

MINUTES
Senate Committee on Educational Policy
April 15, 1988

Present: John Clark (chair), Jean Congdon, Roland Guyotte,
Marla Johnson (staff), Ian Maitland, Marvin Mattson,
Crystal Schlosser, Amy Kaphingst

Absent: John Clausen, Sheila Corcoran, Steven Joul, Robert
Kvavik, James Moller, Gary Nelsestuen, Aron Pilhofer

Guests: Betty Grundner, Sam Lewis

Professor Clark announced that the 45 to 50 minute class period was officially sanctioned by the Senate. The grade change from I to F also was approved. It has not yet been determined when these changes will take effect but Spring Quarter, 1989, looks favorable for the new 50-minute period and mid-summer 1988 might be the time for bringing all student records up to date through Winter, 1988, for Incompletes.

At the next meeting on April 28th SCEP will discuss the 1:1 ratio issue and Tim Erickson will bring in a student report on that. The quarter-to-semester and possibly the grade inflation issue will also be considered. Remaining meeting dates for spring quarter are May 12th and May 28th, 3:15 - 5:00 in CMU.

The problem of nonattendance at SCEP meetings was brought up and suggestions were solicited as to how to resolve this, as the issues that come before SCEP require full involvement of faculty and students on the committee. Professor Clark indicated his personal concern for faculty absences and suggested that SCEP, in a sense, has ceased to function as a Senate Committee unless attendance soon improves.

Student reaction to Darwin Hendel's Bachelor Degree Candidate Survey survey was discussed. The response to being surveyed has generally very high. Issues such as the high cost of attending the University and inability to register for required classes which often close within a day or two of the opening of registration are apparently being mentioned as problems for students. It was suggested that the results of this survey be compared to recommendations on undergraduate instruction for planned changes at the University. It was decided to bring the issue of student dissatisfaction to the President or Vice President's attention and ask that they address this issue in order to convey to students their own concern about the situation.

Minutes from the April 15th meeting will be submitted for approval at the April 28th meeting.

Academic Priorities

The concern was expressed that undergraduates get lost in the Academic Priorities document, particularly in regard to one of the major administrative recommendations, i.e., the creation of the new Vice Provost of Arts and Sciences and Engineering. It looks like a fine recommendation to fill certain responsibilities; however this position supercedes the former Assistant Vice President for Undergraduate Education. This may represent a loss of focus on undergraduate concerns. This should be looked at further or get further clarification. What seems to be happening is that things are getting diffused and concerns about undergraduate education seem to disappear from university-wide concern. Also concern was expressed about whether too much undergraduate advising might be shifting to the professionals and away from the faculty.

The issue of grade inflation was addressed, an issue SCEP has been asked to consider. The question was raised as to whether a span of 4 years is sufficient to accurately reflect the general character of grade inflation. The 2.8 occurred after dropping of the N and going to an F grade. In a 2 or 3 year period, the 2.8 will likely go lower. Besides the automatic F, another influence will be the conversion of an I to an F after one quarter; therefore it was recommended that SCEP table discussion until more information becomes available. (Further discussion of this issue will be held by SCEP in the near future).

It was asked whether the plus/minus grading procedure is a dead issue, since it did not pass the Senate. The student body representatives tended to be against this issue. It was asked whether this issue could be revived, as there is considerable support for it among the student body represented in the Senate and, particularly, faculty.

Morse-Alumni Award

The Morse-Alumni Selection Committee was specifically applauded for its thorough work in recommending its nine awardees. All SCEP members received a copy of their report. It was suggested that the regents be appropriately informed about the importance of this award. The University ought to incorporate a gesture such as taking the recipients to dinner to make this a special occasion in the program of recognition.

Senate Committee Revision

The matter of streamlining the committee system was discussed in response to SCC's request. While decreasing the number of committees might create a more efficient system, concern was raised about overwhelming committees such as SCEP which already has a large workload. The view was presented that issues might be addressed in a superficial way rather than undergoing the scrutiny that they deserve; others thought that a heavier workload might have the opposite effect, that of giving serious study to high priority items.

