

Minutes*

**Senate Committee on Educational Policy
Wednesday, November 17, 2010
2:30 – 4:00
238A Morrill Hall**

- Present: Cathrine Wambach (chair pro tem), Joseph Kirchner, Cody Mikl, Kristen Nelson, Alon McCormick, Peh Ng, Jane Phillips, Henning Schroeder, Jessica Schroeder, Alfonso Sintjago, Donna Spannaus-Martin, Michael Wade
- Absent: Thomas Brothen, Barbara Brandt, Norman Chervany, Sean Finn, Robert McMaster, Peggy Root, Paul Siliciano, Elaine Tarone
- Guests: Carolyn Chalmers (Director, Office for Conflict Resolution), Professor Irene Duranczyk (Chair, Senate Committee on Equity, Access, and Diversity); Professor Nita Krevans (Chair, graduate education policy review committee)
- Other: Suzanne Bardouche (Office of the Vice Provost and Dean of Undergraduate Education); Tina Falkner (Academic Support Resources)

[In these minutes: (1) resolution on academic civility; (2) proposed policy on appointments as director of graduate studies]

1. Resolution on Academic Civility

Professor Wambach convened the meeting at 2:30 and reported that Professor Brothen was at the Faculty Consultative Committee interview of Dr. Kaler, the candidate for University president. The first agenda item is a resolution on academic incivility that comes from the Senate Committee on Social Concerns and the Senate Committee on Equity, Access, and Diversity (EAD); she turned to Professor Duranczyk, chair of EAD, to present the motion. The motion read as follows:

RESOLUTION ON

Supporting the Efforts of the Work Group Promoting Academic Civility

WHEREAS: Academic incivility is a serious concern on campuses across the country.

WHEREAS: Academic incivility can be defined as hostile, intimidating or offensive behaviors by faculty, staff, or students within the institution, to the extent that it interferes with the ability to work or study, and carries high costs to affected individuals and the institution.

WHEREAS: The Senate Committee on Equity, Access, and Diversity (EAD) supports the efforts of the Work Group Promoting Academic Civility.

* 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.

WHEREAS: The Work Group Promoting Academic Civility grew out of the Student Conflict Resolution Center's (SCRC) Graduate Student Experience Survey.

And WHEREAS: The implementation of the recommendations of the Workgroup Promoting Academic Civility provides information and direction on how to respond to academic incivility to graduate advisers and department chairs and addresses ways for graduate students to respond to or cope with incivility within the institution.

BE IT RESOLVED: That EAD requests:

- 1) Administrative support for the vision and strategies that have emerged from the Work Group and are posted on the SCRC website.
- 2) A comprehensive review of the research and surveys, e.g. the 2007 SCRC survey, "Pulse" survey, exit interviews, institutional Research, etc, to provide additional analysis of these data and possible direction for further efforts to create a culture of mutual responsibility and respect.
- 3) That departments be encouraged to adapt and utilize the template survey "Graduate Student Adviser Evaluation" (which currently exists on the SCRC website under "Strategies for Improving Advising and Mentoring of Graduate and Professional Students"). And that the information be used for the annual review of individual faculty, departments, and colleges.
- 4) That the Work Group be encouraged to conduct a new study to provide some comparisons with the 2007 data.

COMMENT:

We would encourage further efforts to disseminate the results of the Graduate Student Experience Survey and would like to see more support for the vision and recommendations of the Work Group. We would like to see more substantial changes to support a culture of respect for graduate students by addressing the University Faculty and Staff attitudes and behaviors in a systemic way.

Approved by the Equity Access & Diversity Committee, November 1, 2010

Irene Duranczyk, Chair
Equity Access & Diversity Committee

Approved by the Social Concerns Committee on October 25, 2010.

Timothy Sheldon, Chair
Social Concerns Committee

Professor Duranczyk reported that EAD had looked at the results of the academic civility survey conducted in 2007 and worked on developing a report last year. The initial survey and response focused on graduate students and what can be done to help them. Of the about 1800 graduate students responding to the survey, nearly 20% reported being harassed and the majority of these did not report harassment because they feared it would hurt their graduation possibilities. More information about the survey results and the academic civility initiative is at http://www.sos.umn.edu/staffaculty/academic_civility.php. After reviewing the data and talking to staff at the Student Conflict Resolution Center, EAD drafted this resolution asking for more administrative support for the vision and strategies of the academic civility initiative.

Professor Wambach recalled that the Committee heard reports on this issue within the last couple of years, so it has been briefed on it. Institutional Research has agreed to help the Council of Graduate Students in conducting its annual survey. The graduate-education groups are also working on this issue. What are the specific recommendations from EAD?

