

Minutes*

**Joint Meeting
Faculty Consultative Committee
Senate Committee on Finance and Planning
Tuesday, June 23, 1998
12:00 – 2:00
Room 238 Morrill Hall**

- Present: (FCC) Kent Bales, Carole Bland, Gary Gardner, Virginia Gray, M. Janice Hogan, Laura Coffin Koch, Michael Korth, Leonard Kuhl, Marvin Marshak, Fred Morrison, Harvey Peterson
- Present: (SCFP) Fred Morrison (chair), Jean Bauer, Catherine French, Cynthia Gillett, Stephen Gudeman, Gerald Klement, Eric Kruse, Leonard Kuhl, Terrence O'Connor, Richard Pfitzenreuter, Jane Phillips, Terry Roe, Charles Speaks, Susan Carlson Weinberg, J. Peter Zetterberg
- Absent: None for a summer meeting
- Guests: Vice President Mark Brenner; Executive Vice President Robert Bruininks; Robert Fahnhorst (Employee Benefits); Vice President-designate Christine Maziar; Professor Richard McGehee (health care task force); Julie Sweitzer (Acting Director, EEO); President Mark Yudof

[In these minutes: (with the President:) technology transfer; structure of finance and operations; the biennial request; health care and fringe benefits; academic misconduct processes; faculty handbook]

1. Announcements

Professor Morrison convened the meeting at 1:10 and welcomed the President and other guests. He noted the presence of Vice President-designate Christine Maziar and welcomed her to the University.

The President began his comments with several announcements. First, interviews for the two finalists to serve as Vice President for Institutional Relations are taking place, and FCC would be among those interviewing them. An appointment will be made shortly.

Second, members of the administration are spending time identifying ways to improve technology transfer. They are holding "fireside chats" with venture capitalists and business leaders to obtain impressions of the University and how it is doing. The President said he hoped to have a draft report on a technology transfer mechanism ready by the end of the summer that could be reviewed by the faculty.

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Third, he has separated finance and operations. There will be no finance vice president in the traditional sense; the controller, treasurer, and auditor will report to him, largely on an exceptions basis, and Mr. Pfutzenreuter will be chief financial officer and will chair a financial advisory committee. There will be a separate vice president for University services, a position now being filled on an acting basis by Eric Kruse. The President commented that he has not seen, around the country, a finance vice presidency that worked well, and said he believed that this structure would not place an unreasonable demand on his time.

2. The Biennial Request

Discussion turned next to the biennial request. The President reported that he is still thinking along the lines he has mentioned earlier, and has had conversations with many faculty and deans about it. The number one item in the request will be compensation; he noted that the cost of each percent increase in salaries will be greater in the next biennium because of, among other things, increased fringe benefit costs and the larger size of the pool because of increases the last two years. The second item in the request (upon which a task force is working) will be a focus on undergraduate education, and could include adding a large number of faculty on all campuses, staffing freshman seminars, and providing improved career and advising services. This should lead to a strengthening of the humanities and social sciences as well as IT, improve technology and the libraries, and generally serve as a “shot in the arm” to serve students and bolster the faculty. In addition, he said, there must be attention on the problems of graduate students and identification of a long-term funding strategy for the Academic Health Center. This is all hazy, the President commented, but work will proceed during the summer. The request will likely also include outreach programs, Dr. Bruininks added; the size is not yet clear.

The outlines of the request will be clearer for the meetings in August, Professor Morrison commented.

Committee members and guests made a number of observations.

- One faculty concern has been sabbaticals. One potential impact of increasing faculty numbers is that departments would have more flexibility in having faculty gone on leave. Research support and leaves could also be one focus of a capital campaign.
- The connection of research and graduate programs to the private sector could be a part of the investment in outreach. Outreach should be broadly defined, but legislative intent will come into play, because there are expectations that the University will address certain issues.
- On the matter of salary increases, fringe benefit costs are going up all over the country on the order of 15-20%. Professor Bland also pointed out that the increases are usually delivered for employees on O&M, ICR, and State Special funds, but not those who are paid from other sources. Any projected cost of salary increases thus understates the actual costs, and the increases are not distributed evenly across the University.
- The task force working on the biennial request includes the FCC chair, as well as the President, Dr. Cerra, Donna Peterson, Dean Martin, Dean Rosenstone, Professor Marshak, Vice Chancellor Magnuson (UMD), Tonya Brown, and the chair of the deans’ council. It will serve as a steering committee, to be sure that all efforts are coordinated and there is broad oversight to the biennial

request strategy. Dr. Bruininks said that each element of the request would be brought back for discussion with the committees, with students, and with deans. He noted that the time schedule is set largely by external forces, and does not coincide with the academic calendar. The Regents must act in the fall, so the discussion must take place over the summer.

