

Minutes\*

**Faculty Consultative Committee**  
**Thursday, May 21, 2009**  
**1:00 – 3:00**  
**238A Morrill Hall**

Present: Emily Hoover (chair), Gary Balas, Susan Berry, Nancy Carpenter, Carol Chomsky, Shawn Curley, Dan Dahlberg, Janet Fitzakerley, Marti Hope Gonzales, Michael Hancher, Kathryn Hanna, Caroline Hayes, Brian Isetts, Judith Martin, Michael Oakes, Nelson Rhodus, Cathrine Wambach, Becky Yust

Absent: William Durfee, Martin Sampson

Guests: Vice President Rusty Barceló (Equity and Diversity); Vice President Karen Himle, Ann Freeman (University Relations)

Other: Kathryn Stuckert (Office of the President)

[In these minutes: (1) discussion with Vice President Barcelo; (2) internal communication]

**1. Discussion with Vice President Barceló**

Professor Hoover convened the meeting at 1:20 and welcomed Vice President Barceló to discuss the issues she deals with in her office. One specific question that has arisen is about the recommendation of the Crouch committee that the equity and diversity functions in the Graduate School be moved to her office.

Dr. Barceló described the work that she did with the Graduate School when she was at the University from 1996-2001 and said that she and the dean worked collaboratively. As for the argument that there is a need for a separate diversity office in the Graduate School, what really matters is who has the expertise to lead. Her office is not the only one that can do it but she would not want to see the University lose ground—it would all depend on people and priorities. Her office could pick up the diversity responsibilities from the Graduate School if necessary.

Professor Chomsky inquired if there are particular issues with respect to graduate students. Regardless of the model, it is important there be a sense of community, of the community of scholars, Dr. Barceló said. Some may think graduate students do not need that, but in her conversations with them it always comes up. There are key components of diversity efforts that need to continue.

In terms of the Crouch committee report, she met with Dean Crouch and spoke to other committee members, Dr. Barceló reported in response to a question from Professor Balas; it was similar to this conversation about the capacity of her office to assume diversity responsibilities currently performed by the Graduate School.

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\* These minutes reflect discussion and debate at a meeting of a committee of the University of Minnesota Senate; none of the comments, conclusions, or actions reported in these minutes represents the views of, nor are they binding on, the Senate, the Administration, or the Board of Regents.

Dr. Barceló next noted she has now been at the University for three years (on her second appointment). When she came, the President asked her to develop a strategic plan, but since the University had just gone through the strategic-positioning process that included a task force on diversity that had met with hundreds of people, she decided to meet with individuals and review reports. She concluded she was not sure another strategic plan was necessary because a lot was happening around the University; what was needed was a strong vision statement. Her office has developed one, using the task force report and other resources, and is receiving a positive reaction; the question is how to implement it. The statement needed to be complex, not just about admitting and graduating students—what happens in between?

Dr. Barceló related that she met with community groups from across the state during her first year back at the University and found the results chilling because people did not see it as receptive to equity issues. Their perceptions, however, seem to be based on old information. She conducted a self-study of the offices reporting to her to enhance services to their constituencies and to be a better resource to the University and the broader community.

Dr. Barceló described a breakfast her office sponsored last November, at which point the vision statement was released. She said they had hoped about 150 people would attend, including alumni (because the University does not have a good record of connecting with alumni of color) and corporations. They had an overwhelming response, with over 500 in attendance, including from every college, and had seven corporate sponsors. This was her first attempt to raise external funds to support what her office does. The University's leadership was present and colleges highlighted excellence through exhibits. They raised funds to award 12 scholarships for leadership and activism in areas of diversity (in addition to academic excellence). A faculty committee selected the winners.

She has been meeting with each of the deans. It has been a pleasant surprise to learn what the faculty and colleges are doing, she said—a lot of good work. These meetings have generated great conversations. She has also met individually with the vice presidents to explore how they can provide leadership across the system in the area of equity and diversity.

Professor Louis Mendoza, associate vice provost in her office, is creating an academic research center. He is working with over 100 faculty and has developed a concept paper. They have also begun funding IDEA grants, small grants to support diversity activities, and hosted a series of equity-and-diversity workshops in response to what people have told them are the areas of greatest need (that focus, for example, on the search process, identity and social development for students of color, communicating diversity in electronic and print publications, and so on). She is also working with Vice Provost Carney to provide information during the orientation of new department chairs.

