

Minutes*

**Senate Committee on Educational Policy
January 24, 1991**

Present: Thomas Clayton (chair), Martin Conroy, Joanne DeMoss, Edward Foster, Roland Guyotte, Ken Heller, Robert Jones, Karen Karni, Marvin Mattson, J. Kim Munholland, Clark Starr, Jennifer Wesson

Guest: JoAnne Stenberg (P&A)

1. Report of the Chair

Professor Clayton noted that he had set forth, on the printed agenda, most of the items to be included in the chair's report. One additional item he reported on: The faculty member for the articulation committee (reported on at the previous meeting) would not be needed; the administrators decided to take on the job themselves.

He next called for three volunteers to serve on a subcommittee to take up teaching evaluation. He had worked with information from Professor Fox in Psychology; he also had received materials prepared by Karen Karni. [The subcommittee remains to be constituted.]

2. Evaluation of Undergraduate Programs

Professor Clayton next drew the attention of Committee members to the revised set of questions to be used in the undergraduate portion of program reviews and expressed thanks to the subcommittee which drafted them. He distributed to Committee members a draft resolution concerning undergraduate program reviews; it could, if approved at the meeting, be forwarded to the Consultative Committee and the Senate for action. This resolution would serve as the implementing statement for the policy adopted last year by the Senate.

The Committee voted unanimously to forward the motion for action with the understanding that the language would be resolved to bring it into conformity with the Senate action of last year.

Committee members then again briefly reviewed the questions to be used in the reviews and made suggestions in a few places to clarify the intent.

One point raised and deliberated for some while had to do with the rewards for faculty contributions to undergraduate instruction: in addition to salary, promotion, travel, and program support, should the list include "respect"? Committee members agreed that some such term would be appropriate because faculty members committed to undergraduate education in many programs are accorded less status/respect/esteem/prestige.

The idea of including such a concept in the question is attractive, one Committee member

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observed, but trying to respond to it as part of question in a program review would be difficult. Even if not easy to answer, another commented, it might serve as the occasion for internal debate. How would a department document "respect," one Committee member inquired. It may only be a pious hope, it was responded, but including it would be a step in the right direction. "Respected and rewarded" was the phrase the Committee endorsed including.

The issue, one Committee member commented, is really survey courses: Are faculty given respect or credit for that kind of teaching, or is it devalued? There must be a way to get at that issue, it was said. It was agreed that a specific question about the extent to which senior faculty teach survey or service courses should be included. Professors Clayton, Heller, and Munholland were designated by the Committee to draft the question and include it in the final document to be presented to the Consultative Committee for the Senate docket. (The question was not prepared in time for inclusion in the docket and will likely be presented at the time of the Senate meeting.)

3. CIC Resolution on Teaching

Professor Clayton drew the attention of Committee members to the resolution on the importance of teaching which had been drafted by faculty leaders of the Committee on Institutional Cooperation (the Big Ten plus Chicago) when they met last November. The resolution contained a series of "whereas" clauses and a "therefore be it resolved" conclusion.

Some Committee members wondered if this would be simply another statement on teaching which would have no effect. It was suggested that this resolution, if adopted, could serve as the basis for the Committee to inquire annually of Academic Affairs what it had done to implement it. Administrative action to support improvement in teaching will be required in a number of ways, including, for example, incorporation of the program-review questions just formulated into the review process.

The Committee was not thrilled with the resolution. Committee members reviewed the various "whereas" clauses; several raised objections to them because the implications for teaching and research could ultimately be dangerous. In the words of one individual, the document has a number of serious deficiencies. After some discussion the Committee concluded it was entirely in sympathy with the "be it resolved" resolution but not the preceding justifying clauses. The Committee finally voted, with one abstention, to reject the document but to "heartily endorse" the sentiments of the resolution recognizing the importance of teaching.

4. Discussion of Reallocation

Professor Clayton began the discussion by reporting to the Committee that Consultative Committee members and Regents Professors had received a letter from Warren Ibele asking that they take action to lend support to the Restructuring and Reallocation plan. A resolution from the Committee, he commented, could be helpful, if it could agree on one.

The plan, he said, is an important one; it may be the last chance the University has "to avoid going down the tube." It needs very serious thought and strong support.

One Committee member said that he found incongruous the commitment to K-12 education and the

severe cut in the College of Education. Another Committee member responded that for many years the undergraduate education major was notorious; people who took degrees in math education or English education took relatively few substantive courses in the discipline and took instead many courses on education theory. The sentiment that appears to lie behind the reallocation is to set aside such majors and move responsibility for instruction in education to a fifth year. Undergraduates take a regular bachelor's degree and then do a fifth year of educational training.

