

Minutes*

Faculty Consultative Committee
Thursday, April 11, 2013
12:15 – 3:00
Room 238A Morrill Hall

Present: Sally Gregory Kohlstedt (chair), Linda Bearinger, Avner Ben-Ner, Peter Bitterman, James Cloyd, Chris Cramer, Will Durfee, Michael Hancher, Russell Luepker, Alon McCormick, James Pacala, Ned Patterson, Rebecca Ropers-Huilman, George Sheets

Absent: Brian Buhr, Nancy Ehlke, Scott Lanyon, Elaine Tyler May, Jeff Ratliff-Crain

Guests: Board of Regents Vice Chair David Larson

Other: Associate Vice President Frances Lawrenz (Office of the Vice President for Research)

[In these minutes: (1) announcements from the chair; (2) Twin Cities Campus Curriculum Committee; (3) discussion with Regent Larson; (4) statement on the biennial request; (5) grade context posting options; (6) discussion with Vice President Herman]

1. Announcements from the Chair

Professor Kohlstedt called the meeting to order at 12:15 and made several announcements.

-- Professor Ziegler, the representative from the Duluth Medical School, has taken a position outside the University so will no longer be a member of the Committee. She thanked him for his service.

-- The meeting with Board of Regents Chair and Vice Chair Cohen and Larson has been postponed; there will be a short conversation with Regent Larson at today's meeting.

-- Professor Cramer received a significant service award from the College of Science and Engineering and has also been appointed Associate Dean for Academic Affairs for the college. Committee members gave him a round of applause.

2. Twin Cities Campus Curriculum Committee

Committee members agreed to close the meeting in order to have a discussion about the Twin Cities Campus Curriculum Committee. The Committee reviewed the charge and touched on the rationale for the committee, the transparency of its work, its communication with the faculty, the financial implications of its decisions, and the schedule for conducting its business.

There was agreement that the charge to the Campus Curriculum Committee is reasonable and that the committee should be encouraged to clarify its mechanisms of communication and that the academic

* These minutes reflect discussion and debate at a meeting of a committee of the University of Minnesota Senate; none of the comments, conclusions, or actions reported in these minutes represents the views of, nor are they binding on, the Senate, the Administration, or the Board of Regents.

community should be informed about its agendas and work. It should also be made clear if faculty members may propose items for discussion by the Campus Curriculum Committee.

3. Discussion with Regent Larson

Professor Kohlstedt welcomed Regent Larson to the meeting. The schedule originally called for an hour's discussion with Board of Regents Chair Linda Cohen and Vice Chair David Larson but the passing April winter storm precluded Regent Cohen from attending; Regent Larson agreed to join the meeting for half an hour. Regents Cohen and Larson will attend a May meeting of the Committee.

Professor Kohlstedt noted that the period "3x3x3" meeting took place yesterday; the group includes the Board of Regents chair, vice chair, and executive director (3), the president, the provost, and the president's chief of staff (3), and the Faculty Consultative Committee chair, vice chair, and staff. Several items came up that it was thought worthwhile for Regents Cohen and Larson to have a conversation with the Committee about. One of them was the relationship between the faculty (governance leaders and others) in light of the recent "no confidence" vote by the faculty of Louisiana State University over the conduct of the presidential search at that institution. The question posed was whether the faculty and regents at Minnesota could find themselves in that position.

Regent Larson observed that one must be aware that most people who join the Board of Regents are skilled individuals who have had leadership roles in society—but they have not experienced a shared governance system. From what he has seen at the University, the shared governance system works quite well because of the level of trust among the participants. Everyone is agreed on making the University a great institution for the benefit of the state, the students, and the people who work for it. In his years on the Board, he can recall no situation when things got out of hand. The Board appreciates the commitment and engagement of the faculty and he hopes the faculty feel the same way about Board members. Board members serve because they realize how important the University is for the state, nation, and the world.

