

Minutes*

**Faculty Consultative Committee
February 14, 1991**

Present: Warren Ibele (chair), Thomas Clayton, W. Andrew Collins, Amos Deinard, Paul Holm, Norman Kerr, Thomas Scott, Burton Shapiro, Charlotte Striebel, James VanAlstine, Shirley Zimmerman

Guests: Rich Broderick (University Relations), William Gerberich (chair, Task Force on Extending the Probationary Period), President Nils Hasselmo, John Howe (chair, Task Force on Liberal Education), Geoffrey Maruyama, Maureen Smith (Brief)

1. Discussion of the Report of the Task Force on Liberal Education

Professor Ibele opened the meeting by welcoming Professor John Howe to discuss the draft report of the Task Force on Liberal Education.

Professor Howe began his comments by noting the context in which the Task Force worked. It has been over 20 years since the University considered what its liberal education requirements should be; much has occurred in those years. These requirements, he reminded the Committee, are for the entire Twin Cities campus, and must be appropriate for B.A. as well as B.S. baccalaureate programs; the Task Force constantly found itself confronted with the reality of the very different educational objectives of the various undergraduate colleges.

One operating assumption, a constraint, has been that the requirements should stay within the 180-credit norm for graduation. He noted that the vast majority of students enroll for significantly more than 180 credits before they graduate; only about 6% graduate with 180 credits. There are a variety of reasons for this phenomenon. Students who change majors must take more credits. There are some majors which require over 100 credits in the field; it seemed to the Task Force that this was a considerable number to require for a baccalaureate degree. These requirements cause problems as one attempts to consider the liberal education components of a student's work. He said he did not know whether or not the programs which require many credits contribute to the excessively long time it takes Minnesota students to obtain their degrees. The Task Force concluded, in any event, that it did not wish to impose additional requirements and thereby extend the time-to-degree of students.

It was also a working assumption of the Task Force, he related, that the liberal education programs should be a shared responsibility of faculty across the entire campus. Faculty in the undergraduate colleges would carry out most liberal education, but the post-baccalaureate and professional schools should share in the responsibility.

The Task Force also attended to the issue of resource demands. The Task Force was encouraged not to feel itself constrained by the financial difficulties of the moment. The report does have financial

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implications, Professor Howe observed, both in "tooling up" costs (developing a new curriculum) as well as in continuing costs. A significant amount of the costs can be covered by redirected effort on the part of faculty and advisors, but the full array of recommendations will require new resources. The Task Force did receive assistance from Academic Affairs on making assumptions and estimating costs. Those estimates provided thus far suggest that implementing the recommendations "will be a challenge for the University" but the agenda is important enough to warrant support and the amounts which might be required are appropriate for the recommendations.

One Committee member inquired about the extent of the consultation by the Task Force with departments which might be called upon to offer the "diversified core" courses. Of particular concern was the mathematics requirement; it appears that 15 additional faculty will be required for offer the core program that the Task Force recommends. Professor Howe was asked how much discussion there had been with the mathematics faculty. He explained the process of consultation used by the Task Force, noting that it varied with the different parts of the report. Members of the Task Force met with college curriculum committees, with groups of advisors, with student groups, and also relied on the survey of faculty. The mathematics recommendation, he agreed, may be the most problematic.

Another Committee member noted that the report calls for every undergraduate student to take a laboratory course in the biological sciences. If the College of Biological Sciences is to offer "decent" such courses, the College will need significant help from qualified faculty in the Health Sciences and Agricultural Sciences. There has, thus far, not been a great deal of "transfer of effort" or similar assistance. Professor Howe recalled that Dean Magee is a member of the Task Force; he acknowledged that there will need to be assistance from other fields. The University will have to decide, he told the Committee, if these are good recommendations; if they are, it will have to decide the extent to which it is willing and able to implement them. Where the priorities lie and whether or not the resources will be made available are the difficult questions the University will have to answer.

Professor Howe was asked about the fit between the reallocation plan and the Task Force recommendations. Professor Ibele interjected that since there was no knowledge of what the Task Force recommendations would be, they were anticipated in general but not in specific detail and will be candidates for the system-wide initiatives.

One faculty member noted that at present the courses which fall under the distribution requirements are extremely diverse; students can have quite different experiences and may not even meet the educational goals of having distribution requirements in the first place. If that is the problem, why such a massive reorganization? Why not simply decertify the courses and re-certify a smaller number that the Task Force believes meet appropriate standards for liberal education courses?

