

Minutes*

Faculty Consultative Committee
Thursday, May 27, 2004
1:00 – 2:00
510 Morrill Hall

Present: Arthur Erdman, (chair pro tem), Gary Balas, Susan Brorson, Charles Campbell, Carol Chomsky, Tom Clayton, Dan Feeney, John Fossum, Emily Hoover, Mary Jo Kane, Scott Lanyon, Marvin Marshak, Fred Morrison, Jeff Ratliff-Crain, Martin Sampson, Carol Wells

Absent: Judith Martin, Jean Bauer, Gary Davis, Marc Jenkins

Guests: Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost-designate E. Thomas Sullivan

Other: Kathryn Stuckert (Office of the Chief of Staff)

[In these minutes: discussion with Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost-designate E. Thomas Sullivan]

Discussion with Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost-designate E. Thomas Sullivan

Professor Erdman convened the meeting at 1:00, welcomed Dean Sullivan to the meeting, and explained that Professor Martin, chair of the Committee, is in China. He called for a round of introductions.

Dean Sullivan thanked the Committee for meeting on short notice and said that when he had spoken with President Bruininks about taking the position, he told the President he wanted to meet with the senior leadership of the University--faculty, deans, chancellors--as part of the appointment process. He said he had no prepared remarks, and wanted to hear from Committee members, but did first speak to the issue of style.

Dean Sullivan said he believes in a consultative, outreach approach to administration. In an ideal world, one would achieve consensus, but in any event he wants decisions informed by the best ideas from people around the table such as this one--and does not want those ideas to appear AFTER a decision. He is committed to a consultative decision-making process, not a unilateral one.

There is a difference between leading and managing; in the position of Senior Vice President and Provost, one must do both. Leading involves strategic planning and thoughtful discussions about "who we are, where we should be, and how we will get there." Managing involves implementation of the decisions in an effective, efficient, and first-class way.

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

This is a complicated position, Dean Sullivan commented. One of his core values is that the most important thing the University has is its faculty and students. For a long time, the University paid too little attention and resources to its human capital--faculty, students, and staff. He said he intends to keep the University's human capital in mind as he makes decisions. He will ask how the decision will affect faculty and students. If the effect will be negative, that needs to be known in advance.

Professor Erdman told Dean Sullivan that as representatives of the faculty, FCC members feel very positively about the relationships they have with the administration and the Board of Regents, and he is confident about President Bruininks's selection to be the Senior Vice President and Provost in that regard. This Committee has instituted a number of joint task forces with the Provost and there has been a sense of shared values between the administration and this Committee.

Professor Kane suggested that, given the quick turnaround in the resignation and appointment, Dean Sullivan might think about sending an open letter to the faculty informing them who he is and communicating his beliefs and values. People will want to know that he is committed to all fields of study. Dean Sullivan said he had thought of this as well, but that he intends to be respectful of Senior Vice President Maziar's position while she remains in office. He will, however, send such a letter at an appropriate time.

Dean Sullivan continued by saying that he wants to reach out, as he has with the deans and this Committee, and go to the colleges and campuses to meet with their leadership, the deans and faculty, in order to connect with the people who formulate policy. That he intends to do quite soon, probably in June and July. He said he also wishes to meet, perhaps once or twice per year, with all academic department heads. He did so when he was chair of the Twin Cities deans' council and found the meetings very helpful, events from which he learned a great deal. He would like to do the same thing as Provost.

Professor Feeney recalled that a few years ago there was an effort on the part of this Committee to build a relationship with the deans. There had occasionally been discord between the Committee and the deans, or policy disagreements that had to be resolved at the level of the President or the Senior Vice President, so they wished to try to minimize the disagreements through better communication. He said it should not be seen as an end-run around the Provost; this was an initiative that Dr. Maziar encouraged. The intent is to operate in the open. Dean Sullivan said he comes out of a tradition and culture such that he believes in and practices shared governance. He said he does not stand on ceremony or hierarchy; this is a huge institution in which one should seek out as many opinions as one can. He said he hoped that any hierarchy could be broken down and the deans and FCC members would talk as colleagues about shared visions and pains. He said he embraced Professor Feeney's idea about avoiding or reducing tensions.

Professor Lanyon asked Dean Sullivan to talk about why he is interested in the position and what excites him about it. Why would he be happy doing the job? Is he happy about it? Dean Sullivan said he was indeed happy about it. He said he would not have accepted the nomination unless he were pleased with and humbled by the prospect, and he would not have taken it if he did not believe he could contribute to the advancement of the University. He related that he has been in academe for 25 years, as a faculty member and administrator, and his interest in the position comes down to the intellectual life and civic culture of the institution. Faculty have a special responsibility to discover new knowledge and to teach bright students. He is excited about the intellectual life of the institution and the effort to make a better society. That is the job of the chief academic officer--to try to make the intellectual and civic

fabrics of the University function so that all benefit, both inside the University and the public at large. He sees the job as helping to lead the effort to make the University a better intellectual place.