The idea of shared governance includes a recognition that the faculty and the Board have different roles to play and the two are in a consultative relationship, Regent Larson said. In some cases, the Board must make decisions, but it will not make very many without consulting with the faculty. He noted, for example, that there was a large number of faculty members on the last presidential search committee; those faculty members had a significant voice in the process that led to the appointment of a great president who will take the University to a higher level—with the help of the faculty. The Board and the faculty must work very closely together for the benefit of the state and the University.

Professor Kohlstedt enumerated the interactive governance mechanisms in place: the 3x3x3 meetings, the invitation of senate committee chairs and other faculty members to meetings of the Board and its committees, the annual dinner with the Board and this Committee, the meeting today, and visits by Board members to various parts of the institution a number of times each year. Are those sufficient?

Regent Larson said that he thought they are and that it was a good idea, instituted in the last several years, for Board members to spend time on the campuses trying to connect with constituents and obtain insights and understandings about the issues that faculty, staff, and students face. The Board does not have all the right answers, they are not educators, and sometimes they do not know or understand all the issues. In the past these interactions were less frequent and there was friction between the Board and the faculty.

The Committee discussed with Regent Larson the successful scholarship program he has established at the University and how, through work with the University of Minnesota Foundation, the number of students might be expanded from the current 50 who are supported.

Professor Cloyd said that it seems there are forces affecting the University's drive to be efficient while also maintaining its excellence. He asked what the Board sees with respect to the need to increase efficiency.

Regent Larson pointed out that he served in a large, complex, global company (Cargill), and when he was on the leadership team, he led an effort, in human resources, to increase employee engagement. They do a survey of employee engagement every year; the first year about 51% of employees said they were engaged, which is about average for Fortune 500 companies. Anything over 77% is considered world class; last year's survey at Cargill had a 79% employee engagement rate. Employee engagement makes a huge difference, Regent Larson said, and he believes the same level of engagement is possible at the University, and to that end he is offering advice to Vice President Brown (Human Resources) on improving human resources management and leadership. In his opinion, if one wants a high-performing organization, it must have a high level of employee engagement.

Is that related to efficiency and effectiveness, Professor Kohlstedt asked?

There will be a lot of innovation when employees are engaged, Regent Larson said, and it will be from the bottom up, with employees taking leadership on issues the senior leaders have no idea about. That innovation can have a significant impact on an organization. Most large, complex organizations have an enormous opportunity in this area and it can make a real difference.

Professor Kohlstedt asked what changes Regent Larson has seen during his eight years on the Board and what challenges he sees coming.

Regent Larson said that the first issue, in his mind, is employee engagement and human resources management. When changes are accomplished there, the University will discover many opportunities to eliminate waste. Every large organization has opportunities there, but first it must discover them and must get employees engaged in order to cut out the waste. He said he did not believe the University has the necessary level of engagement (not including groups such as this Committee). There are ways to cut costs without cutting people, and if an organization can do that, it is a path to greatness.

Regent Larson briefly discussed with the Committee ways that members of the Board interact with members of the legislature and ways for the University to improve its image and reputation with the legislature.

Professor Kohlstedt thanked Regent Larson for joining the Committee.

4. Statement on the Biennial Request

The Committee took up its draft statement on the University's biennial request, discussed a few wording changes, considered the utility of the statement, and thereafter adopted it unanimously.

The University of Minnesota Faculty Consultative Committee (FCC) is an elected body that represents the more than 4,000 faculty members at the University of Minnesota. It serves as the primary faculty consulting body to the president of the University and as the executive committee of the elected faculty senate. As representatives of the faculty we support the budget proposed by the University of Minnesota.

The FCC embraces the ideals of the land-grant mission, investments in which mission represent the nation's commitment to higher education and mobility for citizens through teaching, research, and service. A key to fulfilling this mission has been an enduring partnership with the State to fund investments that afford access by all citizens to education regardless of their individual circumstances.