Professor Martin asked what the disconnect is between what the University has been doing in recent years (such as increasing success in getting minority students on campus) and the discussions she had with communities across the state. The graduation rate for diverse students is a concern, as it is for all students at the University, Dr. Barceló said. She looks at diversity on three levels: international, immigrant, and historically-under-represented populations. It is important to understand the distinction between them and to address them separately. The University cannot compete with the Historically Black Colleges and Universities but it can in the other areas.

Dr. Barceló said, in response to a question about the Northside Initiative, that she has not been deeply involved in it but it is her sense there remain a number of unanswered questions on the part of the community. They are working on a strategic plan which should be helpful.

Professor Hancher inquired if there has been progress in building connections with the Minneapolis and St. Paul public schools. There has been, Dr. Barceló said. They are working with the schools in a number of ways, including submitting joint grant proposals. Professor Davenport has been offering a workshop for years to students of color to prepare them to take the ACT. She noted that the rim of suburbs around Minneapolis and St. Paul are becoming more diverse and is concerned that the University is focused only on the central cities—and because she has system responsibilities, she also works with the coordinate campuses on interacting with their local communities.

Professor Oakes asked Dr. Barceló to talk about the other side of diversity, those who think the University does nothing but diversity. The facts don't bear that claim out, Dr. Barceló said; there are a lot of low-income students in the University's programs as well. The University prepares students to not only meet the needs of diverse groups but also prepares them for living in a more-diverse society. Does that resonate outstate, Professor Oakes asked? Dr. Barceló said she would like to believe it does. The major questions are whether diversity programs work and why the University needs an office such as hers. They are legitimate questions, and they need to continue to develop measures of accountability. The question of identity is important to everyone, and she tells students they are responsible for developing their academic skills but also all parts of their identity. The census suggests there will be a major shift in the U.S. population by 2015 or 2020, but if this is the first year that white high-school graduation rates will decline, and students of color drop out of high school at a 60-70% rate, who is going to pay tuition to come to the University? This is an economic issue within the context of diversity and equity.

What troubles her a lot, as she travels across the county, Dr. Barceló said, is that the diversity curriculum is marginalized. When campuses look at their curricula, they don't typically consider the research on a diverse curriculum and its effects on all students.

Professor Berry had two questions. She recalled an article about the difficulty of retaining mid-level women because of the inflexibility of tenure; she asked if Dr. Barceló had any thoughts on how her office might help address that problem. Second, the University has not been as successful in community-based research with communities of color as it has been in other areas; what role does Dr. Barceló's office play? Dr. Barceló said she has talked with Vice Provost Carney about how to be sure women are promoted to full professor, which will be critical for the University to have the leadership it needs. In terms of community-based research, the communities of color ask that the University not come back until there are researchers who look like them. That will take awhile, Dr. Barceló said. She hopes the faculty research group headed by Associate Vice Provost Mendoza will be engaged in this effort.

Professor Balas asked about the budget for and supporting the hiring of minority faculty, funding for women in the STEM disciplines, and metrics used in deciding what requests to support. Dr. Barceló said they have streamlined the decision-making process to respond to requests for support for minority faculty and have been successful. Most faculty who came through the Faculty Bridge Funding Program were tenured, so that has been successful; she said she can provide the Committee with a report. They do not have additional funds for hiring in the STEM disciplines but it is critical to explore the possibilities. Her office works cooperatively and collaboratively with the colleges, but they have spent all the money they have this year and do not want all the money to go to one college. They had \$1.5 million for

minority faculty support, which went to about nine faculty (the amounts vary with salary and start-up costs).

Professor Hayes inquired about her discussions with the deans. Dr. Barceló said that too often in the past, deans have been told they are not doing enough. It is more productive to build relationships and work with colleges where they are and talk about how diversity relates to the mission of the college.

Professor Hoover thanked Dr. Barceló for joining the meeting.

## **2. Internal Communication**

Professor Hoover welcomed Vice President Himle and Ms. Freeman to the meeting to talk about internal communication.

Vice President Himle said she was aware that Committee's interest in this topic dates to 2006, before she came to the University. Ms. Himle asked for the context so she was sure she knew what the Committee saw as the problem. "The right hand does not talk to the left hand," Professor Balas responded: senior administrators, deans, and department heads don't seem to hear the same messages. Ms. Himle commented that President Bruininks has shared the view that internal communications at the University could be improved. This was a priority expressed to her when she joined the University in 2007.

Culture, Ms. Himle commented, must yield, to some extent, to change. When she arrived at the University she started examining the culture. She observed that the institution's culture wasn't directly incorporated in change proposals from the strategic-positioning task forces. After she arrived, she brought Ms. Freeman into her office as Director of Internal Communication (and she did not add staff; the number of staff in her office is down).

