Faculty Consultative Committee
Thursday, October 20, 2011
1:00 – 3:00
238A Morrill Hall

Present: Walt Jacobs (chair pro tem), Linda Bearinger, Avner Ben-Ner, Peter Bitterman, Thomas Brothen, Carol Chomsky, Nancy Ehlke, Janet Ericksen, Caroline Hayes, Russell Luepker, Jan McCulloch, James Pacala, George Sheets, Kathryn VandenBosch, Richard Ziegler

Absent: Chris Cramer, Elizabeth Boyle, Colin Campbell, Elaine Tyler May

Guests: Provost E. Thomas Sullivan

Other: Sharon Reich Paulsen (Office of the Provost); Jon Steadland (President's Office)

[In these minutes: (1) update on provostal transition; (2) Scope, Size, and Mission Committee: Graduate Education; (3) committee business; (4) questions for the "intellectual future" discussion]

[Correction to the minutes of 10/6/11: The University of Minnesota Physicians (UMP) Board of Directors does not report to the Board of Regents. The CEO of UMP makes reports to the Board of Regents and has discussed Medical School issues with a number of the members of the Board of Regents.]

1.   Update on the Provostal Transition

Professor Jacobs convened the meeting at 2:00, explained that Professor Cramer was out of town, welcomed Provost Sullivan to the meeting and asked him to comment on the provostal transition.

Provost Sullivan told the Committee that he and Dr. Hanson, the provost-designate, have had a number of conversations since her appointment and will meet once or twice per month before she takes office on February 1. He said he believed the transition would go smoothly, and he is preparing briefing books and materials for her.

2.   Scope, Size, and Mission Committee: Graduate Education

Provost Sullivan recalled that in May 2010 he established a committee, the membership of which included a distinguished group of faculty, to look at the scope, size, and mission of the University (primarily Twin Cities campus) from the perspective of undergraduate, graduate, and professional education. Professor VandenBosch was a member and a leader of the graduate-education subcommittee. The Scope, Size, and Mission (SSM) Committee worked hard for a year, had many conversations around the University, and prepared a very thoughtful and thorough report. Professor VandenBosch and Vice Provost McMaster brought the report to the Board of Regents last week and it was very well received by the Board. Provost Sullivan said he believed the report is one of the most important strategic-planning

reports that has been written. Professor VandenBosch, he said, will present the portion of the report that deals with graduate education.

Professor VandenBosch distributed copies of slides and presented elements of the report dealing with graduate and professional education. [Note: This presentation was also made to the Senate Committee on Educational Policy at its 10/19/11 meeting and will not be repeated here. Additional points made and the discussion of the report at this meeting follows.]   The committee's report can be found at: http://www.academic.umn.edu/provost/reports/documents/FullSSMReportSept23.pdf

-- In terms of enrollment management in Ph.D. programs and how enrollment targets are set, Professor VandenBosch said that they heard repeatedly about the need for a minimum number of graduate students required for a good cohort experience, perhaps 10-12 students.

-- Professor Ben-Ner asked about range of the median time to degree in Ph.D. programs: Some of them have a median time of less than four years. Professor Luepker explained that his program provides one example: Some Ph.D. students come in with a Masters in Public Health, so have already completed much of the required coursework, and can complete the Ph.D. in a relatively short period of time. Professor Bearinger said the same thing occurs in Nursing. Professor VandenBosch said that the subcommittee used the definitions established by the National Research Council. They would not argue that median time to degree should apply as a single metric and agree that the data should be examined by program. She observed, however, that some programs may have practices that encourage graduation and some may not.

-- Also on the issue of median time to degree and average completion rates in Ph.D. programs, Professor VandenBosch said that the take-home message is that there is great variation between programs, some related to the discipline and some probably not. Professor Pacala asked what the national norms are. Professor VandenBosch said the subcommittee looked at data for the public AAU universities and learned that all of them have wide ranges. In general, Ph.D.s in the humanities take longer. Even within the six broad areas identified by the NRC, and the fields within them, there is great variation. Professor Bearinger said that Nursing could be seen as an outlier, but that is an artifact of the way time to degree is counted, because in Nursing people often enter the program, obtain a first degree, leave and work for a time, and then return for an advanced degree later—but that entire period is counted, which makes it appear that a Ph.D. takes a very long time.