Professor Howe responded that the draft report notes, first, that the components envisioned for liberal education go beyond those established twenty-some years ago. There is more to the task than redoing the existing categories and the courses within them. Second, he said, the recommendations do in fact do what has been suggested. The traditional notions of educational breadth and fields of knowledge make sense and still apply. While the Task Force has redefined the categories somewhat, and tried to tighten them up, that isn't the main problem; the problem is that individual colleges and departments decide which courses will count so there are courses of all sorts in the categories. The Task Force tried to describe more clearly the purposes that breadth education should serve and to establish criteria for

courses which will serve those purposes. New courses will be required; some existing introductory courses will be appropriate if modified in certain ways to meet educational objectives.

Professor Howe concurred with the proposition that there will need to be a redirection of effort and some of the courses will have to be added by substitution. Another operating assumption of the Task Force, he added, is that faculty teaching should not increase as a result of the recommendations. There will be fewer courses offered in the categories, it was pointed out, so they will have to be offered more frequently; there will, in the end, need to be a shift in teaching load at some point. Professor Howe agreed.

The math requirement is a good example, it was noted. Small sections in math are very rare; to expand the offerings of the one course which is so taught will leave the department with two options: start teaching it in large sections--which would probably not work because the course is designed for small groups--or shift the teaching effort in the department. This is a matter of reallocating effort, something the department should decide. The report carries the implication that "you have to do is this way"--which has consequences for other activities of the department.

Professor Howe responded that the mathematics requirement can be met in a number of ways, not solely through the "mathematical thinking" course. The Task Force assumed that other departments (for example, Statistics or Educational Psychology) might choose to offer such courses. A student can pursue the normal path through mathematics to calculus. While a department must be in charge of its own curriculum, all departments also have responsibilities to meet college and University requirements as well; they must achieve an appropriate balance. It remains true, however, that the mathematics faculty will have to in part redirect its teaching efforts, it was maintained.

Professor Howe was next asked, if the "diversified core" is to be administered by the Council on Liberal Education, if there would be a budget provided for that administration. The Council is to work with faculties to ensure there are sufficient courses to make up the curriculum, he said, and it would be active in that work. In terms of pulling faculty from several units together, for instance, he agreed that staff work might be needed. Who will superintend the arrangements for this curriculum to ensure that it is conceptually more honest and tidy? Such activities will require time and effort in working with departments and faculty. Professor Howe agreed but pointed out that the Task Force acknowledged a number of implementation questions that it could not take up.

It was contended that if the entire report were adopted, implementation would require an enormous number of "person hours." The elements of the report are not so closely inter-related that some could be initiated while others might not be, or might be deferred. Did the Task Force have any priorities among its recommendations? Professor Howe said it did not, at this point. The closest it comes is with the new student colloquia: Different institutions have tried these with more or less success; efforts might be undertaken in several colleges to see how they work. Where a major change in philosophy or conceptualization might be required, would the Task Force consider trying some of them out on a small scale for a few years before having them be adopted wholesale? Professor Howe said, with respect to the new student colloquia, that the Task Force believes the University has a problem with new students. Too many come without a clear sense of University standards and values and without a clear sense of what the purposes of a liberal education are; this proposal tries to put students in the position of thinking more purposefully and clearly about their education. This means more advising and the new student colloquia.

The colloquia seem a promising way to address the problem, if done carefully. If students can understand what the University is asking them to do, and why, faculty could teach better, students could study better--and they'd be spending their time and money more wisely.

Concern was expressed about the structure that would be in place to implement the recommendations; the Task Force was urged to think about mechanisms that would permit departments to work together to develop the courses needed for the diversified core.

Professor Ibele thanked Professor Howe for his comments.

2. Discussion of the Report on Extending the Probationary Period

Professor Ibele next welcomed to the Committee Professor William Gerberich, chair of the task force on extending the probationary period. Professor Ibele reminded the Committee that the task force had been appointed in response to a request from the Medical School that clinical faculty be given a longer probationary period. The task force was asked to examine whether or not the probationary period for all faculty should be extended and, if not, whether or not an exception should be made for the Health Sciences.

Professor Gerberich explained to the Committee the membership of the task force as well as how it went about its work (including a survey of doctoral students and new faculty as well as gathering information from 21 other doctoral institutions). He then touched upon the highlights of the report.