A review of committees was done, one by one, and it was noted which are active and what their functions are.

John Clark will write a letter reporting SCEP's concerns to SCC. He should emphasize that:

Any revision should not diminish quality of committee discussions because of overloading committees with work.

A revision should provide for continuity of committee work over time.

A revision should encourage faculty to be involved and this requires structure that requires it. Would decreasing the number of committees prevent this? We have no detailed answer to the question.

Quarter-to-Semester Issue

Sam Lewis reminded SCEP that if the change is made, enough lead time to make the switch from quarters to semesters be assured, and that room availability for scheduling classes be carefully considered. Betty Grundner suggested that if the structure is changed, we will need a definite policy for conversion.

The question was asked as to whether changing to semesters is a necessary part of the Commitment to Focus program: will it in fact improve academic quality? What evidence is there?

Concern was voiced about students not getting the courses they need on a semester system. Although the system would reduce the number of times one registers and reduce the number of courses in a major, it would also reduce access to some courses. One could offer more discussion sections for the increased size in lower level classes; however, more teaching assistants would then be needed.

Sam Lewis reported that of the 1000 course sections offered this fall on Twin Cities campuses, slightly more than 50% were closed on the first day. At the 3000 course level, about 35% were closed.

Respectfully submitted,

Marla Johnson



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TWIN CITIES

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April 18, 1988

To: Professor Phil Shively, Chair
Senate Consultative Committee

From: John Clark, Chair *John Clark*
Senate Committee on Educational Policy (SCEP)

Re: Student Concern about the Current Condition of the
University

There may be strong reasons and urgency for University leaders to address intense student concerns about our organization's recent disturbing events. Such matters as the lack of legislative funding, debatable use of reserve funds, the likelihood that large and sometimes inaccessible required classes will not likely be remedied, and the announcement of increasing costs of attendance are all of high personal interest to our student body. SCEP suggests that faculty leaders and Central Officers consider ways in which they might directly and visibly communicate to students accurate information about these and related issues in such a manner that may allay their distrust and frustration and signal that their concerns are being given high priority in our recovery operations.

At our regular meeting today of SCEP there were many reports of the students' exceptional disenchantment with an evident lack of importance accorded them by this institution, particularly in times like the present. Frankly, our measures of current student dispositions are not systematic nor objective. The Degree Clearance Survey recently initiated by Mr. Darwin Hendel and Mr. Ron Matross will provide us a first scientific assessment in late June. It may be wise, however, to take official note of student sentiment before then. We offer our very tentative observations because the students' concerns appear to be reasonable, they impress us as serious, and there may be some remedies which can be employed to address the situation in the near future. This is, then, an early alert to what may later be seen as a problem "which should have been foreseen." We offer this informal observation in this spirit.

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As you know, SCEP is charged to concern itself with "all matters that influence the quality of education at the University." Certainly the experiences of our undergraduate student body and its important role at a major research State University is an important concern for us all. It may be that specific attention to this facet of University functioning should be pointedly addressed in the near future, i.e., before this year's graduating class and those who will continue next year turn their attention to their summer activities. An immediate open-letter to students from a Central Officer might be appropriate. A letter to students in their fall registration materials may be another possibility. In SCEP's opinion any action should be directed at the student body generally and not be limited to interactions with student governance leaders.

Thank you for your consideration of this issue.

cc: Prof. Shirley Clark, Chair
Senate Finance Committee



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April 18, 1988

To: Professor Phil Shively
Chair, Senate Consultative Committee

From: John Clark, Chair *JK Clark*
Senate Committee on Educational Policy

Re: Response to AIDS Taskforce recommendations as requested
in your letter of March 8, 1988

SCEP has given specific attention to the three items in the February 15th "Report of the Task Force on AIDS" to which you directed our attention: (1) the establishment of an AIDS coordinator's office, (b) the conduct of evaluation research, and (c) the conduct of a baseline survey on knowledge. Given the absence of supportive material in the report of the Taskforce, it is difficult to make judgments about the contributions which the recommended activities would probably make. We have limited our reactions to this base of information, however, with the specific recognition that if we had the time (and if SCC requests), we would invite testimony from Taskforce members and others so that better informed reactions to recommendations could be made.