-- With respect to program classification into one of four "bins," outstanding, strong, good, and needs reassessment, Professor VandenBosch said the subcommittee recognized that within colleges, there could be reasons beyond quality why a program would be supported. She also said that they believe only a small minority of programs would fall in the "needs reassessment" category—but that it will be an urgent matter to address the issues for those that do fall in it. She said that in that case the subcommittee envisions a collaborative process that includes defining goals and setting benchmarks.

Professor Ben-Ner said he thought this is a wonderful report. He said that "since we live in a decimal numeral system, we need a 10th recommendation." That recommendation would be based on an idea that has been discussed at the University over the years: There are certain common intellectual foundations for multiple graduate programs and it may make sense to identify them and consider offering them University-wide. Doing so may ensure high quality, would increase enrollment (and savings) in individual courses, and could generate conversation among graduate students from different disciplines and programs. Such an initiative should come from the Graduate School because local program incentives

favor offering as many courses as possible, which may not be in the best interest of the University or of students.

Professor Sheets inquired about the baseline that would be used. Of the 69 programs ranked by the NRC, the top ones at the University include Aerospace Engineering; Chemical Engineering; Chemistry; Child Psychology, and so on. He said he was sorry to see that only one humanities program was included in the list of top programs (History). This profile, assumptions, and proposed courses of action could be the product of years of disproportionate differential allocation decisions. English once was nationally ranked but has slipped. His own department is half the size it was in the 1980s. The answer might be, "that's the way it goes," but other University departments that were excellent in the past still are. In considering how to intervene and promote strong programs, was there any awareness of longitudinal or historical factors? Professor VandenBosch said that they looked at the NRC rankings to see where the University sits vis-à-vis its peers and to understand the criteria that the NRC used. The committee also made a comparison of the 2010 NRC rankings with the rankings from the mid-1990s, and this is detailed in the report's appendices. The shortcoming of any rankings system is that it is a snapshot. Some programs may be stable in their rankings while others may not. She said she believed that longitudinal data are needed so that intervention can happen before the situation for a program becomes dire.

If this snapshot is considered to reflect the present reality and what should be done going forward, Professor Sheets said, one could conclude that the humanities are moribund or largely dead at the University of Minnesota and, as a whole area of knowledge and inquiry, might be relegated to secondary status or eliminated entirely. Professor VandenBosch said the subcommittee did not feel capable of deciding what programs belong in what "bins," which is why they recommended a larger and more representative committee to make those decisions.

Professor McCulloch said (to the Provost) that there needs to be recognition for interdisciplinary programs. In her field (Family Social Science), four of the programs are ranked with Psychology and four with Sociology. It is difficult to decide what that means. Provost Sullivan said that the University is engaging Academic Analytics, a very sophisticated analytical group, one that he has heard presentations from and that is used by many of the University's peers. Academic Analytics can provide a deeper analysis of the NRC data and can answer questions that might be posed. The NRC has a rich data set and Academic Analytics has a lot of analytical power that is not present at the University. There are data beyond the NRC data available to help understand the University's own data and strengths that may not have been used by the NRC, he said.

Professor Bearinger said that with respect to metrics, with NIH research training grants there are 14 required tables of indicators of success of an academic program that are used to judge the quality of an NIH research training grant proposal. If it has not been done already, they should compare the lengthy list of NIH training grant metrics against the metrics that the SSM Committee has identified for reviewing graduate programs. Moreover, in the list of metrics that the committee created, they should distinguish between training grants and research grants. Both are indicators of faculty excellence, but having a federal training grant is probably the strongest indicator of excellence because it means that the research training program has undergone the highest level of and most intense peer scrutiny. Professor VandenBosch said they have added training grants, recognizing the peer-review measure and strength of the programs. Provost Sullivan said that this report is phase one; Vice Provost Schroeder is initiating phase two and has asked to engage each department in a conversation about metrics unique to that discipline.

Professor Pacala seconded the admiration for the report. On the matter of the internal review process for Ph.D. programs that guides fiscal investment and enrollment targets and puts programs into one of the four "bins," the devil will be in how the process is structured. It will be a challenge to find a panel without conflicts of interest and that is impartial. How will the ratings be accomplished—explicitly, judged on an absolute or relative scale, or implicit, with the reviewers only examining the data? These will be hard decisions, especially if one wants to build faculty trust in the process.

Professor VandenBosch said that they wanted to recognize that some programs are very stable over time and that some have a trend suggesting that if resources were added to them, they could move upward. She agreed there could be considerable subjectivity in placing programs into bins. Their thought was that the internal review committee could make a recommendation that would lead to a collaborative process with the college and the program. The main point, she said, is to set goals for individual programs so they can move forward and increase quality.