Professor Balas noted that there is a search for the IT dean going on. What does he desire when he hires people to work under him? What vision should they have, and how will they provide the infrastructure to achieve that vision? Dean Sullivan first said that he does not hire people to work "under" him; they are colleagues. He said that he has been on both sides of the dean search process and has thought a lot about Professor Balas's question. The individual selected must be both a leader and a manager and cannot be poor in either. He said he wants to meet with the chairs of the search committees for the deans of IT and Nursing (he said he assumed that Dr. Cerra likely has the Nursing dean search well in hand), and for the Vice President for Research to discuss what has been said to them and about their charge. He will start the search for the Dean of the Graduate School immediately. It is an important role of the Provost's office to hire academic leaders, people with vision, leadership skills, and integrity, whose each move will be toward excellence. They must also be good managers who can move a school forward academically and intellectually and with "emotional intelligence" to do it in an effective way. In this respect he is excited about the time he is coming to the position, Dean Sullivan said, because it will be a wonderful time for a new provost to participate in the searches for new academic leaders for the University.

Professor Marshak said he appreciated Dean Sullivan's introductory comments. He encouraged Dean Sullivan to make the operation of the Provost's office as transparent as possible in both the leadership and management contexts, so that faculty, staff and students understand what he is doing. He also inquired about the scarcity of arts and sciences representation in the central administration; he said he recognized that it could be accidental, and that arts and sciences faculty are not necessarily better than faculty from other fields, but diversity is good and the current imbalance does raise questions.

In terms of management, Dean Sullivan said, "I do not procrastinate." When there is an issue at hand, he calls the relevant people together, talks about the facts, values, and policies, and then makes a decision--he does not believe in taking an inordinate amount of time. He said he could promise that he would move with dispatch, as with the search for the Dean of the Graduate School. He said he will also mentor the searches because he knows that faculty can be nervous and anxious about them and that rumors can start. He said he would try to be as transparent and open as he can; there will be times when he will have to say "I don't know," but he will share answers when he has them (except on confidential matters).

With respect to the arts and sciences, Dean Sullivan said that even though he is from the Law School, he believes they are the core of the University, they have been, and should continue to be the core academic mission at the University. He will signal that belief in his appointments, he said, and as he can affect decisions. This is a very comprehensive university, he observed, and strong in the history of the arts and sciences; the land-grant constituents such as agriculture and science are all important, but the University must identify a core, essential academic units that it must support. It must also begin to identify priorities so the core arts and sciences are healthy. He said he believes undergraduate education is essential--and does not agree with the views expressed by outgoing Dean Fish (U of Illinois, Chicago, Arts and Sciences) in the New York Times (faculty are responsible for teaching, mentoring, advising, and research, and not much else, and he (Fish) rejected the notion of civic/community responsibility). The University has been a leader in reminding people of the important civic responsibility of faculty, which is especially important at the undergraduate level in a public university. The goal of the institution is an

educated citizenry, educated for a lifetime. He said he is committed to the proposition that faculty responsibility goes beyond the classroom and that the University must educate the whole individual. This may be the only higher education opportunity many students have and he hopes they leave the institution transformed, challenged, given humane advising and mentoring, and curious about the role they should play in life. A second and more selfish reason for believing undergraduate education is core, Dean Sullivan commented, is that in law they want the undergraduate colleges to be strong because that is where they get their students and want them well prepared.

Professor Brorson, acknowledging that there have been changes in the Provost's responsibilities with the administrative reorganization, asked Dean Sullivan how he envisions his role vis-à-vis the coordinate campuses and how active he plans to be with them. Dean Sullivan said he has a lot to learn about the coordinate campuses. He was dean when the Rochester concept was developed, has been to the Duluth campus often, and has visited Crookston and Morris. He said he also needs to learn more about the reorganization of central responsibilities and will work with Robert Jones as system administrative senior vice president. It is his understanding that the Provost is still responsible for promotion and tenure and academic issues and he will need to learn how that process works. He said he wants to be involved with the coordinate campuses because he sees this as one university in which the coordinate campuses play an important educational and political role.

Will he continue the compact process, Professor Campbell inquired? Dean Sullivan noted that he was in office when President Yudof brought the compact process from Texas but he does not know how the process has evolved in the two years since he left the deanship. He said he was a firm believer in the process as it was introduced at the University. It was designed to be an annual conversation with the colleges--the deans and faculty--about their strengths and weaknesses and aligning resources with the college priorities. He said he found it a very useful process to have the conversation then reduced to a compact. At first, the compact was short--two or three pages--but it is his sense that the process has become more complicated and lengthy. He said he was not sure that was the way he wanted to go; there should be frank conversations that are reduced to a pithy and concise document without a lot of jargon and without a lot of time spent on it. He recalled the process as having a conversation and reducing it to writing, after which he knew what to do in the next year--it was a simple process in a complex university. If it has gotten away from that, he may want to talk to the President about reforming it.

