

# UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

## TWIN CITIES CAMPUS ASSEMBLY MINUTES

**Feb. 18, 1988**

The second meeting of the Twin Cities Campus Assembly was convened in 25 Law Center on Thursday, February 18, 1988, at 3:15 p.m. Checking or signing the roll as present were 114 voting members of the faculty, 40 voting members of the student body, 2 ex-officio, and 15 nonmembers. Professor Charles Campbell presided.

### I. MINUTES FOR OCTOBER 29

**Action (2 minutes)**

*Approved*

### II. CALENDAR COMMITTEE

**Action (15 minutes)**

#### MOTION:

That the Assembly approve the 1989-90 calendar for the Twin Cities campus:

#### 1989-1990 TWIN CITIES CAMPUS CALENDAR

##### Fall Quarter, 1989 (50)\*

September 21	Thursday	Fall Quarter classes begin
November 23-24	Thursday-Friday	Thanksgiving holiday-no classes
December 1	Friday	Last day of instruction
December 2-3	Saturday-Sunday	Study Days
December 4-9	Monday-Saturday	Final examinations

##### Winter Quarter, 1990 (49)\*

January 2	Tuesday	Winter Quarter classes begin
January 15	Monday	Martin Luther King holiday-no classes
March 12	Monday	Last day of instruction
		<u>No Study Day</u>
March 13-19	Tuesday-Saturday & Monday	Final examinations

##### Spring Quarter, 1990 (49)\*

March 26	Monday	Spring Quarter classes begin
May 28	Monday	Memorial Day holiday-no classes
June 1	Friday	Last day of instruction
June 2	Saturday	Study Day
June 4-9	Monday-Saturday	Final examinations

##### Summer Session I, 1990 (25)\*

June 12	Tuesday	First Summer Session classes begin
July 4	Wednesday	Independence Day holiday-no classes
July 17	Tuesday	Last day of instruction/Final exams

Summer Session II, 1990 (25)\*

July 19	Thursday	Second Summer Session classes begin
August 22	Wednesday	Last day of instruction/Final exams

\* = number of instruction days

**1989-1990 HOLIDAYS (TOTAL: 11 HOLIDAYS)**

July 4	Tuesday	Independence Day holiday
September 4	Monday	Labor Day holiday
November 23	Thursday	Thanksgiving holiday
November 24	Friday	(Floating holiday)
December 22	Friday	(Floating holiday)
December 25	Monday	Christmas holiday
December 26	Tuesday	(Floating holiday)
January 1	Monday	New Year's Day holiday
January 15	Monday	Martin Luther King holiday-no classes
May 28	Monday	Memorial Day holiday
(Unassigned)		(Personal floating holiday)

**WILLIAM VAN ESSEDELFT**  
Chair

*Approved*

**III. REPORT OF THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE  
FOR THE TWIN CITIES ASSEMBLY STEERING COMMITTEE**

**Action by the Faculty Assembly (5 minutes)**

**MOTION:**

That the Faculty Assembly approve the following slate: David Dittman, Warren Ibele, J. Bruce Overmier, Burton Shapiro.

**INFORMATION:**

The Special Nominating Committee (approved by the Assembly on October 29) to fill two 1988-91 Twin Cities faculty terms on the Senate Consultative Committee presents the following four names, from which two are to be elected by mail ballot by the faculty of the Twin Cities campus:

**DAVID DITTMAN:** 1985\*, Professor and Chairman of Accounting and Director of Accounting Research Center, Carlson School of Management. Committee participation: School of Management Executive Committee; School of Management Planning Committee; Search Committee for Associate Dean, School of Management; Search Committee for Controller, School of Management; Search Committee for University Budget Director. Other: Served on faculty at Northwestern and Duke Universities prior to joining the University faculty in 1985. Numerous involvements in college governance and University-wide planning, search, and executive committees at Duke University.

**WARREN IBELE:** 1947\*, Professor of Mechanical Engineering, Institute of Technology. University Senate Member, 1970-73, 1983-86, 1987-90. Committee participation: Senate Planning Committee; Senate Research Committee; Senate Committee on Resources and Planning (former chair); Senate Consultative Committee; University Health Services Committee (former chair); Advisory Task Force on Planning; IT Curriculum Committee; IT Promotions & Tenure Committee; Faculty Advisory Committee for North Central Accreditation Review for the University. Other: former Dean, Graduate School.