Work on internal communication is never done, Ms. Himle reflected. It is important that people not only speak to each other, but also that they listen to each other. If one speaks, one can only say what one knows; if one listens, one can learn something new. Institutional communication can never satisfy everyone, but it can reach most.

Professor Martin commented that after thinking about this for a number of years, she has realized that the real challenge is not communication *per se*. Many people simply do not WANT to hear something from the president or dean: "unless it affects my life, don't tell me about it." That is very different from the corporate sector, Ms. Himle commented, where the leaders lead and everyone lines up behind them. The University does not work that way. Knowing that the appetite for information will vary over 24 hours, the University must at a minimum make sure that people cannot say it made no effort to tell them. There are certain things people need to hear about (e.g., a bomb scare), and for that kind of situation, Ms. Himle said, the system seems to work fairly well and gets people out of harm's way. The perception of something from Morrill Hall depends on the relationship of their work to Morrill Hall, Professor Martin said.

Professor Yust related an experience that shocked her. She heard a faculty member saying that "we are not hurting, we have not had any change at the University." The changes haven't affected her daily life, Professor Yust said, and they have all been incremental. She said she was glad to see the President's message about the budget. That is willful ignorance, Professor Martin commented.

In the corporate sector ears and antennae are attuned to institutional change because it happens so often, Ms. Himle said. For example, at least one Minnesota company is very good at downsizing because it has increased and decreased a lot. One would think that is true of most companies. She said she did not believe that is something the University wants to get "good" at.

Ms. Freeman said she has been on the job for about two years, looking at internal communication and how it relates to the culture of the University. This Committee raised the issue before she and Vice President Himle were in their positions; her office is exploring what is absent that is causing distress (which ranges from not being heard to how to do communication in a university with tenured faculty and staff who have various other kinds of appointments). She put together a group to think about this and they have come to the end of Phase 1, which has identified several infrastructure ideas related to technology and making internal communication effective. Phase 2 will start this summer, which will involve looking at the role of communication in culture change. She said she would like to have the Committee's view; they have thought about faculty and staff culture and recognize that faculty members have different needs. She said they would like to hear what works and what is not working and any suggestions the Committee may have.

Professor Gonzales commented that they are up against an identity problem in terms of faculty and staff. Faculty identity is tied up with their professional organizations. That is part of the problem: faculty members do not identify themselves as University employees in the same way that staff members do, and faculty do not see the need for as much internal communication as staff may, which is why faculty hit the "delete" key so often.

One good thing about being at a university is that interesting things happen every day and are publicized locally, Professor Hancher said. The events calendar is the only way to get information to the larger community, but it needs fine-tuning and more publicity. It has moved around from one administrative office to another and now rests in University Relations. It can be leveraged to make it clear what an interesting place the University is and it could be redesigned and made more useful. Every attempt they have made to get a complete registry of events has been met with silence, Ms. Himle observed. If they know an event is occurring, they will publicize it. It is also difficult to get access to the events calendar, Professor Hanna added. The problem with providing more access to create a master calendar, Professor Chomsky said, is that it then becomes more difficult to find out what is going on because there is so much there. There is a need for filters that distinguish between information people must have and information they are not asking for or looking for (similar to the Amazon.com information "people who liked this book also liked. . .").

Ms. Freeman inquired how faculty and staff use the University home page. She said they hoped to build a faculty and staff page that could become a easy-to-navigate resource for transactional needs and news and information with an internal focus.

Professor Martin asked Ms. Himle to comment on the internal communication problem she heard about two years ago compared to what she is still hearing about. Many have said internal communication is a problem, but that can be a proxy for something else. Many said the same thing during the strategic-positioning process. It may not be possible to solve the problem, given how distributed the University is and how each area has its own particular interests. Safety issues are critical and all must receive them, but she questioned whether it is possible to filter information in a way that people can get what they need to know while others know who to ask.

Professor Yust said that in terms of faculty, they should ask faculty what they need to know to be productive in their jobs. Professor Rhodus agreed and said the culture is one of trust. For any issue, the stakeholders (who must be identified) must have the opportunity to have meaningful input and then to know that they have been heard. Faculty members want to be provided what they need to know or they will ignore the information. Even when the ultimate outcome is not what the faculty have requested, at least they can rest assured and trust the *process*. If they have a venue to express views and someone listens, that communication will be more successful because people will know their views have been received and processed—as opposed to seem to be just hitting their heads against a door and seeing nothing happen. If faculty members participate, but then feel that they were bypassed and the outcome occurred without their input—and when faculty cannot see the process transparently, they lose interest and become apathetic, not only about providing input, but about even paying attention. The University must acknowledge their efforts. Communication channels may be in place and may be somewhat effective, but only as far as the culture permits.

