

Minutes*

Faculty Consultative Committee
Thursday, October 26, 2006
1:15 – 3:00
238A Morrill Hall

- Present: Carol Chomsky, (chair), Gary Balas, Jean Bauer, Nancy Carpenter, William Durfee, Barbara Elliott, Megan Gunnar, Emily Hoover, Mary Jo Kane, Kathleen Krichbaum, Scott Lanyon, Judith Martin, Richard McCormick, Nelson Rhodus, Steven Ruggles, Martin Sampson, Geoffrey Sirc
- Absent: John Sullivan, Jennifer Windsor
- Guests: Vice Provost Craig Swan; Wayne Sigler (Director of Admissions, Twin Cities), Professor Heidi Barajas (Chair, Post Secondary Teaching and Learning); Mark Nelson (Director, McNamara Academic Center), Professors Linda Brady and Richard Weinberg (Faculty Athletics Representatives), Professor Perry Leo (Chair, Faculty Academic Oversight Committee for Intercollegiate Athletics), Ryan Warren (Dean's Office, Education and Human Development); President Robert Bruininks
- Other: Lynn Holleran (Office of the Chief of Staff)

[In these minutes: (1) committee business (meetings with faculty senators, tenure code changes); (2) admissions issues (Twin Cities campus); (3) admissions issues (Twin Cities intercollegiate athletics); (4) discussion with the President]

1. Committee Business

Professor Chomsky convened the meeting at 1:20 and began by reporting that the Committee will meet with the President and senior officers in December to convey the concerns expressed and issues raised in the discussions with department chairs.

The Committee discussed the timing of the proposed changes to the tenure code and the relationship between those changes and work on departmental 7.12 statements. Professor Chomsky said that it is POSSIBLE to obtain tenure code recommendations from the Academic Freedom and Tenure Committee in time for the November 30 Faculty Senate meeting, but she suggested the proposals should not be brought for action. There should be discussion but the proposals should not be pushed through or they will generate opposition and provide insufficient opportunity for faculty across the University to comment on the changes. The Committee agreed that delaying action on the changes until one of the spring-semester meetings of the Faculty Senate probably means that the schedule for requiring departments to have revised 7.12 statements should be delayed. Professor Chomsky agreed to raise the matter with the Provost.

* 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.

Professor Martin said that there are significant issues involved in the tenure code changes and that they deserve the time required to do it right. Professor Kane agreed that it is necessary to slow the train down in order to avoid a train wreck, something that neither faculty nor the administration want. The language of the changes does not seem to be troubling, Professor Gunnar commented; it almost seems like wordsmithing. Professor Chomsky agreed; she said there are some issues being raised about what should be in Section 7.11, how it should govern the 7.12 statements, and what should be in the 7.12s. People want to discuss the changes. The Academic Freedom and Tenure Committee, and this one, do not want to bring proposals that are rejected by the Faculty Senate.

Professor Sirc reported that the Committee on Faculty Affairs earlier in the month expressed concern about the draft 7.11 language dealing with service; the most recent revision takes into account those concerns. Professor Chomsky said she thought the issues were being resolved reasonably by the Academic Freedom and Tenure Committee. Professor Gunnar said she liked the language that calls for protecting junior faculty from too much committee/administrative service.

Professor Rhodus said he had spoken with Professor Clayton, chair of the Academic Freedom and Tenure Committee, about the Twin Cities AAUP chapter sponsoring a forum about the issues arising in the tenure code discussions. No forum has been scheduled, but it could be if that were thought desirable. [Note: Professor Rhodus is President of the Twin Cities AAUP chapter.] Professor Kane thought it would be best to have a town hall forum jointly sponsored by this Committee and the AAUP. Professor Carpenter asked that any forum be made available by ITV to the coordinate campuses.

2. Admissions Issues (Twin Cities Campus)

Professor Chomsky now welcomed Professor Heidi Barajas (Chair, Department of Post Secondary Teaching and Learning, College of Education and Human Development), Dr. Wayne Sigler (Director of Admissions, Twin Cities), and Vice Provost Craig Swan to discuss admissions and related issues.