J. BRUCE OVERMIER: 1965\*, Professor of Psychology and Director of Center for Research in Learning Perception and Cognition, College of Liberal Arts. University Senate Member, 1974-75, 1978-79, 1980-83, 1985-87. Committee participation: Senate Faculty Affairs Committee; Senate Research Committee; Senate Planning Committee; Senate Facilitative Committee; Senate Committee on Committees; Senate Educational Development Committee; Senate Animal Care Committee; Student Fees Task Force; University Committee on Effort Certification; Graduate School Research and Development Council; Task Force on the Quality of Graduate Education and Research; CLA Assembly; CLA Council for Policy, Planning & Budget. Other: former President of AAUP; former member, Board of Directors, U of M Faculty Association.

BURTON SHAPIRO: 1966\*, Professor and Chairman of Oral Biology, School of Dentistry; Professor of Laboratory Medicine and Pathology, Medical School; Professor, Center for Humanistic Studies, College of Liberal Arts. University Senate member, 1968-72. Committee participation: Ad Hoc Committee to Examine Human Genetics at University (former Chair); Selection Committee, Searle Scholars Program; Campus Fulbright Committee; Intercollegiate Task Force to Review Biochemistry Programs (former chair); University Press Committee; Health Sciences Policy & Review Council, Graduate School (former chair); Task Force on Doctoral Programs (former chair); Council of Basic Health Sciences.

The Assembly Steering Committee is also the Assembly Executive Committee and forms the Twin Cities membership of the Senate Consultative Committee. Additional nominations, certified as willing to stand for election, may be made by (1) petition of 12 voting members of the faculties, provided that the petition is in the hands of the clerk of the Twin Cities Campus Assembly the day before the Twin Cities Campus Assembly meeting; (2) nominations on the floor of the Assembly. The faculty representatives of the Twin Cities Campus Assembly shall reduce by vote the slate to twice the number to be elected.

Currently serving with terms continuing at least through next year are Mark Brenner, College of Agriculture; Shirley Clark, College of Education; Ronald Phillips, College of Agriculture; Kathleen Price, Law School; and W. Phillips Shively, College of Liberal Arts.

The terms of Ellen Berscheid, College of Liberal Arts, and Richard Goldstein, Institute of Technology, expire at the end of this academic year.

**MARIAH SNYDER, Chr.**  
**ROBERT BECK**  
**EDWARD GRIFFIN**  
**IRWIN RUBENSTEIN**  
**DAVID STORVICK**

\*Date of initial appointment at the University

*Approved*

#### **IV. STEERING COMMITTEE**

##### **NOMINATING COMMITTEE, COMMITTEE ON COMMITTEES**

##### **Action by Faculty Assembly (5 minutes)**

##### **MOTION:**

That the following persons be approved as members of a nominating committee to provide a slate from which the Faculty Assembly will elect 1988-91 members of the Committee on Committees: Brian Job (CLA), chair; Carl Adams (Management Sciences); Frank Enfield (Biological Sciences); Marian Pour-El (IT); and Paul Quie (Medicine).

**W. PHILLIPS SHIVELY**  
**Chair**

*Approved*

## V. EDUCATIONAL POLICY COMMITTEE STUDENT ACADEMIC SUPPORT SERVICES COMMITTEE

### GRADING POLICY Action (20 minutes)

#### MOTION:

That the Assembly adopt an eleven point +/- grading system as the official grading system of the Twin Cities campus. The following letter grade and point assignments are proposed:

A = 4.0	C+ = 2.3
A- = 3.7	C = 2.0
B+ = 3.3	C- = 1.7
B = 3.0	D+ = 1.3
B- = 2.7	D = 1.0
	F = 0

This system should take effect as soon as Student Academic Support Services can make the appropriate changes.

#### COMMENT:

An extensive faculty and student survey indicated strong support for the +/- grading system. Of 527 responding faculty, 71.7% favored the +/- system. Of 892 responding students 56.4% favored the +/- system, 33.4% favored the current system, and 10.2% stated no preference or no response. The committee feels that the +/- system is more thorough and fair than the current system. Some faculty feel that grading is not as precise as the +/- system would indicate. Also, the point was made that "all-A" students might find their GPA lowered.

#### ADDITIONAL COMMENT:

The Student Academic Support Services Committee considered plus/minus grading at the request of the College of Liberal Arts. The committee had the benefit of materials and arguments used in forwarding the CLA request. The committee then surveyed faculty (527) and students (892). Surveys were mailed to one half of the fall quarter 1986 teaching faculty and 85% were returned. Surveys were systematically distributed to students on the St. Paul campus during grade distribution for fall 1986 and to students in Minneapolis during winter 1987 registration. Student returns were 88%. The questionnaire presented the 11-point plus/minus system and asked the responder if he/she preferred the current system, the proposed plus/minus system or no preference. Responses were: Students—34% for current system, 55% for plus/minus system, and 10% no preference; Faculty—24% for current system, 72% for plus/minus system, and 4% no preference. All data were collected by college and the means were adjusted by college size. Complete copies of the survey results are on file with the Senate clerk.