(a) AIDS Coordinator's Office. While the members of SCEP recognize the high desirability of coordination of AIDS-related activities on campus, it is its opinion that an existing office (possibly in the health sciences) could sooner and more efficiently operate as a focal point for such activity. Since there is little indication of the life-expectancy of such a new office, if established, and since there is often a high-cost of beginning and closing down such a venture, it would seem administratively wise to build on existing structures for the needed coordination. At the same time, SCEP is very supportive of not allowing the new activity to become totally submerged amongst the old so that the new trust is subverted.

(b) Evaluation Research. SCEP agrees that it is wise that systematic and ongoing evaluations be made of the effectiveness of AIDS programs as they impinge upon University populations. Since the research activities of the whole enterprise are presented as an opportunity for significant faculty research and since money for such research is available at the national level, and even our own Graduate School, we propose that this budget be

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kept modest in deference to efforts to attract external funding. Also, it is not clear how the needs for evaluation research are related to the baseline surveys called for under the following item.

(c) Baseline survey of knowledge. Admittedly, the level of knowledge of students, faculty and staff are relatively unknown for this University. In addition, these are likely to be volatile variables, i.e., changing rapidly over time. SCEP has two observations to make about the prospects of campus-wide surveys: (1) the educational efforts by the State of Minnesota and others and the research done in higher education in similar kind of universities might be adequate to inform University policymaking, and (2) the "before" measure provided for in the funds for evaluation research might also serve as an initial baseline of data for the general program purposes.

In sum, SCEP is firmly supportive of special efforts to attend to the University's needs regarding the prevention and management of AIDS throughout the Organization. It is not convincing that wholly new administrative structures are warranted nor that the amount of money suggested for surveys is adequately justified. We repeat that if a more thorough hearing from members of the Taskforce and others were possible, the Committee might have given the Taskforce report a more enthusiastic endorsement.

cc: Shirley Clark, Ph.D.
Chair, Senate Finance Committee

COPY WITH PHONE NUMBERS



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April 8, 1988

John Clark, Chair
Senate Committee on Educational Policy
Conflict & Change Project
249 HHH Center
West Bank

Dear Dr. Clark:

The selection committee for the Horace T. Morse-Minnesota Alumni Association Awards has completed its review of this year's nominees. I am pleased to submit to you the names of the nine faculty members chosen to receive the award for 1987-88.

The committee met on March 10 to discuss the review and rating procedures. During the following month, each committee member independently reviewed the dossiers submitted for consideration. The committee met again on April 7 to select the final list of awardees and to recommend changes in the review procedure and in the materials requested for the dossier.

This year the committee received twenty nominations from the following twelve colleges and campuses:

- College of Agriculture
- College of Biological Sciences
- School of Science & Engineering, Duluth
- College of Education
- College of Forestry
- General College
- College of Home Economics
- College of Liberal Arts
- School of Nursing
- College of Pharmacy
- Institute of Technology
- University of Minnesota, Waseca

The number of nominations received was one more than last year, and the number of colleges/campuses submitting nominations was two more than last year. However, only two of the nominations came from coordinate campuses, which was two less than last year. Of those nominated, twelve are full professors, four are associate professors, and four are assistant professors. Seven women were nominated (an increase of three over last year) and thirteen men.

Because all of the nominees have made outstanding contributions to undergraduate education at the University, the committee's task of paring the list to nine awardees was exceedingly difficult. Those who were named as the nine recipients of the 1987-88 Morse-Alumni Awards are as follows:

Laura J. Duckett, Assistant Professor, College of Nursing

OFFICE 4-9160
4-1100
H: 636-8032

Raymond D. Duvall, Professor of Political Science, College of Liberal Arts 4-8576

Phyllis S. Freier, Professor of Physics, Institute of Technology 4-0378
646-4460

Calvin B. Kendall, Professor of English, College of Liberal Arts 5-6087
476-4637

M. Barbara Killen, Professor of Social & Behavioral Sciences, General College 5-6568

Theodore P. Labuza, Professor of Food Science & Nutrition, College of Agriculture 4-9701
827-1996

