

Minutes *

Faculty Consultative Committee
Thursday, February 13, 1996
12:00 - 1:30
Room 355 Coffman Union

Present: Virginia Gray (chair), Carl Adams, Carole Bland, W. Andrew Collins, Dan Feeney, Russell Hobbie, Laura Coffin Koch, Fred Morrison, Harvey Peterson, Michael Steffes, Craig Swan

Absent: Victor Bloomfield, Gary Davis, Sara Evans, Michael Korth, Matthew Tirrell

Guests: none

Others: Maureen Smith (University Relations)

[In these minutes: Response to the vote on collective bargaining]

1. Recognition

Professor Gray convened the meeting at 12:20 and began by bringing out a cake to honor Professor Collins' appointment to an endowed chair, as Rodney S. Wallace Professor for the Advancement of Teaching and Learning; the Committee gave him a round of applause after Professor Bland made explanatory remarks. Professor Collins thanked the Committee for the recognition.

2. Election Results

Professor Gray then asked the Committee to consider the meaning of the election results the previous day, and the status of the "Committee of 8," the group jointly appointed by FCC and by UFA/AAUP to represent to the administration and Regents the amendments adopted to the Sullivan II tenure code. (The membership on the Committee of 8 is: Sara Evans (History), chair; Mary Dempsey (Biochemistry, chair of Tenure Subcommittee); Dan Feeney (Small Animal Clinical Sciences; chair of Committee on Faculty Affairs); Edwin Fogelman (Political Science, chair of Judicial Committee); Judy Garrard (Public Health; former FCC chair, member AAUP Executive Committee); Fred Morrison (Law School, Counsel to FCC on tenure); Anne Pick (Child Development; AAUP Executive Committee); and Robert Sonkowsky (Classical and Near Eastern Studies, AAUP Executive Committee).)

After brief discussion, the Committee agreed without dissent that it wished to confirm the role of the Committee of 8 and to ask those on it to continue serving, representing the faculty as a whole; they were characterized as "faculty of good will and broad spirit." Professor Gray was asked to write a letter to them to this effect. It was agreed that the Committee of 8 only had authority to present and explain the amendments, not to negotiate any changes; any additional amendments sought by the administration or

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Board of Regents would have to be brought back to the Faculty Senate and its committees.

On the issue of the union election results, Professor Morrison said that that is about as close as an election can get. It sends a VERY clear and significant signal to the administration and Regents; this Committee must also see it as a clear and significant signal to it: however representative FCC may think it is, it carried the center of the campus in the election by 1%. It must begin to do things to broaden the base of support, by the positions it takes and the people it involves--or it can sit and wait for the next union election, in March of 1998. The latter would not be the right thing to do. The Committee should encourage those who have been active to continue to be active. Committee members were in broad agreement with these remarks.

Professor Bland said she was alarmed at how often there is misunderstanding of how the Senate works and the large numbers of faculty who participate, such as the recent letter in the DAILY mistakenly saying that FCC members elect themselves. She suggested that the Senate needs to do a much better job of ensuring that faculty understand the Senate governance process; the system should not be sideswiped by ignorance.

Professor Steffes, noting criticism of the Committee of 8 from Academic Health Center faculty, maintained that the principles of appointment should be similar across the institution, and that the Academic Health Center should not be treated differently. The adoption of a clinical track appointment is sufficient.

Professor Swan cautioned against allowing an "us" and "them" attitude to develop, with the "us" having gotten 51% of the vote and "them" 49%. Many in the 49%, he said, had no quarrel with the role of faculty governance but thought it might be more effective within the structure of Minnesota labor law, "faculty governance with teeth." It would be a mistake to bifurcate the faculty along these lines.

But, Professor Morrison responded, many in the 49% think faculty governance did a wonderful job--for the short term. They see, however, that faculty governance has not delivered on many issues. It is unproductive to talk about a nice protocol on consultation, when many faculty see that the governance system cannot deliver results after the consultation occurs. It is important to include as many faculty as possible in governance, and it may be necessary for the governance system to be a little more strident with the administration than it has been. It may have to say "no" more often. And it may be that the cohesiveness between governance and the administration has been lost as a result of recent events. Other Committee members concurred with these sentiments.

It should also be understood, Professor Adams pointed out, that the members of FCC share some of the sentiments of the 49%, and do NOT think that everything is working well.

Committee members then discussed for a short while the possible reasons why the administration has chosen not to pay attention to the governance system. It was suggested that this might be a topic of conversation with senior officers. It was agreed that a letter on this general topic that Professor Feeney has prepared at the request of SCFA will be circulated to this Committee as well as SCEP, the Judicial Committee, and Finance and Planning to see if they wish also to endorse it. Professor Adams recalled that this exact same issue was brought up with the President two or three years ago, and nothing changed. Some members of the Judicial Committee want to quit because of the nature of the interactions with the

central administration.

It has been suggested that there be a forum, after the February 20 Senate meeting, to discuss the union election results. Committee members were of divided, and not particularly strong, views on the proposal; Professor Gray finally concluded that the majority of the Committee appeared not to favor the idea. No one dissented.

The Committee then held an off-the-record discussion of the possible steps President-elect Yudof might take with respect to the current administration, and other topics it wishes to discuss with him. High on the list will be the meaning of the election and the reasons for the vote.

Professor Gray then adjourned the meeting at 1:25.

-- Gary Engstrand

University of Minnesota