Faculty are concerned about the integrity and resolution of the grading system as well as the reinforcing quality and fairness of specific grades. Students are concerned about the impact of more specific grades on GPA and overemphasis on grades.

The Assembly tabled this issue last quarter and requested information about the impact of the change on GPA's. It is impossible to get accurate information of this nature. A study of schools that have changed systems only provides information on GPA's movement over time—a movement that occurs with or without grading changes. Conversion of plus/minus systems to our system and observing the results falsely assumes that faculty grade assignments are not affected by the system in place. Nevertheless, the committee reviewed our only available experience—Duluth, which uses the plus/minus system. Duluth GPA's were recalculated after dropping the pluses and minuses. The mean GPA of 6,246 students in spring quarter, 1987 (the last data available) was 2.694. After dropping pluses and minuses, the mean was 2.705. An in-depth look at effects on grade distributions among liberal

arts students showed an increase in the number of 4.0 GPA's after conversion to our system (from 3.1% at Duluth to 7.4% without plus/minuses). This was due to deletion of the A minus.

The committee discussed some variations of the Duluth system including the assignment of an A plus (4.3). The records office could incorporate 4.3 in the GPA calculation but still limit the overall GPA to 4.0. The committee believes that, if a change is to be made, adoption of a system common to all campuses is advantageous.

The committee believes that the adoption of a plus/minus system will allow more accurate recording of student performance evaluations.

The Assembly Committee on Educational Policy unanimously endorses the motion to establish an eleven-point +/– grading system for the Twin Cities campus. The committee believes that greater specificity in grading will serve useful educational and informational purposes. In supporting the motion, ACEP commends the Student Academic Support Services Committee for determining that Twin Cities faculty members and students support the proposed system before recommending that the Assembly adopt it.

**JOHN P. CLARK, Chr.**  
**Educational Policy Committee**

**RICHARD JONES, Chr.**  
**Student Academic Support Services Committee**

*A motion to adopt a 12-point plus/minus grading system to be used in grade reports but not in GPA computations was defeated and the original motion was defeated.*

## **VI. INTERCOLLEGIATE ATHLETICS COMMITTEE**

### **INTERIM REPORT Information (5 minutes)**

The committee continues to pursue its principal objective of greater integration of academics and athletics at the University of Minnesota. To that end, a total of about 30 faculty members interacted with potential student athletes in football during their campus visit on one of three weekends in January. We commend the football coaching staff for the comprehensive informational program which these recruits were exposed to during their visit. Each recruit met with the athletic academic counseling staff and with one or more representatives from the academic area of interest.

We are disappointed that legislation to identify minimum grade point averages for participation eligibility at the national level was approved and then rescinded five hours later at the recent NCAA convention. Minnesota continues to support such legislation. Our local policy requires a 2.00 GPA for participation. It also contains a provision that a majority of the faculty members of ACIA can restore eligibility if the Big 10 Conference minimum GPA is met. The policy clearly states that such petitions should utilize nonathletic reasons only. Three such restorations were approved for winter quarter only. In all three cases, the individuals showed evidence of improved academic performance and also had extenuating circumstances contributing to previous poorer performance.

The committee is troubled that allegations of mistreatment by faculty of certain classes of students, including athletes, continue to surface. We are committed to pursuing such complaints when they involve athletes as part of our effort to achieve better relationships between athletic and academic components of this institution. As the institution demands improved academic performance of student athletes, it is equally appropriate to demand responsible behavior of faculty toward all students. We welcome suggestions and comments concerning academic aspects of our intercollegiate athletic programs and are appreciative of all faculty, staff, and student support and participation in the programs.

**DEON D. STUTHMAN**  
**Chair**

*Accepted; see Abstract*

## VII. PLACEMENT SERVICES COMMITTEE

### ANNUAL REPORT, 1986-87

The Placement Services Committee met several times this year to respond to the charge to develop policy and guidelines for on-campus recruitment on the Twin Cities campus. Several of these meetings were attended by representatives of the PSO and other student organizations who had interest in the issues being discussed. Work of the committee was also coordinated with the Social Concerns Committee of the University Senate, which was working on related but slightly different aspects of the same problem.

A recruitment policy was developed which was adopted by the Assembly and appears on pages 25-27 of the Assembly minutes of May 14, 1987.

**LEE D. STAUFFER**  
Chair

*Accepted*

## VIII. OLD BUSINESS

none

## IX. NEW BUSINESS

(15 minutes)

none

## X. ADJOURNMENT

### ABSTRACT

The assembly was called to order by Charles Campbell, vice chair, at 3:15 p.m. in 25 Law Center. Minutes of the last meeting were accepted.