The discussion began with Dr. Sigler providing data about the incoming class of 5439 freshmen. The students come from 41 states and 15 countries. Applications for Fall 2006 were up 19.9% over the previous year, which itself was a record; there were 24,658 applications for the Fall 2006 freshman class. (It costs \$45 to apply, Dr. Sigler reported in response to a query from Professor Balas; that cost is on par with other Big Ten schools.)

Professor Hoover asked what the acceptance rate was. Of the 24,658 applicants, 57.4% were offered admission. Of the individuals offered admission, about 38% accepted, Dr. Swan said, so the "yield rate" dropped a little from the previous year. That is actually a good thing because it means that the University is competing for students that it has not competed for in the past. Dr. Sigler reported there has been a 105% increase in applications since 1995, and a 67% increase since 2002.

Why doesn't the University use early admission, Professor Lanyon asked? Dr. Sigler said few public institutions use it. Most of these institutions have a rolling admissions process. The reason schools are abandoning it, Dr. Swan commented, is because it forces students to make a decision before they have full information. The University does have a December 15 priority deadline, Dr. Sigler pointed out, and about 90% of applicants apply by that date.

In terms of diversity, 20.2% of this freshman class was comprised of students of color, Dr. Sigler said. The corresponding figure last year was 18.5%. The increases occurred across almost all groups, Dr. Sigler said, although some increased more than others (18.8% Asians, 3.6% 12.9% African-Americans, 3.6% American Indians); the number of Chicano-Latino students dropped by 19 students. Dr. Sigler said he would liked to have seen numbers up in all categories every year but things do not work out that way; there are year-to-year variations, and the number of enrolled students of color freshmen is higher than it has ever been.

This is also the best-prepared class in University history. The average high school rank was the 83rd percentile, the average ACT score was 25.2, 38.7% were in the top 10% of their class and 78.5% were in the top 25%. Academic preparedness increased across all ethnic groups, Dr. Sigler said.

Professor Lanyon asked what the yield rate was for students of color. The number of applications was up substantially, Dr. Sigler said, while the yield rate dropped a small amount. Dr. Sigler said that in 2005, the campus enrolled 35% of the pool of Minnesota students of color ACT test-takers in the top half of their high school class; this is more than three times higher than the percent of Minnesota white students. The University consistently outperforms its market share.

Do they track how students do once they are at the University, Professor Martin asked? They do, Dr. Swan said. The graduation rate for students of color is not as high as it is for the student body in general, but it is increasing along with the rate for the rest of the students. This is not to say the University should not do more; if it admits students, it should work with them to help them graduate.

Professor Bauer asked if scholarships or economics affected students of color. Dr. Swan said that the availability of scholarships clearly affects graduation rate for all students.

Professor Kane asked what the percentage of students in the top 10% of their high-school class was in 2003. Dr. Sigler said it was 34% last year and 38.7% this year and the trend line is up.

Is the University seeking representation from many states, Professor Kane asked? Are they pleased that students come from 41 states? They are, Dr. Sigler said. He said he did not have at hand the percentage from out of state in previous years. About two-thirds of the freshman class is typically from Minnesota, he said. The admissions process gives preference to students from Minnesota, and it is in the state where the University does most of its recruiting. They do honor reciprocity agreements, of course, and they are now targeting a few other areas nationally. If the number of non-reciprocity national students were to increase markedly, Dr. Sigler said, the campus would revise its enrollment targets to be sure that Minnesota students would not be a disadvantage. Dr. Swan said the University does not achieve diversity with students from outside the state; there is typically a smaller percentage of students of color in the non-resident, non-reciprocity category than in the group of students who come from Minnesota. Currently, 80% of enrolled students of color are from Minnesota.

Professor McCormick asked where they recruit outside the state. Dr. Sigler said the primary areas are in the Midwest (Chicago, Omaha, Kansas City) because they are looking for students who like the Big Ten, the Midwest, who will not be too far away from home, and who are familiar with cold weather.

Professor Rhodus speculated that the University's success rate in recruiting high-ability students of color is probably fairly good, given the competitiveness in recruiting them. Dr. Swan agreed.