Thomas M. Skovholt, Professor of Social & Behavioral Sciences, General College 5-1016/
5-5860

Charles E. Walcott, Associate Professor of Political Science, College of Liberal Arts 4-1671
338-3077

Jean Ward, Associate Professor of Journalism & Mass Communications, College of Liberal Arts 5-5598

The contributions to undergraduate education represented by these nine faculty members are truly exemplary. The selection committee supports any efforts by you and the Senate Committee on Educational Policy on behalf of these individuals to bring their innovative contributions and leadership to the attention of the University community and others concerned with the quality of undergraduate education.

Following your telephone calls to the award recipients, members of the selection committee will make calls as indicated below:

John Clausen--Phyllis Freier
Elizabeth Haugen--Jean Ward
Brian Job--Raymond Duvall and Charles Walcott
Gail Koch--Barbara Killen and Thomas Skovholt
Gary Nelsestuen--Calvin Kendall and Theodore Labuza
Crystal Schlosser--Laura Duckett

Finally, I want to take this opportunity to acknowledge the fine work of the 1987-88 selection committee. I was honored to chair this conscientious and hard-working group and to participate in a program to recognize excellence among our very best faculty.

Sincerely,



Gary Nelsestuen
Department of Biochemistry
and Chair, 1987-88 Morse-Alumni Awards Selection Committee:

John Clausen
Elizabeth Haugen
Brian Job
Gail Koch
Crystal Schlosser

gave to Mr. Ward
4-1-88

Motion: The Student Academic Support Services Committee and the Senate Committee on Educational Policy recommend that in regard to "Incompletes," the University policy be that unless a grade is assigned at the end of the next quarter of residence that the "I" convert to "F."

SASSC and SCEP agree that I's should convert to F's. Under University policy, an I grade represents a contract between instructor and student that defines how and when the work is to be completed. I's are not intended to be permanent marks on the record. If that were the case, the I would become an escape for unsatisfactory performance.

Prior to the conversion of the A/N grading system to the A/F grading system, an I converted to an N if a grade was not assigned at the end of the next quarter in residence. This conversion actually took place about midway of the subsequent quarter. For example, if a continuously enrolled student received an I for fall quarter that was not made up by the end of the winter quarter, the I was converted to an N about midway of the spring quarter unless the records office received a notice from the instructor to the contrary.

SASSC and SCEP believe that the timing of I conversion should remain the same. Extending the conversion further will increase the number that fall into another year. TA turnover, professors leaving, students transferring, etc., are difficulties that make it important for a student to make up an I grade immediately. It is not doing the student a favor to allow excess time for the I removal. In cases where an I has converted to an F, the student can request the instructor to resubmit and I grade. SASSC and SCEP believe that a policy that converts I's to F's after one quarter is a positive influence to encourage completion of incomplete contracts before things become stale or the players change. It is not a policy that forces a student to receive an undeserved F.

Motion: The Assembly Committee on Educational Policy unanimously recommends that the basic class period be changed from 45 to 50 minutes, starting as soon as feasible but not later than Fall Quarter, 1989.

At the request of the Assembly Steering Committee, SCEP has considered this issue over the past year. It has requested information from various student, faculty and administrative groups. The great majority of opinion supports the educational policy objectives of re-establishing the 50-minute classroom period (the returning of about 10% of classroom contact time) which had been previously shortened to permit Eastbank-Westbank movement between classes. The 50-minute class period is now used at 8 of the 10 Big-Ten and University of California campuses. (Indiana's class periods are 45 minutes and Ohio State's, 48 minutes.) A 15 minute passing time will be maintained between classes. (A frequently suggested scheme is one based on the convergence of the hour and minute hands on a clock; thus classes would begin at 7:35 a.m., 8:40 a.m., 9:45 a.m., and so forth.) An identical recommendation has also been made after careful study by Central Administration (Academic Priorities, February 1988, p. 9).