

Minutes*

Faculty Consultative Committee
Thursday, February 24, 2005
1:15 – 2:45
238A Morrill Hall

- Present: Mary Jo Kane (chair pro tem), Jean Bauer, Charles Campbell, Carol Chomsky, Tom Clayton, Dan Feeney, Emily Hoover, Kathleen Krichbaum, Judith Martin, Jeff Ratliff-Crain, John Sullivan
- Absent: Gary Balas, Gary Davis, Morris Kleiner, Scott Lanyon, Marvin Marshak, Fred Morrison, Martin Sampson
- Guests: Vice President Kathryn Brown; Senior Vice President and Provost E. Thomas Sullivan; President Brian Rosenberg (Macalester College)
- Other: Kathryn Stuckert (Office of the Chief of Staff)

[In these minutes: (1) election of the chair and other business; (2) discussion with Provost Sullivan; (3) discussion with Macalester President Brian Rosenberg]

1. Election of the Chair and Other Business

Professor Kane convened the meeting at 1:15, explained that Professor Marshak was out of town, and called for the election of the chair for 2005-06. Professor Bauer was elected.

She reminded the Committee that Professor Marshak had forwarded an email requesting the names of two members of the Committee to serve on a stadium advisory group.

Professor Kane welcomed Vice President Brown to the meeting, who assured the Committee that the work of the Committee would be supported while its staff is on leave; they will not leave Senate committees high and dry.

Vice President Brown also reported that they have invited two members of the Finance and Planning Committee to serve on the administrative strategic planning task force: Professors Terry Roe and Kate VandenBosch. She said there had been no intent to disregard faculty consultation; they had conceived of the task force as an idea-generating group, but they were pleased to bring faculty into the process earlier.

Professor Kane thanked Vice President Brown for joining the meeting.

* 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.

2. Discussion with Senior Vice President and Provost E. Thomas Sullivan

The Committee and Provost Sullivan discussed a number of matters.

- (briefly) the situation with respect to the men's tennis team
- the status of searches (Dean of the Graduate School, Vice Provost for Faculty and Academic Affairs)
- strategic planning (there have been five town hall meetings, he has made 37 presentations, the task forces are meeting every week and will get reports to the President by March 21, and the Provost emphasized that no decisions have been made; the President will decide what recommendations to accept and will identify a process of consultation and communication)
- the two-year waiting period for the Faculty Retirement Plan and (briefly) tuition for dependents of University employees
- research and intellectual property issues
- reviews of deans (the process has been held in abeyance pending the outcome of a committee review of the process, and Vice President Carrier will bring the committee recommendations to this Committee and to the Twin Cities deans; once there has been a resolution, the reviews will resume)
- establishment of a committee to identify faculty to be nominated for national awards, co-chaired by Vice President Mulcahy and Professor Kenneth Keller (nominations for committee membership are welcome; there is no doubt about the quality of the faculty but the University has not been assertive enough about making nominations)
- establishment of a committee, chaired by Dean Rosenstone, to look at all aspects of students scholarships

Professor Chomsky inquired how much consultation there has been by the academic task force about what it will recommend beyond the membership of the task force itself. This is important, she said, because decisions will be made, sent to the President, and then implemented fairly quickly. Provost Sullivan said the task force is consulting beyond its own members.

With respect to reviews of deans, Professor Campbell pointed out that colleges have constitutions with provisions for reviews of the dean—but the reviews often ignore the constitutional provisions. He said he hoped any new process would be consistent with the college constitutions. Provost Sullivan reported that they have gathered all the pertinent constitutional provisions and are taking them into account.

Professor Kane thanked the Provost for joining the meeting.

3. Discussion with President Brian Rosenberg, Macalester College

Professor Kane welcomed President Rosenberg to the meeting and explained to him that the Committee had been inviting a number of visitors from outside the University to learn about perceptions that others hold.

President Rosenberg began by noting that his experience before coming to Minnesota was in Wisconsin and discussed the comparative relationships between the public and private institutions in the two states. He said he thought there was more balance in Minnesota and that the approximately 1/3-1/3-1/3 enrollment at the University, MNSCU, and the private colleges was important for all three sectors. The University and the private institutions have what he described as "an occasionally uneasy alliance."

Only 19% of Macalester's students are from Minnesota, President Rosenberg related. Because they have lower percentages of Minnesota students, Macalester, Carleton, and St. Olaf rely less on state funding for student aid than some of the other private institutions in the state.

In his view, the benefits of the University far outweigh any drawbacks. The University is an advantage to Macalester in recruiting faculty because they are able to work with colleagues at the University. At the same time, a strong private college system should be an advantage for the University as a feeder to its graduate programs—and the private colleges, in turn, hire from the University. There is thus a symbiotic relationship, he concluded.

As a resident of Minnesota, he is very concerned about the extent to which the University is underfunded and might be losing faculty. There must be a first-rate research university in the state if it is to remain economically competitive. He is originally from the East Coast, where public universities play a smaller role in higher education; in the Midwest, the large public research universities are a much more important element of higher education and it would be a huge mistake to let the University slip. Unfortunately, he said, he does not see the standing of the University as a high priority with the legislature.

The Committee and President Rosenberg discussed the relationships of the University and the private institutions with the MNSCU system. President Rosenberg observed that the private colleges can more easily work with the University than MNSCU and he does work with the University administration. It is important that the University have good undergraduate programs; it is important for the University to have Macalester and Carleton to bring strong students to the University—because many of their students stay in Minnesota and many end up at the University at the post-baccalaureate level. The differences and competition between the University and the private institutions are exacerbated by the decline in state funding for the University. One of the five points the private colleges are making to the legislature is the need for a strong University of Minnesota.