Vice President Himle said that is a significant insight. It used to be that people were loyal to their employer, which was seen as good. Then consultants came along and said that if anyone was in the same job for five years, that was bad and they should move. One byproduct of this change is a lot of churning in every corporation, with no loyalty. People at the University, depending on who and where they are, have a relationship with the institution that does not exist elsewhere. Faculty have one kind of relationship, staff another, administrators another, and alumni yet another. Those are very different relationships. Those differences inform the difference between the faculty and staff web pages, for example. Those differences are also part of the question about internal communication. One must note that the President comes from the faculty. Many administrators are faculty, Professor Hancher pointed out. And they are perceived to have been abandoned by their faculty family, Ms. Himle commented, but most administrators want the option to go back to the faculty. When people who have the length and depth of relationships with the University as faculty leave to become administrators trying to lead, that is a lonely place to be. One of the unique attributes of this institution, however, is the length and depth of relationships people have with it.

Professor Wambach noted that in the last two years there has been an effort to phase out print communications. But some units are still producing print materials. She suggested Ms. Himle tell them to stop it because they are an annoyance and they irritate the faculty. Ms. Himle pointed out that she stopped the publication of "M" and no one seems to have noticed. They are doing research on what the alumni want. One member of the Minnesota Senate pointed to a box of publications she had received from the University and observed that they cost a lot of money.

Professor Wambach said she also disliked the University's main web page. It is slow and the menus on the bottom are hard to read. There is no link to sports. She said she believed it is worse than it was in the past. It could be difficult to find a president if the web page isn't in good order, she commented.

Professor Oakes said that communication is important, and all try to improve it, but so what? That is the human condition. She will not solve the problem, he told Ms. Himle, but does she know what incremental improvements can be achieved? The measure of success may simply be that the University community thinks that it is better than it was, Ms. Himle responded. But she agreed that there is no way to declare victory. Is it communication or happiness, Professor Oakes asked? It is the opportunity for people to be heard, even if they are not happy with the decision, Ms. Himle said. What are the

benchmarks if she compares the University with Michigan or North Carolina—or Merck, Professor Oakes asked? Ms. Freeman said they focus on the University, not on higher education, and they are making things up as they go along, drawing from all over.

What is happening with "Driven to Discover," Professor Martin asked? Most faculty members sort of liked the phrase. It was interesting to read the questions and answers and learn about colleagues' research. Ms. Himle said she cancelled the TV advertising because she believed that it risked the University's reputation with the legislature, the public, and employees. But Driven to Discover has not gone away, it is being reorganized in light of the economic situation—even though it was very successful with the business community, students, and the public. Tone and manner are important, she observed, and she wants to avoid the perception of wasteful spending.

Last fall there was a new publication from the diversity office that seemed over-the-top when the University was talking about cutting budgets, Professor Yust commented. There is frustration when some units are told they must cut publications but others are not. That should not happen in the future, Ms. Himle said. Who is the sheriff, Professor Martin asked? In part it is her, Ms. Himle said. But academic freedom applies to communications even if there is an institutional policy. She tells them about the policy and departments say it doesn't apply to them.

Professor Hoover commented that Professor Yust is a department head in the college that has the best web site on the campus.

Professor Yust reported that research on women's satisfaction at the University suggests that female associate and full professors are MORE stressed than probationary faculty. Are they using the Pulse survey to create benchmarks? They are, Ms. Freeman said, and trying to use what exists as well as adding questions so there are baseline data. Professor Yust said it is better to use the Pulse survey than other mechanisms. Ms. Himle said they have wondered about using spot surveys on occasion; the Pulse survey is only taken every two years and can miss a lot. But an occasional survey, of perhaps one or two questions, might help. She said she is hesitant to add more to the mix of communication, but would hate to miss the opportunity to obtain information they could act on.

Professor Hancher inquired about the relationship between Ms. Himle's office and the Alumni Association (it reports to her). He said he always reads the alumni magazine, which is very well done. Ms. Himle agreed. She said the one thing the alumni will read, and want in print, is reports on advances in science, technology, and teaching. It speaks to them where they are in life now, not when they were students. They have talked about it as a University magazine covering all parts of the University and sent to all alumni; they worry about the opportunity to engage the 450,000 alumni in the state in supporting the institution. The research indicates they want something in print only if it is very good. If it is very good, it should perhaps not be limited to the membership of the Alumni Association.

Professor Hoover thanked Vice President Himle and Ms. Freeman for joining the meeting, and adjourned it at 3:00.

-- Gary Engstrand