at night, Ms. Lougee said; when they make cuts, they will have to look at the population of users at various hours during the evening in order to decide when to close. They need food in Walter, Professor Marshak said. He has heard complaints that there is no food in Walter or on the West Bank. Ms. Lougee commented that preliminary investigations suggested it would be costly to introduce "coffee" services in Libraries and that there would be no financial incentive to the Libraries to do so given institutional contracts for service.

Do they offer freshman seminars, Professor Speaks asked? They do offer a couple of them, Ms. Lougee said, along with hundreds of ad hoc classes, on-line seminars, and so on, but they could do more.

Professor Feeney said he was concerned about the journal contracts, the problems of access, and increasing journal prices; it sounds like the publishers have the Libraries by the throat. Ms. Lougee agreed that Libraries were often left little room for negotiation. Elsevier was cited as a publisher with problematic pricing practices. When the University proposed to drop about 100 electronic titles from its agreement, Elsevier countered with a price proposal that would reduce the University's contract by very little. The goal was to sustain a similar level of financial commitment (in this case, the Libraries' expenditures for Elsevier journals are approximately \$1.6 million, or roughly 17% of its collection budget). The Libraries are at a critical decision point in this particular negotiation process. It may be redundant to have two versions of the journals (print and electronic) and financial constraints may move the Libraries more swiftly to electronic only journals.

Must all universities do something together to be effective, Professor Marshak asked? In the past, the Libraries have been told they could not act in concert, but now at least one policy analyst has pointed out that under antitrust law the Libraries can petition to work together for the public good. The University will not sign more than a one-year contract with Elsevier. She said she would like to establish a mechanism to capture faculty voices on these issues of publisher pricing and restrictions to access.

Professor Balas asked Ms. Lougee if she had thought about canceling Elsevier and becoming the poster child for fighting the exorbitant prices the University is charged. She could make the case to the faculty and see if there is support for the idea. Ms. Lougee said she has thought about the idea but the faculty need the journals. There needs to be a middle ground on which to take a position; she would like to find a way that faculty can express their concerns. Someone has to make a statement, Professor Balas said; if the universities cannot collaborate, someone must draw the line.

When the contract expires, does the University have everything up to that point or is it all gone, Professor Feeney asked? In this respect Elsevier has favorable practices, Ms. Lougee said; the University owns the content it licenses from Elsevier and could choose to support the content locally if it suspended its license. With some publishers, the University only leases access. What about the CIC, Professor Feeney asked? There are consortial licenses and benefits, Ms. Lougee said, but it is hard to make consortial agreements because the institutions have different needs.

Some of the licenses are for the Twin Cities and some are for the system, Professor Ratliff-Crain said; they run into barriers at Morris. In the case of electronic subscriptions, the Libraries start with proposing a license for all of the campuses, Ms. Lougee said. Some contracts are based on the number of employees, some are based on the number of physical sites. If the University cannot absorb the price for the system, it faces restrictions. She said she was not sure that the Twin Cities Libraries could or should absorb all the costs for the coordinate campus Libraries.

When the Libraries cut journals, what criteria do they use, Professor Feeney asked? Subject-librarians work with the disciplines and keep track of data on use, price, and impact (e.g., frequency of citation) Ms. Lougee said; the cost per use is also in the mix. Professor Clayton lamented the demise of Books in Print, something that was a major resource for many faculty. Ms. Lougee said the Libraries saved significant funds by not subscribing to it; a similar title was already under license by the campus and that access was more cost-effective.

Professor Speaks said that this Committee, the Finance and Planning Committee, and the Budget Advisory Task Force must keep the Libraries in mind for re-investment as budgets are cut. Asked what the Libraries needed to run a respectable operation, Ms. Lougee told the Finance and Planning Committee it needed \$4 – 6 million, Professor Speaks recalled--which led a member of the Finance and Planning Committee to comment that that amount was interesting in light of the subsidy to athletics. The Libraries are essential to research and are where the money should go, Professor Balas declared. Ms. Lougee said she has been told that in the past the Libraries received a percentage of ICR funds but that now they receive a flat amount. It may be that some of the ICR funds going to the colleges should go to the Libraries, Professor Balas suggested. Some institutions have tried information technology fees, part of which went to the Libraries; at Penn State, the IT fee provides \$2.5 million per year to the Libraries. What fee would be required if the University were to go that route, Professor Speaks asked? Ms. Lougee said she did not know; she said she is gathering information on what other institutions are doing.

Professor Feeney suggested that she might want to use the group on campus that does surveys in order to get a sense of what the faculty want in the Libraries. If more faculty knew about the Elsevier blackmail, Professor Balas said, there could be a campaign similar to the one being waged against war in Iraq. Faculty are often their own worst enemy, Professor Feeney observed; they require publishing in certain journals and shoot themselves in the foot in the process. It is difficult to sustain the level of umbrage needed, Ms. Lougee agreed.

Professor Feeney thanked Ms. Lougee for joining the Committee.

3. Discussion with Executive Vice President Maziar

The Committee returned to closed session and continued the discussion of the budget, legislative politics, and regental selection.

Dr. Maziar commented that the faculty should feel free to explain the impact of budget cuts on teaching, research, and service, as well as the lost opportunities, as they see them. She noted that the Governor's recommendation takes the University to the funding level it had in 1998, or 1997 if adjusted for inflation. One could look at these numbers and observe that, if the tuition were to increase 15% each of the next two year, undergraduate tuition would have increased 80% since 1998. Much of the improvement of the University over the past five years would have been shifted from state support to students. However, it is also important to note that in many places and in many ways the University is performing its worker "smarter and more efficiently."

Professor Feeney adjourned the meeting at 2:00.

-- Gary Engstrand