Another aspect of the change, Dr. Foster explained, is that there are several fields where there are far more people being trained than there are job openings. According to figures from the State, Minnesota has 45,000 licensed teachers with teaching jobs and 45,000 licensed teachers not in teaching jobs. There is a proposal to reduce the size of three areas in particular: social science, English, and vocational-technical education.

The College was already doing away with the undergraduate education major, it was argued, so that reallocation had already occurred. Second, it was said, it is true that there are shortages in some areas but not in others, such as science and math education. Support in this latter area is "dismal" and increases have been consistently recommended. This plan, however, cuts more from Education than its 10%--so there is no reallocation, just cuts.

Dr. Foster pointed out that this is not completely true; there will be funds in the K-12 initiative which will flow to the College of Education, primarily for science and math education. Even though it may not be clear in the documents available to the Committee, the amounts identified for the K-12 initiative (which is one of the system-wide initiatives) are independent of the amounts reallocated to or taken from the individual colleges. The President has said he cannot specify the allocation of funds among the system-wide initiatives, because it will vary from year to year, and he does not want to start squabbling over money that is not yet available.

The problems with science and math education, however, have always existed because there are no recurring, targeted funds available; the efforts are always supported by special funds, in big chunks, that need to be spent immediately. There is no infrastructure which provide for continuing attention to and improvement of science and math education. Even worse, the College of Education has few resources to devote to this kind of education; their facilities are not as good as most high schools in the State. IT can use the funds for science and math education, it was said, but not alone; it will need the assistance of the College of Education.

Language education should be another concern, it was suggested.

This is a document of efficiency, one Committee member said, which is good corporate behavior--but efficiency may not be the best single criterion to use in measuring the production of good teachers. Another said that funds should be targeted for specific areas.

This plan clearly represents the triumph of the plan to educate teachers at the post-baccalaureate level, it was observed. The number of teachers not in teaching jobs reflects, in part, the fact that the strongest programs in the State Universities were for many years those in education--and many students went through those programs without any interest in going into teaching. It is also interesting that those institutions which provide teacher education only at the graduate level cannot be accredited in Minnesota.

That battle, however, will be won down the road; the University views that as setting maximum standards rather than minimal ones. What is most disturbing about the plans for the College of Education is that they put the main impetus for the quality and type of K-12 education in the hands of the State University System. Ideally, given the resources, the University would be providing most of the teacher training in the State--or at the very least ought to be setting the standards for teacher training.

Professor Clayton suggested that the sentiments being expressed touched upon serious matters and should be communicated to the administration. They need not necessarily be addressed in a more general Committee resolution on reallocation but they should not be lost. More information will be forthcoming, he noted, but the points made here should presumably have informed the thinking about the plans for Education. Dr. Foster said that they have and suggested that the Committee should have Dr. Kuhi's views on the subject. It was agreed that with the assistance of concerned Committee members Professor Clayton would send a letter to Dr. Kuhi outlining the reservations about the cuts in the College of Education. [The letter was sent February 3, 1991.]

One Committee member expressed the opinion that as one looks at the overall plan, and while there is not a one-to-one correspondence, those parts of the University that are rural or land-grant in orientation are the ones which are cut more. Dr. Foster responded. He noted that the transfer out of the College of Agriculture is a transfer into the Minnesota Extension Service and the Experiment Stations; essentially this will reduce the teaching loads in the College of Agriculture, giving more faculty time to non-teaching activities. The proposed closing of Waseca is matched by increases on other campuses in Greater Minnesota (although not one-for-one) and also matched by further increases in the Experiment Stations and Extension Service. Finally, he said, Waseca has too few students, many of those do not graduate, and in almost all cases there are local technical colleges which offer the same programs. Only two programs are not offered nearby: horse management and veterinary technology. These plans, he concluded, cannot be fairly interpreted as a reduction in support for rural Minnesota.

The education offered at technical colleges, it was said, is not up to the standards of that offered by the University. What appears to be an efficient decision may not prove to be so in the long run.

In an era of shrinking resources, another Committee member commented, efficiency is a legitimate issue. Although there are many things the University should be doing, in a perfect society, there are things it simply cannot do in the real one. Decisions must be based on what the University believes is most central to its mission. The University does many things which are wonderful and important to the State but which are not central to its survival--and survival is the question. It is for this reason that the Education cuts are bothersome; the education of K-12 students directly affects what the University does and how it operates. The faculty rails about how awful students are when they enter and about how much they do not know--but on the other hand the University will apparently not participate in deciding how they will be educated. None of this is to assert that the College of Education necessarily spends all of its money wisely; funds could probably be reallocated. But the document seems to say that it is not a central part of the University.