Decreases in funding by the state leads to increases in tuition, the only way the University can continue to provide quality faculty, facilities, classrooms, and technologies that create a world-class environment for students to gain the knowledge to compete in an increasingly competitive global economy. Ultimately these funding cuts reduce access for those who do not have the personal or family resources to pay for their education, further widening disparities within society and eroding the mobility and participation necessary to maintain a thriving and vibrant civic democracy.

Decreases in funding for higher education by state and federal governments have also jeopardized the land-grant mission by reducing investments in the basic and applied research that serves to educate our students and further creates the foundation for economic growth and prosperity for all citizens.

While we understand that economic realities have created difficulties for public finance and budgets, attempts to stimulate growth by stifling education is a flawed strategy that chokes off the engine of innovation and knowledge necessary to grow Minnesota's economy. As demonstrated so clearly by our recent state budget gains, it is precisely this broad-based economic growth that offers the greatest potential to increase economic security for all strata of society and to improve the fiscal foundation of our public sector necessary for investments in health, education, and infrastructure.

For these reasons, we strongly support the University of Minnesota budget request for increased funding from the state to stabilize tuition and to improve students' educational experience through access to world class faculty and learning facilities. We also strongly endorse the MnDRIVE request, which represents significant investment to stimulate research that promises dramatic economic gains for the state in the long run. We also warmly endorse the strategies proposed by President Kaler to improve administrative and operational efficiencies at the University in order to better target funding to the mission-critical areas of teaching, research, and outreach.

We urge the legislature to support appropriations to meet these goals of the University of Minnesota, recognizing that this is an investment in the students we teach, in the businesses of Minnesota through their application of innovations from the University, and in the employment of highly educated and creative citizens grounded in and the arts and sciences. It is, finally, an investment in cultural and civic engagement that attracts creative people and that leads to the sustained economic and cultural prosperity for which Minnesota has long been known.

5. Grade Context Posting Options

Professor Kohlstedt recalled the discussion at the Faculty Senate the previous week about the options for posting grading information to provide context for those considering transcripts. This is an issue that has been simmering for a couple of years, she observed, and one question from the Senate discussion, in her view, is why the subject is still being talked about. There was, moreover, no agreement on what should be done. As Professor Lanyon commented at the last meeting, the question is what is beneficial for students. With no momentum in favor of any particular option, but with agreement that the University should not spend a lot of money on what choice might be made, Professor Kohlstedt said she believed the Committee should recommend that some action be taken without taking dramatic and expensive steps.

The origin of the discussion was a concern about grade inflation, Professor Kohlstedt said, but the availability of grades on Myedu.com and on other sites has had no effect on it. Reporting grades could slow down or speed up inflation, depending on what point one wants to argue.

Professor Kohlstedt suggested that the Committee recommend to the students and the administration that students be given access to UM Reports to the extent that they would be able to view grading data for departments or programs. She noted Professor May's concern that providing grade access to students at the course level could be misleading (e.g., students in a small advanced course might legitimately all receive an A grade, but it could appear that the instructor was giving out easy grades).

The Committee concurred. Professor Kohlstedt said she would draft a motion for the next meeting.

6. Discussion with Vice President Herman

Professor Kohlstedt now welcomed Vice President Herman to the meeting and noted the four questions that had been posed in advance.

1) After four months on the job, what are you finding are the most exciting potential prospects for your role as Vice President for Research, perhaps unanticipated? Alternatively, what are some of the significant challenges?

Vice President Herman said that this is a fabulous institution, but before he came to Minnesota he had heard very little about it. There are collective successes here about which the University does not do a good enough job of getting the message out to the world. He has been extremely pleased to learn how successful the University is.

The University of Minnesota is already one of the top ten research universities in the country in terms of research expenditures, Dr. Herman said, and what is important for him is that President Kaler has set an ambitious goal to move even higher. The goal is an ideal; to move into the very top would require the University to double its research funding, something that would be very difficult in the current funding environment.