Professor Bitterman asked how many of the 40 or so currently funded NIH T32 awards (training grants) at the University map easily to single departments or single colleges. He said he believed many of them would not. They could be in trouble if graduate funding goes solely to departments or colleges based on the criteria presented. These nationally-visible, highly-competitive programs are already peer-reviewed and funded by NIH. So the department X component of a great NIH-funded program might not do well by the University standards presented, which are department- and college-centric. But if one combined all the departmental components (which is the way they are reviewed and funded by NIH); the programs are among the best in the nation. The same is likely true for NSF and major foundation-funded training programs.

They did not look at training grants, Professor VandenBosch said. With respect to interdisciplinary programs, they need additional work. If a program that crosses multiple colleges is flagged as in trouble, dealing with it will be more complicated. It may be, Professor Bitterman said, that in passing a program could look crappy but in the aggregate is would look great. The program is the unit for evaluation, not the college or department, Professor VandenBosch pointed out.

Professor McCulloch said she thought of the blue-ribbon-committee process when she read the recommendation for the internal reviews of graduate programs. She expressed the hope that there would be attention to the lessons learned from the blue-ribbon process, such as how to ensure consistency. The blue-ribbon process was not consistent across colleges.

Professor Luepker asked if the University has too many Ph.D. programs. Professor VandenBosch said she believes the subcommittee would say that it does but that the University should not establish an arbitrary number. The process to evaluate quality should drive the outcomes. If there is support for programs of high quality and a decision to terminate some weak programs, the University will end up where it should be through a natural process.

There may also be programs the University wishes to start, Professor Jacobs observed. Professor VandenBosch agreed. If there is a good rationale, and a proposed new program would not duplicate existing programs, it should be allowed to go ahead. Ohio State, for example, has rankings for its programs but has a special category for new programs. The subcommittee believed, however, that new programs should be monitored just as existing programs would be.

Professor Sheets referred to his earlier comment about the lack of humanities programs among those at the University that are highly ranked. His point had been that the relative invisibility of the humanities is an issue that strategic planning should address in the context of the intellectual landscape of the University as a whole. If the humanities are doing poorly, that reflects poorly on the institution, not just individual programs as discrete areas. He noted the table in the report listing the University's peer institutions and the number of programs they have that are ranked in the top 20% according to the NRC data (while Minnesota has 49.3% or 40.6%, depending on whether one looks at the R or S rankings, in the R rankings Berkeley has 98% in the top 20%, Michigan has 83%, UCLA has 79.7%, Texas has 69.2%, and so on). What makes institutions great, Professor Sheets said, is that they are strong across the board and have not surrendered in one area in order to invest exclusively in others.

Professor VandenBosch said the subcommittee had no basis for saying that the humanities programs are doing poorly. They believe that some of them are in the next category down (in the top 20 – 30% of programs in their discipline, for example). No matter how one slices the data, some colleges have outstanding programs and some that are not.

Professor Jacobs thanked Professor VandenBosch and Provost Sullivan for their reports.

3.   Committee Business

Professor Jacobs brought up several items of business.

-- The Committee approved unanimously a bylaw amendment including Rochester among the units eligible for membership in the Faculty Senate, now that it has the required number of faculty and faculty-like P&A staff to be eligible.

-- The Committee concurred on recommendations for committee chairs for those committees whose chairs are ex officio members of this Committee as well as for the Committee on Academic Freedom and Tenure. Noting the large number of faculty members whose terms on Academic Freedom and Tenure will end, the Committee also agreed on a list of names of faculty members that the Committee on Committees might consider for appointment to Academic Freedom and Tenure.

-- Professor Jacobs announced that he would not be on the Committee next year because he will be on leave.

-- The Committee agreed unanimously that items of information for the Faculty Senate should be located on the Faculty Senate portion of the dockets. Professor Chomsky noted that everyone who attends the meeting, whether members of the University Senate or the Faculty Senate, receives the docket so would see these items.

-- On the procedure "Hiring Senior Administrators: Senate Committee Involvement," the Committee concluded that all of the positions are of interest to all groups at the University, so it would make sense to have the hiring authority contact the chair of the Senate Consultative Committee (who also serves as chair of the Faculty Consultative Committee) to consult with FCC in order to make faculty nominations for search committees and to have the chair of SCC convey to the chairs of the other consultative committees as appropriate information about a search and the need for nominees for search committees. Professor Chomsky said that there could then be an internal protocol calling for the Senate Consultative Committee chair to invite the other consultative and appropriate subject-matter chairs to ask their committees to

participate in interviews of finalists for senior administrative positions. Such an arrangement would be less confusing for the administration and would put the responsibility for participating in selection of search committees and interviewing finalists on the governance system, not the administration.