There is a related issue, it was suggested by another Committee member. One reason the University has the problems it does is that the State Universities and Community Colleges absorb an enormous amount of money. Whatever becomes a target of the reallocation plan, at least in some cases, is a University response to problems created by others. The University did not produce all of the 45,000

teachers who are not teaching; it was the major of choice of many State University students. There is a hint, at a couple of places in the document, that now that the University has shown the way in reallocation and economy, it would be nice if the other systems would do likewise. This outcome could be one of the most important outcomes of the document. There is much pork-barreling in higher education which the State can no longer afford; both the State and the University are being victimized by it. This issue, Dr. Foster said, is on several agendas. One of the main topics for discussion is combining the community colleges and technical colleges, although it will be politically difficult to accomplish the merger.

Professor Clayton asked for the Committee's pleasure. He suggested that it might wish to endorse strongly the plan in spirit--as well as a good deal of the substance--and perhaps indicate that additional comments will be forthcoming when more details are available. He expressed the view that it is essential for the Committee to endorse the document.

Another Committee member speculated that the President and Academic Vice President would find it helpful to have endorsement. Recognizing that the details have not yet been provided, they would probably be happy with endorsement in principle. It was pointed out that this is the position that the Senate Committee on Finance and Planning has taken. It is probably not necessary to go out on a limb as far as the details are concerned in advance of their presentation to the public or the Committee.

Students at the Finance and Planning meeting, the Committee was told, came away with considerable concern about the issues left up in the air, such as the financial aid and tuition picture and had accordingly on the vote. That description of events is not completely accurate, the Committee was also told; Senior Vice President Donhowe addressed the tuition question directly: He told the committee that the reallocation plan would have, at the worst, a very minimal impact on tuition. This is an internal movement of funds rather than an addition to the instructional base which would cause tuition to increase. One student at the Finance and Planning Committee meeting voted in favor of endorsing reallocation, and one student abstained because it was the first meeting he had ever attended and he had not seen the documents before the meeting.

President Hasselmo, however, it was responded, had said there would be a 5-6% impact on tuition--in addition to whatever inflationary adjustment the State may grant to the University.

Dr. Foster observed that tuition at the University is almost bound to increase next year, for three potential reasons. One is that the number of students is declining while State support is not, so each student must pay a slightly larger share of instructional costs; this will drive tuition up by perhaps two percent. Another reason is that if there is an inflationary increase, it would drive up tuition. The third reason, and the one with the biggest potential impact, is a proposal from the State Department of Finance that across all higher education students pay a larger share of instructional costs through their tuition. This entire question has not been discussed by the President's Cabinet, he added.

It was moved to endorse strongly the plan in principle. The seconder said he did so because of his sense of what the consequences will be if the plan is not adopted. These are not easy times; the response of the University will have influence beyond itself. Tough stands had to be taken if only to preserve its believability and to make a statement to the other systems. Without it the University would not receive the hearing in the legislature that it desires.

In response to a question, Dr. Foster told the Committee that the discussions about transferring items from the instructional to the non-instructional budget were continuing and were not halted when the biennial request was withdrawn. There has been tentative agreement to make some of the transfers but without providing additional funds to the University. This would change instructional costs and thereby reduce the amount collected in tuition. Dr. Foster said he did not know if the University would take the offer.

Tuition is a major educational issue at the University, it was contended by one Committee member. There is much evidence that the amount of time students are working has a detrimental effect on their education. The Committee should take up the issue--not merely as an addendum to the reallocation plan but as an issue in its own right. This has to do with State mandates about the percentage of costs that students should bear. The Committee agreed it should be taken up as a separate agenda item. Part of the problem, another Committee member observed, is that it is beyond the University's ability to change because the funding formulas are determined by the legislature. The concern of the students is that with a year that could be largely budget neutral, the administration would have the freedom to take a position that would not have the 9 - 10% inflationary pressures on tuition. Nonetheless these additional internal factors keep cropping up which will increase tuition. Dr. Foster demurred; there are no internal reasons being adduced to increase tuition, he said. The issues being raised, he maintained, are entirely independent of reallocation.

What is to be feared about reallocation, one Committee member said, is that if it does not happen then the chances for success of any initiative for improving undergraduate education will vanish. Whether the results will be all that is hoped for is another question, but the chances without reallocation are virtually nil.

The Committee deliberated briefly on the wording of its motion. Committee members agreed that they were not adopting a "Gulf of Tonkin" resolution and that it wished to reserve comment on the details of the plan. One commented that there will be feelings of unfairness and expressions of support, "but the fact is that we have got to do this."

The Committee voted 11 - 0 with one abstention to approve the resolution.

The Committee adjourned at 3:00.

-- Gary Engstrand