Professor Duranczyk said the specifics were found in the four recommendations on the resolution.

One point this Committee had remarked on, Professor Wambach said, is that having expectations about how faculty behave as advisors on the Student Conflict Resolution website means that not many will see those expectations. It is a strange site to house them, which is about conflict resolution rather than faculty development. Have they thought about putting them in other places? And what administrative actions are being requested?

Ms. Chalmers said that the leadership on this issue came from the Student Conflict Resolution Center but that there may be other web pages where the information should be located. For SCRC to have it is also a good idea, however, because they see a lot of students. The work group has developed several tip sheets that they provide to deans and department heads, they have conducted orientations in some colleges where faculty talk about what it means to be a good advisor. They would like to do more workshops and want to be sure that materials are accessible and used. The materials are very simple tools that are intended to be adapted to local needs to help faculty and graduate students be more aware of the quality of advising. Anyone who is interested in the materials can contact the Student Conflict Resolution Center. Ms. Chalmers noted that her office deals with employment-related matters but works collaboratively with the Student Conflict Resolution Center because graduate-student employment is so closely tied to academic work.

What is the strategy, Professor Wambach asked? The issue has been discussed by this Committee before and was mentioned prominently in the second graduate-education report. The Committee has endorsed the idea that faculty members be trained and evaluated on how they advise graduate students. She said it is not clear what administrative action EAD seeks. Ms. Chalmers said that endorsement by this committee is a way to move forward and add support for the initiative. Her thought is that if EAD, Social Concerns, and this Committee endorse the statement, it elevates the issue of graduate-student advising and helps people keep it in mind. Professor Duranczyk concurred.

Ms. Phillips said she originally thought the statement was asking for a policy and she was concerned that a policy on something so nebulous could create problems. Approaching the issue as an educational matter is wonderful. Everyone is incivil sometimes, but that is very different from harassment. They are not seeking a policy, Ms. Chalmers confirmed.

Professor McCormick said he is interested in a broader set of interactions. Faculty-graduate student interactions are important, but so are the interactions between graduate students, between graduate and undergraduate students, and undergraduate students with TAs and faculty. He said he looked for tools that would help make minor conflicts teachable moments and help people move through them. Ms. Chalmers agreed. She said the workgroup focused on the graduate-student-advising relationship because it was timely, given changes in the Graduate School and unit responsibilities for advising.

Professor Wambach noted again that several groups are working on this issue, each with a claim of legitimacy, and there seems to be no logical place for it to be; the Graduate School would be the logical place. Have they spoken with the Graduate School? There are people from the Graduate School on the working group, Ms. Chalmers said, and where the issue should be located is a good question. Answering that question would help determine who provides administrative support, Professor Wambach pointed out.

Mr. Mikl asked if the survey of graduate students will be conducted again. Professor Duranczyk said it was done once as part of a national survey and asked graduate students what they thought of as harassment. The answers ranged from requests to perform tasks unrelated to their job to excessive expectations to sexual harassment. Mr. Mikl said he thought the last conversation the Committee had on this topic focused on keeping faculty accountable rather than a soft way to train future faculty. They have generally taken the approach of not making things mandatory or punitive, Ms. Chalmers said. Graduate students are vulnerable and may be afraid to say much, so the workgroup has decided to provide materials and hope that early adopters will promote them and participate in workshops.

Referring to the tip sheets on conducting difficult conversations, best practices for mentoring and advising, and model orientation and evaluation forms distributed to the Committee, Ms. Phillips noted that these are good materials; to whom are they distributed? Ms. Chalmers said the packets were put together last spring and the working group wants to get them out; they will be provided to department heads and deans. In her experience, Ms. Phillips said, DGSs are pro graduate students; if the DGSs had the materials, they might make headway.

Is the problem insufficient funding to print the materials, Professor Wambach asked? Or funding for the survey? Is that what is meant by administrative support? They are redoing the survey, Ms. Chalmers said, and that will take some support (the previous survey was paid for by SCRC). Some of what they would like to do will take administrative support, but she said she is not sure at this point what those steps might be. Professor Duranczyk said the statement is more about influence and supporting the effort by reaching the larger audience of the University Senate and the larger committees—to widen the audience for the issue.