- On changing the probationary period for all faculty, the task force voted 7-1 against, with 3 abstentions.
- On permitting college variations from the present period, the vote was 6-3 against, with 2 abstentions. Those who favored a change came from the St. Paul campus, the Medical School, and the Carlson School.
- The task agreed that the Medical School has serious problems which must be addressed; lengthening the probationary period was not seen as the solution.
- There are other problems, especially for women and members of under-represented groups, which should be taken up by a group working under the aegis of the Faculty Consultative Committee.

One potential problem, had the Medical School been granted a waiver, would have been that biochemists in the Medical School would have been working under a standard different from those in the College of Biological Sciences or in IT.

- The surveys of new faculty and doctoral students provided the respondents with a choice of the preferred number of years for a probationary period; both groups favored the current policy of six years. Among new faculty there were two exceptions: The Law School and Waseca favored 5 years or less (although no option received a mean score reaching the

level of "acceptable"; they didn't prefer any of them very much.) Duluth and the Medical School favored 7 years; General College favored 7 or 8 years.

- To the question "what length do you favor," Medical School new faculty responded: 62% found 5 years or less to be unacceptable, 19% said 6 years was unacceptable, 16% said 7 years was unacceptable, 26% found 8 years unacceptable, and 40% found 9 years unacceptable. (Totals are greater than 100% because respondents could check more than one alternative.) The plurality of Medical School new faculty (32%) favored the present policy; there were varying percentages who found other probationary periods acceptable but none received more than 25% support.
- Of the 21 institutions who were surveyed by telephone about their practices, only 5 had a pattern different from that which now exists at the University. 2 of the 5 (Harvard and Yale) have no probationary period; one is hired as a tenured faculty member. The University of California has an 8-year probationary period (7 plus one terminal year); this has been their policy for over 100 years. Duke recently increased from 6 + 1 to 7 + 1, primarily in response to problems in its medical school. Johns Hopkins has an 11-year period (10 + 1)--but one must make it to full professor in that 10-year period. Of those institutions which are different, only one of them is public.
- Only Duke and Northwestern permit the Medical School to have a different probationary period from the rest of the institution; they grant an additional 3 years' probation, but only to clinical faculty.
- Of the 21 institutions surveyed, only 2 have changed the length of the probationary period (again, primarily in response to medical school problems). Several, however, have been approached by their medical schools to consider such a change and the possibility is being explored.

There are other strategies for meeting the special needs of clinical faculty in the Medical School (and similar problems encountered in other units, such as in Agriculture). These include the use of multi-year non-tenure contracts to provide job stability or a 3-year appointment in advance of starting the tenure clock.

The task force explored several other issues, such as the impact of a change on the administration of the University, the legal implications, and the impact on diversity goals.

What happens next, inquired one Committee member. Professor Ibele said the charge and the findings will be reported at the next meeting of the Faculty Senate. **It was moved, seconded, and voted without dissent to endorse the report.**

[Copies of the report are available from the Senate Consultative Committee office, 626-0884.]

3. Discussion with President Hasselmo

Professor Ibele closed the meeting briefly for a discussion of personnel matters.

Reaction to Reallocation; Waseca The President then commented briefly on the reception the University is receiving at the legislature in discussions of the reallocation plan. He said there was about as good a hearing as one could expect that morning; legislators asked very important questions about reallocation and about how the other systems could be made to take the same hard look at their priorities. There continue to be questions about closing Waseca and the many job opportunities for its graduates, he said; he told the legislators that where the University feels there is an over-supply of graduates the programs are being curtailed. He also tries to indicate the nature of jobs Waseca graduates obtain as compared, for instance, with those obtained by Pharmacy graduates; there are a number of areas where the University is not providing as many people as are needed for sophisticated professional settings. The jobs that Waseca graduates take, in many cases, are not positions which even require a two-year degree; the technical colleges have the capability to provide that kind of training--and probably in a more cost-effective manner.

There is genuine concern on the Agriculture Committee on the part of legislators associated with the Waseca campus. There is an unfortunate misperception that the University is abandoning its responsibilities to agriculture. There have been encouraging signs, however, that that view is not commonly held, including among many rural legislators. "So far, so good," he commented.

The legislative leadership also realizes, the President told the Committee, that if they undercut the University's attempts to put its house in order, there will be tremendous repercussions for the State's ability to reorder its priorities.

Quality Improvement Measures How does one respond, the President was asked, to criticisms of the measures of quality enhancement? His first response, he said, is to ask people to look at the quality measurements already proposed--retention between the freshman and sophomore year, for example, where there has been a significant improvement (which, he commented, may be due in part to the increased preparation standards). The University may be turning a corner in terms of bringing undergraduates along toward graduation. In terms of research, one can look at the volume of sponsored research and peer evaluation of the quality of the research being conducted by the faculty. Surveys done show that the University touches a substantial number of Minnesotans; approximately 50% of college-educated Minnesotans have had some educational experience with the University within the last three years. The University is also looking at outcomes--faculty productivity, service and research activities, and so on.