Professor Lanyon asked if there is some criterion related to the state or nation of origin of an applicant—if the University doesn't have someone from somewhere, do applicants from those places receive extra consideration? The first goal is to admit students with a high likelihood they will be successful, Dr. Sigler said; the second goal is keep enrollment in line with resources, and the third goal is to have an academically-prepared and broadly diverse class, in the belief that it will enhance the academic and social environment for the students. They do a holistic evaluation of applicants, Dr. Sigler said in response to Professor Lanyon's query: academic record, geography, diversity, special skills—no one factor controls in the decision.

Professor Martin observed that there are many students in the Minneapolis and St. Paul schools who are not US citizens; are they counted as international students? That depends on their visa status, Dr. Swan said. Dr. Sigler added that a student who is not a citizen is not hampered in the University's admissions process; if they are undocumented, however, they can encounter barriers in seeking financial aid (because of federal rules).

How will graduation rates be improved, Professor Balas asked. Through a combination of things, Dr. Swan said. There have been new and rather ambitious graduation rate goals announced. Associate Vice Provost Laura Koch is leading implementation of the recommendations from the task force on undergraduate student support implementation group that builds on the work of the strategic positioning task force; Graduation Planner will be available next year, a tool which will help students plan over a four-year horizon and give advisors stronger tools to track student progress against their plan; significant investments in writing and honors programs are meant to strengthen the undergraduate experience more generally; the Founders Opportunity program and the President's scholarship match program are aimed at addressing issues of financial access to the University; and departments and programs need to ensure that their major programs are clear and transparent for all students.

With General College no longer available to admit students, Professor Chomsky said, what impact will there be on keeping the numbers up and spreading the responsibility for diversity around the campus? Dr. Sigler said they are aware that the University cannot be a great university without strong diversity. They do not make admissions decisions based on US News & World Report rankings; their mantra is retention and graduation. The number of General Studies students was limited to 800 last year and 650 for Fall 2006; but the University will continue to work hard to keep and enhance its diversity numbers, he assured the Committee. Professor Barajas said that the General Studies number will decrease to 475 next year and emphasized Professor Chomsky's point: diversity and multiculturalism are the responsibility of the entire University, not just one college or unit.

Professor Chomsky thanked Professor Barajas, Dr. Sigler, and Vice Provost Swan for their comments.

3. Admissions Issues (Intercollegiate Athletics)

The admissions discussion continued, this time focused on intercollegiate athletics. For this portion of the meeting Professor Chomsky welcomed, in addition to the guests already part of the discussion, Mr. Mark Nelson (Director, McNamara Academic Center), Professors Linda Brady and

Richard Weinberg (Faculty Athletics Representatives), and Professor Perry Leo (chair, Faculty Academic Oversight Committee for Intercollegiate Athletics).

The Committee voted unanimously in favor of a motion to close the meeting for this discussion.

The Committee had a discussion with Mr. Nelson, Vice Provost Swan, and others about admissions and academic performance in athletics. Mr. Nelson explained the philosophy and history of his office and what it does. Committee members were informed about, and asked questions about, the academic performance of athletes and the role of Mr. Nelson's office in helping student-athletes to succeed academically.

4. Discussion with President Bruininks

The President joined the meeting during the discussion with Mr. Nelson and Vice Provost Swan. He suggested that Professors Kane and Leo present to the Committee their report on academic support and progress in athletics when it is made public.

The President said that in some cases the issues raised are not just student-athlete issues; there is a need to look at internal systems, articulation of the curriculum, and the ease with which one can get back into the University to complete degree requirements. At present the rules seem to discourage returning to the University.

The President itemized and briefly discussed a number of significant issues before the University:

- the biennial request (a 9.5% increase in both years)
- the structure of undergraduate tuition (and the related issue of competition for international students)
- the future of Northrop Auditorium (including reducing the size of the actual auditorium and adding 35,000 square feet for academic purposes and creating a cultural center for the campus)
- the potential development and benefits of UMore Park in supporting the University's academic mission—an issue he would like to address in future discussions
- the North Side Initiative (a conversation that is evolving and no decisions have been made)
- Future financing of the University (how to advance the educational and research mission while staying true to its public commitments).

Professor Gunnar commented, on the North Side Initiative, that if the University gets involved, it cannot later drop the ball because then the University's relationship with the community would be worse than it was before. The President agreed.

Professor Chomsky thanked the President and adjourned the meeting at 3:15

-- Gary Engstrand