As the University receives fewer state funds and is forced to become more privatized, how will that affect Macalester, Professor Kane inquired. A lot of public universities are doing things that affect the private institutions, President Rosenberg said. When they develop a small liberal arts college inside the university, combined with all the other things a university has to offer, they lay down a competitive challenge to the private liberal arts colleges for good students. To the extent that the University must rely more on fund-raising directly affects Macalester and the private institutions because there is an intense competition for private dollars and the institutions often go to the same people and organizations.

What are the other four points the private institutions are making to the legislature, Professor Campbell asked? Among them are protect the state grant system, which is always important to them, President Rosenberg said, and preserve access to higher education for low-income/disadvantaged students.

Professor Martin observed that Macalester students are subsidized; the University may be cheaper, but the private institutions subsidize costs much more. President Rosenberg reported that only ¼ of Macalester students pay the full sticker price; they have a large number of disadvantaged students and the average discount is 45%. Their operating budget exclusive of financial aid is about \$67 million; their financial aid budget is about \$24 million. Almost all the aid they provide is need-based and they meet the full need of all students. There are cases, not rare, where Macalester is cheaper for the student than is the University.

Is it at the point that the University is competing with Macalester for the same students, Professor Martin asked? It is, President Rosenberg said, but less so now than perhaps 15 years ago. As the Macalester student body has become more national, the percentage of students from Minnesota has declined significantly. They face more competition from other liberal arts schools; the University, and Wisconsin at Madison, are less competitors than in the past. Students going to a place like the University or Madison often decide early, so they will not be going to a private institution. Once they have made the decision to consider a private liberal arts college, then there is little overlap/competition between Macalester and the University.

Professor Clayton inquired about the link between student aid and student quality. They do not distinguish them, President Rosenberg said. They have an extraordinarily strong student body (the mean SAT is 1400) and last year had 4500 applications for an entering class of 480. Even those students at the "bottom" of the entering class are very strong. Once a student has been admitted, Macalester meets the full need of the student irrespective of their academic qualifications.

Professor Sullivan asked President Rosenberg to identify what he sees as the three great strengths and three weaknesses of the University. How is it perceived by people who know about it? President Rosenberg said that those who know see the research function as critical. The University also gets good reports for providing a high-quality undergraduate education; it is seen as difficult to get into and the students who get in are very good. They have a lot of choices at the University (Twin Cities) and the campus is located in the heart of one of the most attractive metropolitan areas in the country, which is an enormous asset. For both the University and Macalester, that location sets them off from their peers.

As for weaknesses, money is tight and the University is under-funded. Managing any organization as large as the University is tough, and providing the experience undergraduates want is difficult when the institution is so large. The University should take seriously its identity as an urban institution at a time when such institutions are very popular. Columbia and Washington University in St. Louis are high-quality private universities that are booming, in part because of their location; the University should try to maximize the advantage of its location. If a student wants to work with disadvantaged populations, they exist in the Twin Cities; if a student wants an internship in business, there are a large number of Fortune 500 companies in the area. They at Macalester are looking at how it is different because it is in an urban setting.

Should the University get smaller, Professor Sullivan asked? President Rosenberg said that it is difficult for the University to do well when it is losing public funding unless it cuts programs—or keeps raising tuition at higher and higher rates. The demographic makeup of students at the Twin Cities campus and the private institutions are similar, President Rosenberg surmised; the mean household income of students at this campus is higher than the privates as a whole and probably about the same as for Macalester and Carleton. Both the Twin Cities campus and Macalester serve upper middle class families—which raises a public policy question. If the children of doctors and lawyers are attending the University, it is difficult to argue that they should not pay. He raised one issue about student aid: if the aid is not awarded on the basis of need, the argument for receiving state funds is weakened. Why not apply the same rationale to Macalester or Carleton (in terms of a student without need). The argument for public subsidies for no-need students is not as strong as that for needy students. He said he has not heard the University deal with this issue.

Professor Krichbaum inquired what President Rosenberg saw as the biggest problem at the University. It needs a clearer statement, at the undergraduate level, about what it is trying to accomplish and who it is serving, President Rosenberg said. As he reads the newspapers, it is confusing: sometimes the University wants to compete nationally for students, sometimes it wants to serve under-served populations. There is a case to be made that it can do both but it needs to be clear about it. If there is a shift in student aid from need-based to merit-based, in order to attract outstanding students, and then the University says it is serving need students, means the message is fuzzy. Professor Kane said that is part of the conundrum of being a major research university and a land-grant university—it is expected to do many things.

Professor Hoover inquired about the PSEO and College in the Schools programs and possible overlap between the two institutions. President Rosenberg said Macalester does much less of those than the University simply because of a lack of time, staff, and resources. One priority they have, however, is to improve the perception of Macalester in the Twin Cities, to make it more permeable. Right now it is sometimes seen as IN Minnesota but not OF Minnesota, as somewhat walled off. They are trying to change that perception, and a related priority is to diversify the student body. They have the highest percentage of students of color this year, but they do not do well in attracting students from the Twin Cities.

Professor Kane thanked President Rosenberg for joining the Committee; Committee members gave him a round of applause.

Professor Kane adjourned the meeting at 2:45.

-- Gary Engstrand

University of Minnesota