

Minutes*

Senate Committee on Finance and Planning December 3, 1991

Present: Burton Shapiro (chair), David Berg, David Biesboer, Paul Hess, Michael Hoey, Thomas Hoffmann, Nick LaFontaine, Fred Morrison, Jeff von Munkwitz-Smith, Irwin Rubenstein, Mary Sue Simmons, Charles Speaks

Guests: Senior Vice President Robert Erickson, Darryl Sedio (Advanced High School Student Services Office)

1. The Post-Secondary Education Options Act

Professor Shapiro convened the meeting at 3:15 and welcomed Mr. Darryl Sedio to discuss the enrollment of high school students at the University under the provisions of the Post-Secondary Education Options Act [hereinafter PSEO].

Mr. Sedio began by explaining that the legislature, in 1985, provided for high school students to attend institutions of post-secondary education; the costs of their tuition, fees, and books would be paid by the State. In the first year there were 91 students who attended the University; the current figure of approximately 3000 students per year, noted in the previous minutes of the Committee, is correct. It does, however, require some explanation.

There are two programs: (1) high school students attend classes at the University; about 500-600 students per quarter participate, and (2) high school students take University-level courses in their high school; this program, along with perhaps 150 students who participate in independent study, enrolls about 2000 students. The limits have probably been reached on the first program (500-600 per quarter) because there are insufficient advisors to deal with any additional students.

The second program began as a pilot collaboration with the St. Paul schools and has since grown considerably. Because both these programs divert funds from the school districts, and because the cost to the districts for offering the courses in the high schools is substantially lower, it is more popular with the schools. It also permits the schools to enhance their curriculum. The University receives \$72 per registration for the courses offered at the high schools; Mr. Sedio explained that they lose a small amount of money on it, but that the other programs make up the deficit.

In addition to the two programs, there are also programs for students of color, with the same elements, and satellite programs have been developing in the Hmong community, etc.

In the program where the courses are offered at the high school site, they are also taught by a high school faculty member. That individual, however, is nominated by the faculty of the high school, meets with a University faculty member in a seminar, and is told of University requirements and grading

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standards. The University faculty member, in turn, follows up with the high school course to make sure the course meets college standards. Mr. Sedio explained that students self-select for both programs, and there are a variety of reasons--personality, transportation, scheduling--why they would opt for the on-site class rather than one on the University campus.

Asked if any class at the University is open, Mr. Sedio said that there are a few departments which have said they will not enroll high school students, but most departments do. And courses at almost all levels are open.

Courses taken either at the University or at the high school are listed on both the high school and college transcript. Some concern was expressed by Committee members about offering University credit for courses taught IN high schools and BY high school teachers, where University course reviews and various other checks and balances do not exist. Mr. Sedio explained that they are supposed to be the SAME courses, with the same information delivered and that in follow-ups with the students when they are in college, those students say the high school courses were comparable to their college courses. It was also pointed out that University courses are more than exams and grades and content; it is the whole environment, including the students, that makes a University course. Mr. Sedio agreed generally with the reservations and noted that the same concerns would be applicable to Independent Study and media courses; on the basis of the evidence, however, he did not appear to believe the concern was justified.

Asked about the University services of which the high school students could avail themselves, Mr. Sedio said they can use basically any service available to students. Technically, he observed, one could quarrel about their use of services funded through student activity fees, which the high school students do not pay.

Students who enroll in the program have, in their first college quarter, higher GPAs than average and their performance improves later. The program also works well in the sense that it costs about \$200,000 but brings in about \$600,000--and will continue to show a surplus even though the State has reduced the amount of money it will pay for the students who attend classes at the University. The program has been in the media across the country and has been very good public relations for the State and University. It is not only the University that participates, Mr. Sedio confirmed, in that it enrolls only about half of the students, but the University office is the principal one. The program enrolls students of high ability, some of whom go to other institutions but some of whom stay at the University even though they didn't intend to do so.

