

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATIONAL POLICY MINUTES

February 28, 1986

Members Present: Vernon Cardwell, Andrew Collins, Susan Collison, Sheila Corcoran, Thomas Daniels, Kathy Ebnet, Brenda Ellingboe, Van Gooch, William Hanson (Chair), Lawrence Goodman, David Lutz, Marvin Mattson, Michael Root, Mary Young

Guests: Susan Stonefield, Harold Swofford, Laurie Hayes, Don Ross, Gwen Ruff

Advising Awards:

A Proposal for Academic Advising Awards had been distributed to SCEP. Susan Stonefield as well as Harold Swofford, Laurie Hayes and Don Ross were present to answer questions concerning the proposal. Susan Stonefield indicated the awards will not be given until 1986-87 and most likely during Winter Quarter so they will not conflict with other awards such as Morse-Amoco.

It was suggested that: as these are awards for undergraduate advising, the name of the award be changed to "Undergraduate Academic Advising Awards"; under "Criteria", the wording be changed to "may" or "can"; more than one advisee letter be included, perhaps one-half of the letters should be from advisees, that is, four advisee letters with two of these from former advisees. There was discussion concerning the need for a personal statement from the nominee and it was generally agreed that this should remain in the proposal.

A motion was made by Lawrence Goodman and seconded by Michael Root to endorse the awards. The motion received unanimous approval.

Lower Division Task Force Report (continuation of discussion):

As William Hanson is chair of the Special Committee on Coordination Lower Division Education on the Twin Cities Campus, Andrew Collins acted as Chair of SCEP for this portion of the meeting.

William Hanson reviewed concerns that had been expressed by others outside of SCEP (the report is somewhat vague concerning the Center and how it fits with other units; the report should be stronger in the area of curriculum reform; a lower division college and single port of entry may provide better service to students and be more cost-effective than the proposed Center) and encouraged the Committee to consider these comments in their discussion.

Lawrence Goodman, concerned with the consequences of the large size and primarily commuter composition of the Twin Cities campus, presented a unified lower division model with a residency requirement that would humanize the college experience. He suggested there be five or six undergraduate or lower division colleges named after prominent people in the state. Each undergraduate student would be associated with a college and be located in a dormitory with one year of residence required.

William Hanson clarified the "unified college model" discussed by the Task Force. All students would spend the first 90 credits or two years there. Faculty for the college would be on a purchase basis from existing colleges. There were objections to an anticipated increase in cost with this model. It may not be useful to draw distinctions between lower and upper division students as not all students go straight through four years and there is a mixed sample of students taking 1000 and 3000 level courses. This may not alleviate the impersonal nature of the campus.

Andrew Collins explained that the purpose of our discussions would be to provide comments for the University Senate to consider as they revise the report.

Issues raised included:

The tension between the focus on research and graduate education and the goal of undergraduate education (page 3). What tensions are here and what can be done to minimize them?

There was concern that, due to the size of the University and the emphasis on research and upper division, many times lower division courses were taught by the least qualified.

Perhaps the focus on the quality of teaching and large classes was too narrow and the quality of the teacher should also be included. Departmental policies may be involved here.

Should graduate students teach lower division courses? There is student concern about the quality of these courses. Establishment of a Lower Division Center would imply a commitment to instruction at that level.

It is important to increase the rewards for teaching and have a systematic way to train teaching assistants.

William Hanson stated that the Center as proposed stresses student services more than curriculum. An undergraduate college could do more...but the price is that existing colleges would lose students. Do we want a unified lower division college or a center?

It was suggested that the administration should work through the colleges rather than set up a new structure. Perhaps more pressure should be put on Deans to achieve the goals through the present structure. The report should address goal statements and priorities. Central administration should state goals, keep track of where we are, and give the University community reminders of where we still have to go. The Deans, of course, would have to cooperate and agree.

What is President Keller's priority concerning this report? The priority should be addressed in the report.

It is important to consider how to lessen the impersonal nature of the University. It was suggested that students be organized into groups rather than different colleges. A lower division unified college as such would not solve this problem. It is desirable, however, to have a single entry point and complete information concerning colleges, programs, courses, and student support services. The proposed Center would meet this need. The report, however, should include how the Center would articulate with the existing structure.

The report should address future goals or long-term planning as well as short-term pragmatic issues.

Students should have more opportunity to "rap" with professors. Programs such as the CLA Honors Program with small group seminars seems to partially meet this need.

The Center was supported as a locus for incoming students and advising, but the importance of undergraduate education should be emphasized. It was suggested that the University set goals and systematically work toward achieving them.

The next meeting of SCEP will be Friday, March 7. Meeting adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:
Member, SCEP