Everyone at the University has been very nice and very helpful, Dr. Herman said, and the faculty, the leadership, the deans, and others have been very consultative and collaborative. He is trying to reach out to everyone he can. He said, however, that he had no idea how cold it could get in Minnesota, and that has required an adjustment.

In terms of research, there are many opportunities here because the University has a great infrastructure base and intellectual capability, Vice President Herman said. His goal is to support a successful research enterprise and he believes the University can obtain legislative support for it. He is working on a research infrastructure fund, bridging funds, with the provost's office and others to provide funding to attract faculty members in the National Academies, and on grant programs to foster new research and infrastructure. In addition, light rail is coming to his office because of the need for testing to determine if the mitigation standards have been met. The Provost's Interdisciplinary Committee will be looking at guidelines for research institutes and centers.

All in all, he is excited to be at the University, with its great possibilities.

The one constant in life is change, Dr. Herman said, and his office will be working with others as a group to address challenges. His office has begun a strategic planning process that will be very consultative, will reach out to stakeholders, and the outcome will help to determine University research directions. The president intends to start a strategic planning process for the institution later in the summer; the one in his office will dovetail with the president's.

With respect to challenges, Dr. Herman said he has not seen any significant, difficult challenge. There has been a national concern about the privatization of public research universities, but Minnesota is well off by comparison to some institutions. The legislature is very supportive of the University, as is business and industry, and there is also support for bringing the public and private sectors together. He has seen nothing that reasonable people cannot accomplish.

2) What plans do you have to help advance research in the humanities?

One of the reasons he came to Minnesota was because he takes seriously the language of the mission about using research for social good, making changes in society and the world. There are a number of pieces to doing so, one of which is the humanities. His office has grants to support the humanities and he would like to see more partnerships that bring humanities to the table as partners for social improvement. Dr. Herman related the story of Dean Kamen, the Segway inventor, who also developed a device to turn dirty water into clean water that could be used in third-world countries; in the process of making it accessible, he had to rely on cultural, political, and marketing experts—all of whom came not from the hard/natural sciences but from the humanities and social sciences. That is one example of the collaboration he would like to try to create that lead to efforts to have a social impact, efforts requiring the sciences and the humanities to improve life.

Dr. Herman noted that his wife is an artist and he has served on the boards of artistic organizations—and raised money for them. He has, he said, a strong appreciation of the role of the arts in society.

Professor Kohlstedt said there are ways to use the local arts community to engage faculty research; would he like to see the University engage more with non-profit organizations?

Dr. Herman said it is important that the University become closer to its communities because they are a tremendous resource of intellect, history, and knowledge; the University must be a more engaged, integrated partner with the community.

Professor Bearinger said that as his office begins a strategic planning process, she would like him to think about how to engage the Senate Research Committee in it as well as this Committee. Dr. Herman said he has a long list of stakeholders and faculty governance is a large part of the list. He will err on the side of being over-consultative because he is a strong believer in shared governance. Many committees are likely to be approached.

Professor Hancher inquired about Dr. Herman's relationship with the associate deans for research in the colleges. There was a clear relationship when the Graduate School was the site for research; since then, there has been more definition of the role of research associate deans; how does his office articulate with them? Dr. Herman noted the existence of the Council of Research Associate Deans (CRAD), and both Drs. Lawrenz and Sundermeyer from his office attend every meeting. He has met with them twice so far and has talked with them about how his office can be helpful in supporting research in the future. He has asked them to define the top 7-10 areas of University research strength and international reputation; their views will be part of the strategic planning process. He meets with the individual associate deans if they have issues they wish to talk about; they can contact him any time. Is that process working well, Professor Hancher asked? He has only been in office for three months so it is too early to tell, Dr. Herman said, and the request to define research strengths will be a kind of test. He told CRAD that they would not be the only ones working on the question; he will also ask the deans and review other data.