*Calendar Committee.* William Van Essendelft, associate director of Extension Classes and chair of the committee, presented the 1989-1990 calendar, which was approved without debate.

*Steering Committee.* Mariah Snyder, professor of nursing and chair of the nominating committee, presented the names of four faculty members from which two would be elected to serve three-year terms on the Steering Committee starting in July. There being no discussion, the slate was approved.

*Committee on Committees.* W. Phillips Shively, professor of political science and chair of the Steering Committee, presented the membership of a nominating committee to fill next year's vacancies on the Committee on Committees. It was approved forthwith.

*Grading Policy.* Richard Jones, professor of entomology and chair of the Student Academic Support Services Committee, re-introduced a proposal for an 11-point plus-minus grading system. Additional information provided since the last Assembly meeting included a recalculation of Duluth GPAs after dropping the pluses and minuses, resulting in a small increase in the mean GPA for spring quarter. He reported that six Big Ten institutions use more than an A through F system, four of which use a system with 10 to 12 levels. The committee compared year to year Twin Cities campus GPA fluctuations with those of institutions using the plus-minus system but concluded that it was difficult to draw conclusions because of normal fluctuations in the GPA. Each faculty member would have to decide whether the plus-minus system was precise and accurate and whether it could be used with validity. As to the point that there would be more argument about grades, he maintained there would be less disagreement because there would be less to argue about.

On behalf of four senators, Andrea Moses, student, introduced a partial substitution to the motion which proposed a 12-point plus-minus system to be used in the grade reports but not included in computing the GPA. She said it would answer the student argument that the 11-point system would discriminate against A students and would respond to the question of the arbitrary nature of letter grades. It would allow the faculty greater specificity in grading and, if anyone cared to see where a student was in a class, the grades would be available on the transcript. There was no further discussion of her amendment and it was defeated.

Bruce Vandal, chair of the Student Twin Cities Steering Committee, claimed that no specific need for change had been identified and that other options had not been considered; the University would not be getting a policy tailored for its particular needs. With regard to the precision argument, he said that in a large university, where there are many sections of the same class, there is often more than one person grading papers with differences of opinion as to the plus-minus grades. He said the student body had made an informed decision and cited the opposition of the MSA Forum, the Student Intermediary Board, and many student petitions.

Mr. Shively then reported that the Steering Committee had voted unanimously in favor of the change but recognized that the "world probably wouldn't cease to turn either way." Tim Erickson, chair of the MSA Educational Affairs Committee, reported that he had gone out among students to get personal opinions and discovered overwhelming opposition. He also had several petitions with hundreds of signatures. He said that the ideal system would be for a professor to sit down with a student at the end of a quarter for a personal evaluation, which is impractical at the University. However, grades do not always reflect where a student stands, he claimed, and by instituting the new system even more emphasis would be placed on grades.

Thomas Clayton, professor of English, favored the motion because it would offer finer discrimination for recognizing effort and achievement. He said it was closer to a numerical grading system, which some institutions use and which he himself used. He pointed out that faculty members would not be compelled to use plus-minus but he believed the opportunity should be offered to the ultimate benefit of the student. He suggested addition of a computable A + . Matthew Traxler, student, said that in his class with Professor Clayton teaching assistants had graded each of two exams, and there was no consistency in their grading as often occurred in large classes with a number of sections where grading was by individuals with differing perceptions of grade levels. He maintained that a built-in margin of error in the grading system was important. Further, a plus-minus system would take the emphasis away from learning and place it on grading, which would put the cart before the "horse." He claimed that the UMD survey covered only one quarter, and he equated the conclusions with judging a Fellini film on the basis of one frame of a movie. He begged senators to consider that, if even small changes in GPAs could have an impact on students, such as making the difference of going to Harvard or Iowa State, a change should not be made. Mr. Clayton asked time to explain that in a course with 100 students and two teaching assistants his choice was to divide grading so the result would be an average of the two teaching assistants throughout the quarter, which he viewed as a fair procedure under the circumstances.

Mr. Jones maintained that his committee had considered a number of alternatives and had finally concluded that the plus-minus would be the best way to provide a more precise grading system for the University. He again stated the issue came down to deciding whether under a more precise system a person would grade more accurately. A motion to extend the discussion by five minutes was defeated 69 to 54, and the original motion was defeated.

*Intercollegiate Athletics Committee.* John Clark, professor of sociology and committee member, said that with considerable personal pleasure he could report that the cumulative GPA report for women athletes last quarter was 2.88, showing steady improvement over the past three years. It now matched the average of the University for the first time. The GPA for the men's department was 2.66, which was still not at the University average, he said, but it too had been improving over the same period. He credited progress partially to the work of the academic counseling unit within the athletic departments.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:45 p.m.

**MARILEE WARD**  
Abstractor