

Minutes
Senate Committee on Educational Policy
Meeting of November 7, 1984

Members Present: Lawrence Goodman, William Hanson (Chair Pro Tem), Gretchen Kreuter (secretary to SCEP), Elaine May, David Thompson, Gloria Williams, and Mary Young

Members absent: Julie Bates, Jeffrey Frey, Lael Gatewood, Van Gooch, Gerald Kline, Andrew Lee, Tom Lussenhop, David Lutz, Robert McCollister, and John Wallace

Minutes: The minutes of the October 10 meeting were approved as corrected: Tom Lussenkop was at the meeting of October 10. The Task Force Report on the Economy of the State was discussed, in part, at the October 10 meeting.

1. Announcements: Because Lael Gatewood was unable to attend this meeting, the discussion of her report on computers was postponed until the next meeting.

William Hanson reported that he had attended a meeting of the Assembly Facilitative Committee. There, the chair of the Committee on Honors had reported that after a period of quiescence the Committee was resuming its activities, which included responsibility for coordination of inter-unit honors programs.

Associate Vice President Betty Robinett sent to SCEP a summary of what the University will focus on for its forthcoming North Central Accreditation review.

2. Committee on the Semester System: Minutes were distributed to SCEP members in advance of the meeting. Elaine May suggested that if SCEP saw this proposed change as a matter of educational policy, it should register its concern in a formal way. David Thompson observed that it is necessary for someone to look at the curriculum, college-wide, and assess the implications of the proposed change. Lawrence Goodman expressed concern about the possible proliferation of courses that might follow the change to semesters, and about the fact that students might feel it necessary to take more than four courses per semester. He urged that the University state as a matter of educational policy that it is undesirable for a student to take more than four courses.

SCEP will express its concern in a resolution, and Lawrence Goodman agreed to draft one for consideration at the next SCEP meeting.

3. Continuing Review of Task Force Reports: The rest of the meeting was devoted to assessment of the recommendations from the task force reports, in order to elicit those issues that the committee wished to focus on this year.

Task Force on the Economy of the State: Discussion of this report began at the October 10 meeting, when the committee expressed disappointment that the proposed recommendation on raising admissions standards had not been endorsed by the president. Further discussion focused upon that non-endorsed recommendation. Committee members regretted the University's reluctance to separate numbers and money and noted that there is a need to persuade the state legislature to fund the University on a basis other than numbers of students. Lawrence Goodman observed that one cannot push for excellence with overloaded programs.

Elaine May noted that the Task Force on the Student Experience had taken a more positive view of demographic realities that predict smaller numbers of students in future years.

SCEP decided that the issue of honors programs and recruiting high ability students was an issue it wished to address.

Task Force on Graduate Education and Research: In commenting upon the task force's expressed desire to make the University of Minnesota a premier research institution, Lawrence Goodman suggested that ancillary help, both clerical and technical, is as important as higher salaries in making the University a more attractive place for faculty.

Others echoed the need for other kinds of resources: Elaine May noted, for example, that there are few resources available for getting groups of faculty together to design major collaborative research projects. She suggested that collaborative research should be encouraged for quarter leave projects.

David Thompson suggested that it would be desirable for the University to be able to tell prospective faculty that a certain amount of money would be available, as part of their job offer, to develop their research ideas.

The committee agreed that if the University is to become a premier research institution it needs to provide internal support if its faculty is to obtain external grants, and it needs to open minds to other new ways of doing things.

With respect to graduate education, SCEP members agreed that greater financial support for graduate students is essential. According to the Task Force Report, an additional \$1 million in aid was to be allocated for this year. David Thompson, a member of the executive committee of the Graduate School, said that the money has been allocated, but that SCEP might wish to examine how it was done. Allocation may be a source of divisiveness among different segments of the University -- some departments seem to get much support, some don't.

Elaine May called attention to the problem of TAs teaching too much because they need the income: some never are able to finish their Ph.D.s for this reason. What is needed is dissertation fellowships.

David Thompson expressed dismay that the Task Force recommendation on retooling of faculty for other careers or other kinds of activities within the University was not endorsed.

The committee agreed that it was highly desirable to evaluate teaching and encourage improvement of teaching, but that these efforts must be separate from promotion and tenure decisions, and that the resources of the College of Education should be used.

Task Force on the Scholarly Activity of the Faculty: Discussion began as time ran out. The Task Force report alludes to the need to make committees more effective.

4. Future agenda: Copies were distributed of the Root-Fenton correspondence regarding residence requirements and graduate credit for CEE students.
The committee suggested that John Wallace report at some future meeting on the activities of the Council of Undergraduate Deans.
The Gatewood Report on computers will be discussed at the next meeting.
Issues identified in this and past discussions of Task Force Reports will be prioritized.
5. The next meeting of SCEP will be held on Wednesday, November 21 at 3:15 p.m. in 404 Coffman.