Professor Bearinger recalled that the first year she served as chair of the Senate Research Committee she served on the Provost's Research Council, which she found fruitful as a way to look at the different ways people are involved in research. It does not exist any longer but it has the potential to deal with some of the issues Dr. Herman has been addressing. Dr. Herman reiterated his point that he will meet with many people to get as much feedback as he can.

Professor Luepker said that as the University renegotiates its relationship with Fairview, one question is their support of research. The Medical School is developing a strategic plan, of which research is an important part. Is Dr. Herman's office involved in that effort? It is, Dr. Herman said, and he is also on the search committee to identify Dr. Friedman's successor. The president's charge to the search committee is that he wants a dean of the Medical School first and a vice president second; the dean is to focus on rebuilding the Medical School. He has also been asked to be more engaged in the Fairview discussions and will be going to the Fairview strategic planning retreat to be sure that research is not forgotten.

3) What are you learning about the effects of sequestration on research in health fields, in the sciences and engineering, and in other areas where federal funding is significant at the university? What kind of plans are in place to address short-term issues and to plan a longer term strategy if necessary?

Dr. Herman said that the effects of sequestration this year will not be significant. NSF is cut 3%, NIH and Defense are cut 5%, but the agencies have considerable flexibility in how they handle the cuts

and most are handling it reasonably well. The real danger is next year and the years after that; the budget agreement calls for cuts of \$85 billion each year. If that remains in place, there will be a much greater problem for the scientific enterprise in the United States. He has met with staff from Senator Franken's office and they are aware of the implications of continuing cuts.

As for this year, there will be a bridge program in place for PIs in need, and they are making one-time investments on a shared basis with the colleges. He said he was not sure about graduate summer training but he, Vice Provost Schroeder, and Provost Hanson will make everyone whole this year. The real issue is what happens next year with the federal budget, he repeated, and history has not always been kind when agreements are reached.

Professor Kohlstedt asked if Dr. Herman sees a differential impact across campus with agency funding reductions. The biggest University funders are NIH and NSF, Dr. Herman said. Professor Bearinger reported that on the ground, they are hearing that they don't know if they will be funded again. Some agencies may be more cautious, Dr. Herman said. What he has been hearing is in general, not about individual projects. But the National Cancer Institute will be funding at the 50% level, unlike the other agencies that are funding at the 90% level. If the cuts continue, NIH will have fewer grants and more applicants. Agencies, however, are being circumspect because they do not want to be boxed into a corner.

4) Do you and the Provost have ideas or plans to advance research at the all-University level, such as applications to foundations for particular programs or projects?

The long-term strategy will address what the University must do to create a more competitive infrastructure in order to be successful, and collaborative research will be an important piece of that strategy. The University must create opportunities for faculty to mix, in a non-rigid environment. He and the provost have been charged by the president to identify barriers to interdisciplinary research and teaching by September; they hope to help identify opportunities where the University is good and where it can lead. They are also working closely with the University of Minnesota Foundation on raising money for research because philanthropy needs to be part of the picture.

One reason for question #4 is because it seems the University does not do well with major foundations (Sloan, Mellon, etc.), Professor Kohlstedt said; will there be initiatives with them? Dr. Herman said he could not answer the question today; the combined foundations (Minnesota Medical and University of Minnesota) are looking for a CEO. He is spending more time with foundation leaders to convince them that there are many areas at the University that are a good investment (and they agree). Virtually the entire leadership team at the University is new and there are public demands being made on the University as a research institution (e.g., light rail) and his office has been asked to serve as a coalescing site for economic-development activities to show the community that the University can help. Vice Provost Carney also has a program underway to get people nominated for the national academies (one problem is that people do not want to fill out the forms).

On the last point, Professor Kohlstedt observed that there are departments that do a very good job of nominating faculty members for awards and memberships. It is a matter of creating a culture where people believe they should do so.