Case studies would also be useful, it was suggested, which would illustrate the reductions in class sizes and more modern equipment and advising time.

Perceptions Outside the Metropolitan Area; Extension Service One Committee member reflected that outstate Minnesotans are feeling more and more that they have been abandoned by St. Paul--their programs are being cut back and they have no voice. The University, justifiably or not, is seen as being a part of that trend. The loss of the Waseca campus, and discussions about Crookston, contribute to this apprehension. Partnership programs with local governments are being cut; rural legislators are losing their voice; discussions of cutting counties from 87 to 10--there appears to be a constant erosion. It is important, the President was told, to strengthen the perception that the University serves the whole State.

It is interesting, the President observed, that supporting the Morris campus seems to have no effect on that perception; it seems to be seen as an extension of the metropolitan area. True, it was said; the Morris campus is not an agricultural campus and not seen as part of the agricultural community. A liberal arts campus in rural Minnesota has for years been looked at as sort of a "foreign object." Despite the fact, the President commented, that many of the students come from the surrounding area.

One of the most important operating links between the farmer and the University has been the Extension Agents. The fact that the Extension Service is part of the University must be constantly emphasized, along with the fact that the Extension Service and Experiment Stations are big recipients under the reallocation plan. The President agreed with the observation that the Extension Agents are a particularly important set of opinion leaders and commented that he has probably seen more Extension Agents, in proportion to their numbers, than any other group of the University--including the faculty. He said he has developed, as a result of his travel around the State, a deep and abiding appreciation for what they contribute to their local areas and for their effectiveness. If the Extension Service didn't exist it would have to be invented, he said, because the expertise and opportunity for knowledge transfer is extremely important. These people are the infrastructure for the most important elements of community development efforts; they are "absolutely indispensable." But it remains a puzzle, he said, why these activities have not achieved notice.

Graduation Rates; Time-to-Degree One matter that a number of faculty have been concerned about is the cause(s) of the low graduation rates and low retention rates. Everyone has anecdotes and reasons--the urban setting, students working, the quarter system--and it would be helpful to know there is some group that has access to the information and can provide a better understanding of what lies behind the statistics. To look at the charts and see Minnesota last--even though some of the Big Ten campuses are residential, others are not--is not a situation we should accept. Some understanding of the causes would be useful so the faculty could join the effort to improve the results.

There are analyses underway, the President said, although one must look at different cohorts of students. There is a cohort that looks just like the residential cohorts at other Big Ten universities; then there are the outliers, casual clientele who float in and out, course by course. The explanation ranges from a lifestyle that has developed to the placement by the University of obstacles in the way of completion of degrees--courses not available when needed, for instance. Not a great deal can be done about lifestyle--although a message needs to be sent that something close to a full-time educational experience is something qualitatively different from a stretched-out education. But the University has a clear responsibility to remove internal obstacles to graduation. The phenomenon may also be related to the ability to provide good counsel when it comes to student careers and advice when students run into difficulties. The "Undergraduate Initiative," fundamentally, is an attempt to create a different culture, one that provides more personal attention and helps students realize their educational goals in a more timely fashion.

Costs of Instruction There are a number of components to the cost of delivering education; among them are administrative, academic, and service/infrastructure costs. Can the administration help campuses and colleges make informed judgments about where and what costs are and how they might be reduced, the President was asked. He said there are such studies, both of direct and "allocated" costs; the higher numbers for Waseca, for instance, rely on the allocated costs and represent an attempt to compare

oranges with oranges. The President told the Committee that MPIS has extensive analyses of the allocation of costs and their relative proportions.

Task Force on Liberal Education Costs The President was asked how the funding implications of the report of the Task Force on Liberal Education mesh with the reallocation plans. The University will consider those implications in the budgeting, via the faculty governance structure decisions about the curriculum. There has been an attempt to cost-out some of the proposals. Some of the resources will come from internal college reallocations; those units receiving additional funds will direct them to activities which also serve the purposes of liberal education. If the report is approved, he said, presumably it will serve as a general guide for faculty recommendations in the colleges. The report will need to be filtered through the governance structure as well as the administrative structures of the colleges.