Professor Wade said that the intent is good but that there is such diversity in what constitutes a good adviser and such enormous divergence in what one might call harassment or incivility that the issue is problematic. Some advisors are a royal pain and curmudgeonly and get mad—but they get a job for the student. Harassment is totally unacceptable, he agreed, but incivility is different. He said he was uncomfortable moving from incivility to harassment. What they are trying to do is admirable, and there is incivility, but not always to the degree that it becomes harassment or unfair treatment. Ms. Phillips added that she has seen cases where employees consider it "harassment" to be asked to do their job. That is why the committee resolution is needed, Professor Duranczyk said, so that problems do not fester.

Mr. Mikl said that another piece is working with graduate students to provide examples of what they should not have to tolerate and what recourse they have. They need to do something to empower graduate students. There can also be cultural differences, Professor Duranczyk said; some students may not be assertive and are unwilling to confront others. The DGS is especially important

on issues that relate to faculty who are difficult advisors, Professor Wade said, and this is particularly the case in large programs. Irrespective of the size of the program, the process must start with the advisor, then move to the DGS, and then to University procedures as appropriate. This becomes even more important with no Graduate School. Students need to be told to see the DGS if they have problems.

Professor Nelson asked why the word "incivil" is used. All agree that harassment is unacceptable. It is less confrontational and judgmental, Ms. Chalmers said. It is about the culture of the place. This is not an initiative that follows an accountability/evaluation path. It seeks to raise visibility and providing tools to help people talk about good advising practices and goals. The "squishiness" of the subject is not a fatal flaw; they are not holding people to standards but are instead providing tools. The term incivil is used around the country, Professor Duranczyk explained.

Professor Nelson said that the last sentence of point #3 in the resolution goes to accountability. The statement starts with encouragement and then includes an evaluation piece, which gets to accountability. The message is confusing. "Review" comes up, Professor Chalmers explained, because faculty say they receive no credit for good advising and they need recognition, but she agreed that the language in point #3 may not accurately convey this point. Ms. Chalmers suggested that the last sentence in #3 could be removed or revised without doing harm to the resolution. Professor Nelson said it should be taken out for now, but then the statement is weakened with respect to the problem of lack of recognition.

Dr. Falkner asked if the implication of the resolution is that such problems do not arise with undergraduate students. It is not, Ms. Chalmers said. It should be clear that incivility and harassment should be addressed in the full range of relationships on campus. This workgroup started with the graduate student/advisor relationship.

Professor Wambach asked what the Committee wished to do with the resolution. She said she was ambivalent about it. The issue has been before the Committee. She agreed that some faculty need training in advising graduate students, a point made in the graduate-education report. She said it is not clear what the Committee is being asked to vote for and she said she did not know what administrative support was being sought. This is a "you know it when you see it" problem, Professor Wade said, and someone should be responsible for stepping in when a problem arises. It is the responsibility of the DGS and the chair to create a vibrant community in a program. Everyone knows that sometimes there are problems with some faculty who are just not good with students. The DGS and chair have to deal with those problems.

Ms. Chalmers said the Committee is being asked to support the effort to reduce incivility in graduate-student advising. This is an effort to generate tools that some may find helpful. Mr. Mikl said the Committee needs to look at the visions and strategies referred to in point #1 and consider combining points #2 and #4 which seem similar. He agreed the last sentence of #3 should be dropped. Professor Duranczyk read from the visions and strategies statement and suggested that part of the language could be incorporated in the "whereas" clauses.

What appeals most, Professor McCormick said, is providing educational materials for everyone. Professor Ng cautioned that the Committee needs to be clear what it is voting on.

Professor Duranczyk said that she would make changes to the resolution and bring it back for Committee review. Eventually it is intended that the resolution go to the Senate.

Professor Wambach thanked Ms. Chalmers and Professor Duranczyk for bringing the resolution to the Committee.

2. Proposed Policy on Appointments as Director of Graduate Studies

Professor Wambach welcomed back Professor Krevans to discuss a proposed policy governing the appointment of Directors of Graduate Studies (DGSs). Professor Krevans first explained that as a result of the discussions with this Committee, and with the Faculty Consultative Committee (FCC), the draft policy on appointments to graduate examining committees was revised and will be forwarded for action to the Faculty Senate on December 2.

Dean Schroeder said the policy was tightened up a little and there are more restrictions on Ph.D. advising—a subject about which FCC felt strongly. They left in the opportunity for decanally-granted exceptions because there are some units that use non-faculty advisors. This is the first of two policies that they have asked be fast-tracked because the documents setting the rules have become moot.