Professor Cloyd asked about intramural funding and the research and scholarly advisory panel to provide advice. The amount of intramural funding at the University is astounding and most faculty members do not realize its size and scope, which means that they are losing opportunities to apply for an receive the initial support they need. There is also a psychological effect because they do not know that the University provides support. There needs to be more awareness and every faculty member should be provided a list of the University money spent in the University on research. There is also the problem that when he asks who the experts in an area are, people do not know the breadth and depth of University expertise. Dr. Herman said that he asks a number of people and when he receives similar answers, he assumes they are accurate.

Three very important letters are ICR, Professor Luepker commented. With respect to seeking foundation support, he noted that his school (Public Health) has a \$20-million grant from the R. W. Johnson Foundation, but it only carries 20% indirect costs. The Committee has been told that even when the University receives the full 51% indirect costs agreed to with the federal government, it still loses money on every research dollar brought in because the true indirect costs are 61%. Some of his colleagues are skeptical about that number.

Vice President Herman said the University funds 22% of research, so it does help everyone out. Indirect costs are an interesting game. There is a formula for what an institution can count when it negotiates with OMB, such as lights, laboratories, etc. What the federal government did was cap the administrative component at 26% but it did not cap the facilities portion. So the institutions build more buildings because they can receive facilities funding, but they can never recover the administrative costs. When it is said that the University loses money on research, that is because it cannot cover administrative costs. Moreover, the University often does not recover the 51%; the average is about 35%. But the University still wants to do research and must figure out how to pay for it. But it does not fully recover its costs, he agreed.

Dr. Herman said he has been through a number of negotiations with OMB on indirect costs, and institutions work hard to gather data.

Professor Hancher said that information technology is a necessary support for all research. Does Dr. Herman see the University, five years out, as prepared to provide the information technology support it will need for research in the aggregate, or are there things it must do to get ready? The University is not ready, Dr. Herman responded, and he has reconstituted the University of Minnesota Informatics Initiative (UMII) because one of his top emphases is to build a more robust informatics infrastructure across the institution for the sciences. It is clear that "big data" is here, in every science, and it is also clear that there is no idea about the way to store, analyze, and use big data. The University is not now able to be competitive in using big data—and it will likely be a big ticket item for it to become competitive. He is working with Vice President Studham and faculty from across the colleges.

Professor Kohlstedt noted that Professor Hancher is involved in the digital humanities; Dr. Herman alluded to the sciences. How can the University be sure that other fields will also be able to deal with data? Dr. Herman said that Wendy Lougee, the University Librarian, is on the UMII and he has asked her about the digital humanities. The University of Minnesota Press also reports to his office and faces questions about printing books and electronic monographs and how to monetize them. His office is deeply involved in the digital humanities.

Professor Bearinger said, apropos of long-term investments, the most important quality of a good leader is the ability to discriminate between investments and expenses. Sometimes that distinction is missing at the University. She has heard that in the Academic Health Center it may be the position that the University will not provide matching dollars for any grant that does not require them. The University cannot be competitive without strategic matches that show support for faculty grant proposals; twice she has been given the feedback on NIH summary statements that a weakness of her proposal is the lack of matching funds and neither of them required a match. Dr. Herman said that there is no policy in his office to bar matching funds and that they will provide them when asked if a good case can be made for them. Professor Bearinger said the University needs to be clear that matching funds are an investment.

Professor Durfee asked what the amount per year of the 22% of research costs that are internally funded and whether that is the right amount. Committee members discussed the amount with Dr. Herman; it is not clear what the total is because it depends on what is counted. The figure may, however, be around \$200 million. Professor Luepker inquired how much research funding the University receives that carries no indirect-cost funding, such as from industry groups. Dr. Herman said that he is philosophically opposed to tying the research the University does to the amount of money the research can make—it must do good work for the sake of doing good work and research cannot be driven by whether it receives 51%, 25%, or 10% in indirect costs. The University should, for example, continue to seek training grants even though they only carry 8% in indirect funding.

Professor Kohlstedt thanked Dr. Herman for joining the Committee for the conversation, and adjourned the meeting at 3:00.

-- Gary Engstrand

University of Minnesota