The President thanked the Committee for its support of the reallocation plan and acknowledged that everyone has to set aside questions and concerns. He said he was pleased, after weeks of winnowing and sifting the proposals, that they have held up as well as they have. They do represent the implementation of the University's priorities, an extension of the planning that has been going on for years. The process has to be little rough around the edges, he commented, because if changes of this magnitude are to be made, "you have to do it, to some extent, in one fell swoop; you just do not get there in a slow, cumulative fashion."

Upcoming Financial News About the future: The President said he had no inside information on what the Governor's budget will contain but there has been continuing contact with the his staff. The University has had good opportunities to make its case and has been able to make clear what non-instructional costs consist of; it is to be hoped that the University is not "over-charged" in any reduction of instructional costs (as it was in the rescission for the current year). There may be some shocking numbers publicized in the near future but the President cautioned, in the words of Yogi Berra, that "it ain't over `til it's over." The University will continue to have the opportunity to make its case; in the end, he said, the importance of the institution to the State will come through--although there will be considerable constraints.

He also continues to make the case for faculty and staff salaries; even though some competitive pressure may be reduced because other states are in similar budgetary situations, the University must nonetheless have the flexibility to meet the pressures which still exist.

Professor Ibele complimented the President on his patience, restraint, courage, and unfailing courtesy as he has gone through the presentation and defense of the reallocation process and its recommendations.

4. Discussion with Professor Maruyama

Professor Maruyama opened his comments by telling the Committee that he wanted to share with it some of the opinions he has encountered at the legislature and learn if there are ways to lessen the criticisms directed at the University.

A bill has been introduced which would require faculty to teach 12 credit-hours per quarter (12 hours per week) and to consider teaching excellence foremost in awarding tenure. The bill arose from a perception that faculty do not care about students or about teaching. They don't care about teaching because they don't do very much of it; they don't care about students because they are not continually available in their offices when students come by.

Professor Maruyama told the Committee that he and others try to explain the demands on faculty time, although some legislators--a minority--believe that if the faculty taught more money could be saved because there would be need for fewer faculty. The University could take some simple steps to address the problem, such as reminding students at orientation that they are coming to a major research university and that their expectations about teacher availability should not be the same as that at a liberal arts college and that faculty have other important commitments. There is a need to change student expectations; are there structural things that can be done?

Legislators are also being provided the results of course evaluations, which demonstrate that students do not find the teaching to be bad. The use of external comparisons might be useful, as would ratings of overall teaching, so that useful information could be assembled. If the University is to be criticized for not providing good teaching, it ought to have relatively objective indices to counteract those claims.

The Committee discussed a number of responses that could be made to these criticisms. Student expectations are the source of complaints, it was agreed, and while some things can be done there will also always be a group of students who will be disgruntled. Faculty and college sensitivity to "academic timing" would help (such as being more available during Finals Week and being careful about announcing and holding office hours and being available for appointments). Education about the faculty role during orientation would be a help, but faculty need to be better "public relations ambassadors" for the University in their own classes.

As far as allegations about foreign TAs, Professor Maruyama said that is less of an issue than it was a year ago. Professor Clayton related information provided to SCEP about the intolerable treatment of outstanding foreign TAs by American undergraduate students. Even though it is a problem of ethnocentric listeners, Professor Maruyama commented, that is not an argument that will carry much weight with legislators. The only way the University can allay the concerns is to demonstrate structural responses which will minimize the problems; legislators who are around for a while will understand that they have fewer complaints than in the past.

There is no concern in the legislature about athletics, Professor Maruyama said in response to a question; attention is focused on teaching and Waseca (and the apparent reduced influence and attention to rural Minnesota).

The most recent numbers being bandied about for cuts to the University range from \$30 to \$90 million for the biennium (3 - 10% of the state funding). One must be prepared for bad news, although the University does have friends at the legislature who will try to minimize the damage. One Committee member suggested that the point needs to be made that a lot of faculty raise their own money; if they have less time, the costs to the State will increase.

What he hears about research, Professor Maruyama said, is that there are certain entitlements in the budget; teaching is one of them but research is not. That is why there is a push to do more teaching; in tough times we can do with less research. Account is not taken, he agreed, of the money brought into the State through faculty research--even though many understand the role of the University as the economic engine of the State. There is no reason to worry about funding for research, but there will be a problem with base budget cuts. The alternatives are consolidation in higher education or increased taxes--the latter is already being discussed.

Professor Ibele thanked Professor Maruyama for his report.

The Committee adjourned at 2:45.

-- Gary Engstrand

University of Minnesota