The second policy they were asked to fast-track was one governing appointments of DGSs. Professor Krevans distributed copies of a proposed policy but cautioned that while the college reps supported it, the provisional graduate education committee was divided about it. The proposed provisions read as follows:

1. Every graduate program must have a director of graduate studies.
2. A tenured or tenure-track faculty member with an earned doctorate or designated equivalent in an appropriate field from an accredited institution is eligible to serve as director of graduate studies.
 - Collegiate deans or their designated representatives at the collegiate level may, with the approval of the Provost or the Provost's designated representative, assign the role of director of graduate studies to an individual that does not fully conform to this requirement. [Reason for exception to policy: allow flexibility for director of graduate studies appointments in line with collegiate needs.]
3. Collegiate deans or their designated representatives at the collegiate level must review all individual appointments to the role of director of graduate studies.
4. Each college must have a set of publicly available standards and processes for appointments to the role of director of graduate studies, to include:
 - a. their responsibilities and reporting lines; and
 - b. the appointment review process.
5. Collegiate units may develop more specific local criteria, so long as they are not in conflict with the above policy statements.

Some members of the provisional graduate education council argued against the idea of central policies because the idea of reorganization of graduate education was to decentralize it. Professor Krevans said she was not sure how to proceed at this point. The draft she provided is not officially

before the Committee for its consideration. It is a "barebones" policy that only requires programs to have a DGS, that the person be tenured or tenure-track (with decanally-granted exceptions allowed), that every appointment of a DGS be reviewed at the decanal level, and the every college must have a process and standards, including DGS responsibilities and reporting lines.

The college reps seemed fine with the draft, Professor Krevans said, but at the provisional graduate education council was not. One person argued that the idea is to decentralize and central policies should not be imposed. There are units that do not have a faculty DGS but instead have a Masters-level P&A coordinator for the graduate program. Other members of the council also asked why these matters should not be left up to the colleges.

Dr. Schroeder said that everyone on the council is concerned about the quality of graduate education and that the DGS must be an advocate for graduate students. The question is whether the way to ensure that programs are run well is to have a policy. Some say it is acceptable to list characteristics and responsibilities, but not what the academic standing of the person must be. Others ask why have the policy at all if exceptions are allowed.

Dean Schroeder also related that he had asked now-President-elect Kaler how Stony Brook administered graduate programs in times of financial constraints. He said they were reorganized so smaller programs are co-administered in a hub in order to take care of administrative support. Dean Schroeder said he told Dr. Kaler that they are in the midst of evaluating such coordination and are not saying that every program must have a separate DGS, but if they create a University-wide program they must ensure quality.

Professor Wambach expressed doubt that faculty would want a DGS who was not a faculty member. It entails a lot of busywork, Professor Wade observed. There can be someone like a course coordinator to assist the DGS, Professor Wambach responded, but it is not reasonable to say that the DGS should not be a faculty member. Ms. Phillips pointed that in her college they have grant coordinators but the faculty member is still responsible for the grant

Their position is that the norm for a DGS is a faculty member, Professor Krevans said. Ten of 150 programs have non-faculty as DGSs, and many have coordinators who handle all the paperwork. There are two kinds of resistance to the draft recommendations: (1) to the requirement that the DGS must be a faculty member, and (2) to the adoption of any central policy. Dean Schroeder added that it has also been said that the policy would allow an associate dean to be designated as the DGS for all programs in the college and a faculty member or P&A staff member could be appointed in the programs to implement the requirements. That is not in the spirit of the policy—but the policy does not prohibit such a choice. Professor Krevans said that they thought about related programs, in the same budgetary home; she formerly served as DGS for four programs. She surmised that if she carried a policy to FCC that did not say faculty have the primary responsibility for serving as DGS, it would get shot down. She said she needed advice: How can she translate her sense that there is a need for such a policy into one that will protect students?

Dr. Falkner observed that there is no similar policy on the undergraduate side; if a policy about appointment of the DGS is established, is there need for a parallel policy about the appointment of Directors of Undergraduate Studies? Ms. Phillips said that undergraduate programs are within colleges while graduate programs can be cross-college. But they are part of a college or have a

collegiate home, Dean Schroeder said, the interdisciplinary programs will be dealt with by multiple owners and there must be a clear description of what each of the owners will do; the Graduate School will prepare a Memorandum of Understanding. So there is ownership at the college level. From a policy standpoint, Dr. Falkner said, this does not seem to be an over-arching policy and she expressed doubt it would pass through the President's Policy Committee.

People are trying to develop statements to be sure that graduate programs are well run, Dean Schroeder said. A policy could create a lot of problems, and the colleges are working to develop regulations and policies on how best to administer graduate programs.