It was agreed that this proposal would be brought to the Senate Consultative Committee later in the day.

4.   Questions for the Intellectual Future Discussion

Professor Jacobs next asked Committee members to suggest questions that could be taken up at the "Intellectual Future of the University" discussion scheduled for November 3. He noted that Professor Cramer had sent to the Committee some thoughts on possible foci of discussion:

> Many departments are just getting into the full swing of a faculty search as we speak. What are the attributes that we should be looking for in faculty members for the future? How, if at all, have the skill sets for success changed for the faculty of the future compared to those hired years ago? This question applies to coordinate campuses as well as the TC, even though both the needs, and the changes relative to the past, may be different for different campuses.

> Surrounding this general question, how should a unit's proportion of graduate (and professional) versus undergraduate teaching affect its search for faculty members? Are there skills that are more important for one than for the other? If we want to reduce our graduate population relative to our undergraduate population (as suggested by the size, scope, and mission report), should that affect the way we hire moving forward?

> A report in 2011 listed the U of M as having one of the highest proportions of tenured and tenure-track faculty relative to non-tenure-track faculty in the nation. What benefits accrue to an institution with a strong dedication to the hiring of tenure-track faculty and how are these best demonstrated and communicated both externally and internally?

> To what extent, if at all, does balkanization into departments (and colleges, and maybe AHC vs. non-AHC) hinder the evolution of the 21st century university as a teaching and research establishment? The U of M Rochester has been pursuing an innovative "cluster" model of education that seems to be reaping pedagogical rewards for its students to date. Are there good aspects of that model that can be brought to the larger campuses of the U and how might that be accomplished?

> Along similar lines, there are many success stories associated with teaching in active learning classrooms on the TC campus. But, effective active learning requires some maximum number of learners per mentor in an ALC, and that number is probably quite a bit smaller than, say, 40. However, many, many courses at the U, particularly introductory ones, have student:instructor ratios of greater than 40. How can resources be brought to bear to reduce class sizes without increasing teaching loads beyond a level that would render the U uncompetitive in hiring compared to other research-intensive institutions?

Committee members offered a number of additional possibilities.

-- (Professor Chomsky) The last session with President Bruininks was about what he had learned and what ideas he would suggest be pursued. Perhaps the first Intellectual Future discussion with President Kaler should be about his vision and his agenda for the University, although not necessarily at the level of specifics, such as where he would cut the administration. This would be about his academic vision.

-- (Professor McCulloch) Or how he sees his priorities shaping up, even though they may not be etched in stone. He has been here awhile, collecting information; what is bubbling to the top.

-- (Professor Ben-Ner) What are his views about things that are happening nationally? About the conditions academics will be facing?

-- (Professor Pacala) After an initial open-ended question, how the President envisions managing incentives to promote STEM and non-STEM programs. (Professor Hayes) When one reads about what companies are interested in when they relocate, it is not just taxes and education, it is also non-STEM fields and the quality of life—the University must continue to nurture non-STEM fields and emphasize their value. This point has to be marketed correctly because it is important to business.

-- (Professor VandenBosch) It has been argued elsewhere that the University cannot afford to do what it cannot do excellently. What process will the President use to implement that proposition? And could that get into operational items? (Professor Bitterman) There is a value to having both landscape questions and questions about how to get to that landscape. (Professor Chomsky) In other words, what change does the President envision and how will he manage that change, with some specific examples.

-- (Professor McCulloch) The Committee has thought lately about the value of college as education, as more than just for getting a job. Given what the Committee has been hearing about events in Florida and Texas, what is the message from the University as the flagship campus? What statement should be made about why the state should invest in a broad intellectual education? As more and more states think about what they are doing, what will Minnesota do? It is not STEM fields VERSUS other fields, it is STEM fields AND the others. (Professor Jacobs) In his work with companies, he's learned that they want people strong in the liberal arts, not just STEM fields.

-- (Professor Bitterman) How will the President focus the University's efforts to train leaders and innovators, not just train people to do a job.

-- (Professor Bearinger) What does the President see as cultivating, nurturing, and enhancing the connection with the legislature?

        Professor Jacobs said that he and Professor Cramer would review the questions and formulate them for the President. He adjourned the meeting at 2:50.

-- Gary Engstrand

University of Minnesota