Why is this not better known, asked one Committee member? The State and legislature need to know that this is a program that works. Mr. Sedio explained that the program has been highlighted in newspapers from the Twin Cities to Paris and in national newsmagazines. At first the higher education community saw it as a program imposed on them, and in some instances it did not work. At the University, however, it works and works well. One reason it does not have high visibility with the legislature, Mr. Sedio commented, is that the education lobby sees it as a threat.

Professor Shapiro thanked Mr. Sedio for providing the information.

2. The Capital Request

Professor Shapiro next welcomed Senior Vice President Erickson to discuss the University's capital request. Mr. Erickson explained that it is not certain that there will even be a capital expenditure bill; all requests have been limited to fire/life safety improvements and special situations: buildings which have been under consideration before and on which there has been planning money already spent. The University has requested \$15.6 million for health and safety improvements and \$62.7 million for the Basic Sciences building, the latter under the "special situations" category, where a great deal of money has been spent in planning and schematics. There is, however, some sentiment in the legislature not to adopt any bonding bill.

Mr. Erickson also reminded the Committee of the large backlog in deferred maintenance which must be dealt with. The annual funding needs for deferred maintenance are about \$30 million; the University has been spending about \$10 million. The administration had hoped to make deferred maintenance a major legislative issue, but with the vetoes of the State Specials and the need to obtain salary funds, it concluded this was not the right time to make such an appeal. The University is, however, gathering information and will press the issue in the future, because it is critically important. He also noted that the University must continue to make the case that its needs are much greater than those of the other systems--primarily because the Twin Cities campus is much older than the other higher education campuses in the State.

The discussion turned again to the Basic Sciences Building (the details are the same as were reported in the SCC minutes of December 3). He affirmed that maintenance funds for the building have not been identified, although he pointed out that considerable space will be vacated by the health sciences if units move into the Basic Sciences Building, so some costs could be absorbed from current expenditures. There has also been discussion of using ICR funds, although no policy decision has been made; when the project goes before the Board of Regents, funds will have to be identified. If there is no bonding bill, the Basic Sciences Building will not be built--unless alternative funding sources can be found. Relying on other sources, however, will commit large amounts of money long into the future.

It was noted by one Committee member that if charging for space is implemented, the maintenance cost question will be automatically answered. Mr. Erickson concurred and said he would like to face that issue as soon as possible. He told the Committee he would like to implement some of the space charges concepts as rapidly as possible; before doing so, however, funds must be allocated out. There is a need to begin achieving efficiencies.

On the issue of employee assistance programs, Mr. Erickson noted that a center for employees who have been laid off has been established and that severance and compensation plans have been developed to try to cushion the blow for them. There is no doubt that this is a traumatic experience; in some instances, employees who have worked for the University for 20 years or more are being terminated. The employee assistance center is working with all laid-off employees in developing resumes, etc. He acknowledged that the "client satisfaction" levels are not likely to be high in any event, given the circumstances. Mr. Erickson also reported that where lay-off procedures have been violated, the units have been quickly brought into line.

It was agreed that the Committee would meet with Roger Forrester in the near future to inform

itself further about provisions being made for employees who are laid off.

Asked why the University is hiring from the outside when it is laying off employees, Mr. Erickson pointed out that there is always a mismatch between skills and positions in a large organization such as this one. Some lay-offs are due to the lack of work (such as in architecture and engineering), not any reorganization. In other areas, there is a need for specific talents not available from those who have been laid off. It was noted that Academic Affairs has sent out a letter strongly recommending that departments hire from inside but it appears, at least in the P&A ranks, that this is not happening. In many cases, it was added--in accord with Mr. Erickson's observation--that it would be difficult to match insiders with the skills needed in some vacant positions. One problem may be that units are not considering whether or not their needs can be modified to meet the skills of those who are being laid off.

Professor Shapiro then reported on the discussion with President Hasselmo at the FCC meeting earlier in the day about "across-the-boardism" and the President's firm view that cuts are not being made across the board. Professor Shapiro also told the Committee that he had informed the President about its concern that there appears to be no link between the short-term tactic of relying on resignations and retirements and long-term programmatic plans of the colleges and that the President agreed with the Committee's view.

The Committee adjourned at 4:20.

-- Gary Engstrand

University of Minnesota