Is the DGS elected, Professor Wade asked? There is no graduate faculty any longer. Dean Schroeder said that there are multiple ways DGSs have been identified in the past; some are elected, some are appointed. The parameters were specified in the old Graduate School constitution, Professor Krevans said, and the reporting line was to the Dean of the Graduate School. The graduate faculty of the program elected the DGS. Now things are in limbo, which creates three problems. One, there is no graduate faculty; two, there are different reporting lines; and three, because there is no constitution or graduate faculty, if there is to be a documented process for appointing the DGS, the process has to live somewhere. At present, as with the graduate examining committees, there is a concern that there is a giant legal hole and it is not clear what the basis is for appointing the DGS.

Professor Nelson asked if an interim appointment could be made. This is not like the Director of Undergraduate Studies, who is typically selected by the associate dean (in her college). In her experience, however, matters of graduate education have been voted on by the faculty. If the DGS reporting line is within the college, Dean Schroeder said, the selection process may not be election.

Professor McCormick asked if it possible to say that all the old policies stay in force until the colleges adopt their own. That is what they did with the graduate-examining committees, Professor Krevans said; most of the rules were in the catalogue but they had to deal with eligibility, which was not. The problem with DGSs is that she has seen too many grievances and does not want an attorney asking what the authority of a DGS is to tell a student he or she must leave a program.

So can there be an interim policy, Professor Nelson asked? One that provides that if the DGS authority is not from the Graduate School, it is from the next level down, until a college develops a new procedure? The colleges are aware they must revise their constitutions, Professor Krevans said, because they usually only deal with undergraduate programs, but that is a lengthy procedure.

Professor Wade asked Dean Schroeder how the matters were dealt with at Stony Brook. They merged administrative support and roles, Dean Schroeder said. He met with the Graduate Dean from Stony Brook and learned that they are very forward-looking in creating flexible programs to meet student needs.

So is the Committee's position that the University should let the colleges decide if they do not want to have DGSs, Professor Wambach inquired? There is no central policy that says a department must have a Director of Undergraduate Studies, Dr. Falkner pointed out. What student would be interested in coming to a graduate program without a go-to person, Dean Schroeder asked? It could be an associate dean, Ms. Phillips said. Such a person could be responsible for 10 programs, Dean Schroeder said, and not likely to be someone a student could easily go to.

Professor Wambach said that there are people who serve as Director of Undergraduate Studies, but much of that responsibility also rests with the department chair, who is responsible for running the majors and program. Historically, the DGS does not report to the chair, Professor Krevans noted, but the Director of Undergraduate Studies does. That is a reflection of the fact that graduate programs are often cross-disciplinary.

Dr. Schroeder said that several deans are in the process of appointing associate deans for graduate education, and they will want to know what the responsibilities of that person will be, and they are currently consulting with the Graduate School about this question. He is seeing a lot of effort in the colleges to create a structure needed for the success of graduate programs—but that does not necessarily mean there is no need for a central policy. If there is to be a policy, it should be phrased in such a way that it does not inhibit the good things that the colleges are doing. Any central policy needs to be created to fill gaps or to create an expectation of consistency, Professor Nelson said. It would be possible to adopt an interim policy, Dean Schroeder suggested, and then see what emerges in the colleges, and then see what might be needed in the way of a central policy.

Professor Krevans agreed. Some on her committee believe firmly there must be a central policy, but Dr. Falkner and Michele Gross in the policy office do not believe this looks like a central policy. The college reps are pleading for a policy; the provisional graduate education council is raising questions. Is it better to push forward now or adopt something on an interim basis? Professor Nelson suggested an interim policy, but surmised that a permanent policy will be needed. Dean Schroeder agreed. Professor McCormick reported that his department has a new DGS and he would like to be sure that the person has the necessary authority. Dr. Schroeder reiterated his view that an interim policy should provide flexibility and the Committee can wait to see what the colleges do.

If all the colleges say they will have DGSs, then there is no need for a policy, Professor Wambach said, but if colleges start running big programs to make money, and the DGS is not a faculty member, there could be problems. There have been some egregious cases, Professor Krevans said, especially with the University's budget model.

It was agreed that Provost Sullivan should be asked to send out a memo establishing the authority of the DGSs and the expectations about what should be in the college constitutions with respect to the DGS position. Professor Krevans said she continued to believe there will need to be a central policy, if only to keep people from doing something wrong for budgetary reasons. There are national standards, she added, and the University needs to be sure it does not fall off the track in comparison with its peers. She said that while she believes there will be need for a policy, it need not be rushed if the Provost can issue a memo dealing with the interim.

Professor Wambach thanked Professor Krevans for joining the meeting.

-- Gary Engstrand