Professor Sampson said he liked what Dean Sullivan had said about undergraduate education and its link to graduate education. It seems to be going out of fashion--across the country--for legislatures to invest money in public higher education, and one wonders what the University will look like in 25 years. Does he have any ideas about the viability of places like the University of Minnesota? That is one reason he agreed to join the administration, Dean Sullivan replied. A few years ago he wrote an essay on the public university as a public good; he tried to collect and synthesize political and economic ideas about why the public university is so important in society. Professor Sampson's question implies that constituents have lost that idea; he said he hopes to work with the President to re-engage constituents and to make the case why the University of Minnesota is the chief intellectual/academic/economic engine of the state. There has been slippage in support for the institution in the nine years he has been here; when he came, he heard a lot about the University's central intellectual and economic role in the state. He said he would like to recapture that perception of the University with everyone from CEOs to farmers to those on the streets of the cities. It may not be easy; Minnesota has changed, but he would like to return to the notion that the University is important to everyone.

Professor Feeney said that Dean Sullivan is likely aware that there is a faculty-driven push to develop budget principles based on the idea that incentives will help people do things rather than having the revenues taxed away. There is a vigorous campaign on to define operating principles so that all know how the game is played. Right now the proposed principles are being discussed by this Committee and the Committee on Finance and Planning. He said he hoped that Dean Sullivan understands that faculty care about these issues, not that they are trying to usurp administrative prerogatives--they want the faculty voice heard rather than just have complaining outside the room.

Dean Sullivan said he hoped one of the principles is shared governance, a process that includes cooperation and respect. The process will not work without those elements. Dean Sullivan recalled that he was at the University through the last two years of the Hasselmo administration and all through President Yudof's administration, and through many resource allocation decisions. Those have changed with recent exigencies, but he was a strong proponent as a dean of letting the colleges manage their own budgets. He said he believed ALL revenues should go to the colleges because that is where the best decisions can be made. At the same time, knowing that central administration had little money left but that it is a public good, the internal taxes were introduced. He said he was comfortable with the original model, which provides more accountability and transparency in the colleges. The central administration does not know all the answers; it must make decisions, but it is better if the if the decisions and options relating to allocations bubble up from the colleges, not from the top down. He said he liked it as dean when he controlled the resources and paid the tax for the public good. The initial accountability for decisions should be in the colleges.

Professor Clayton observed, apropos the question of where the University will be in 25 years, that the question that should be asked of the citizens of the state is whether they can imagine the state without the University in it, because with declining levels of support they might one day have to ask that question. The University needs to press on that question; it has been too long taken for granted. Second, he said, it must differentiate itself from other institutions in the state.

Professor Chomsky said that while he has spoken about research and service, and touched on teaching, the Provost's office has played a significant role in the Council on Enhancing Student Learning. Could he talk about that? Dean Sullivan said he hoped to share his passion about excellence in the classroom, and is related to his comments about the importance of undergraduate education. The faculty have a large responsibility to stretch undergraduates, and that responsibility starts in the classroom. There is as much teaching in the hallways and offices as there is in the classrooms, and embodies an important responsibility, a commitment made to students. The University and its teachers will have failed unless students can say they received a first-rate education, they were stretched, made curious about life and their role in society, were educated in a humane, thoughtful, and diverse culture, and want to be connected with the University for the rest of their lives. If the University fails in this regard, and its alumni do not want to be connected to it, that will affect fund-raising and public support. There is no chance to correct the students' first impression, Dean Sullivan warned.

Professor Erdman thanked Dean Sullivan for joining the Committee and said that he and Professor Martin would be glad to meet with him to bring him up to speed on the governance system, something they are very proud of. Dean Sullivan thanked the Committee and said there will be many opportunities to work together in an open, trustworthy fashion. Committee members gave Dean Sullivan a round of applause.

Professor Kane moved that the Committee adopt the following resolution (approved unanimously by email in the day following the meeting):

The Faculty Consultative Committee expresses its deep appreciation to Christine Maziar for her service to the University of Minnesota, as Vice President for Research & Dean of the Graduate School and as Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost, and wishes her well as she takes up her responsibilities at the University of Notre Dame.

Professor Kane then moved that the Committee adopt the following resolution (also approved unanimously by email the day after the meeting):

The Faculty Consultative Committee enthusiastically endorses the appointment of E. Thomas Sullivan as Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost.

Professor Erdman adjourned the meeting at 2:00.

-- Gary Engstrand

University of Minnesota