- Professor Morrison cautioned that it is easy to prepare a list of items and priorities for the request, but that the costs of buildings tend to absorb much of the money. There must be an effort to allocate the resources to people and programs, not just capital items.

3. Health Care and Fringe Benefits

The Committees held next an off-the-record conversation with Professor McGehee about developments with respect to health care coverage and developments at the state.

President Yudof reported that he had requested consideration of an improvement in life insurance and disability insurance for University employees; Mr. Fahnhorst reported on the changes that are going to be implemented.

The Committees returned briefly to the topic of health care at the end of the meeting. Professor Morrison said that depending on the outcome of the investigations this summer, he could envision asking the Senate to recommend that the University separate from the state and offer its own health care options, but that any such action will depend on the outcome of the work of the health care task force. The problem is that the University never acts in a timely fashion on the issue: by the time the University realizes the state options are less than optimum, it is too late to do anything for another two years. The University always neglects to make a decision. The information needed for a decision is being gathered, Professor McGehee said. There is a timing problem, Professor Gray pointed out; one does not know what one is pulling out of, because of the way the decisions are made. Another difficulty, Professor Marshak said, is that one does not know the financial consequences of such a change, so a motion in the Senate would be hard to vote on; one possibility might be that the University seek proposals from the providers and see what its options are. This might annoy the state, and might annoy the providers, but it would mean the University had better information.

4. Academic Misconduct Policy

Professor Morrison then took note of a letter that FCC had received from Professor Gayle Graham Yates, chair of the Scientific and Scholarly Advisory Board (SSAB), asking for a full review of the academic misconduct policy. The SSAB has been unhappy with the way the policy has been implemented. The perception, he said, is that the University has a Kafkaesque process, and he encouraged the administration to rethink the implementation protocols of the policy.

Dr. Bruininks said it appears that the policy itself is acceptable, but the procedures are not. One question is whether the SSAB is in the right place. Another is conflict of interest, and that Academic Health Center has appointed a committee. He will appoint a parallel committee (with the Vice President for Research), but wants to be sure that there are parallel processes and protocols.

Dr. Brenner said there was an unfortunately communication problem. The SSAB serves important functions, and met regularly this spring, but always at times when his staff was not available.

Nor had the SSAB contacted him, so a dialogue was difficult. He described the letter as unfortunate. He emphasized that there have been NO cases in which the SSAB has not been involved, and that allusions to what happened more than two years ago are inappropriate because the procedures have changed considerably since then. Dr. Brenner said that the SSAB letter essentially proposes to make the committee line officers, which would be a major change in policy, and something with which he is uncomfortable. The University is on the brink of not complying with NIH timelines for dealing with allegations of misconduct; the SSAB recommendations would ensure the University was not in compliance. This requires more discussion, he said, and while he has serious reservations about some of the ideas in the SSAB letter, others he can endorse.

Professor Campbell, a member of the SSAB, said that Dr. Brenner's remarks came as a surprise to him, and that the SSAB sought the coordination of judicial activities at the University – something it has been seeking for four years or more. The bottom line, he said, is a concern with the lack of due process afforded to faculty members, to their detriment. SSAB is not dogmatic about where the issues are addressed, only that they be addressed.

Dr. Bruininks said he intended to take an open and objective view of the issues and would consult with Professor Graham Yates. He was not sure that some of the SSAB suggestions would work, and still believed that the transfer of responsibility for academic misconduct to the office of the Vice President for Research was sound. Other issues should be looked at, and he would spend time this summer working on them. He also said he would consult later with FCC, but did not promise to appoint the task force the SSAB has requested until he was certain what its charge would be and until he knew that there were issues it could address.

5. Faculty Handbook

Professor Morrison next raised the issue of a faculty handbook, which FCC has discussed on several occasions in the past year. President Yudof agreed that it was a good idea, and inquired if Professor Morrison would like to write it. He suggested the University look at what the University of California is doing, and observed that it may be a data entry and indexing task as much as anything, in order to make policies readable and easily accessible.

Professor Morrison said that what the University is doing in the name of policy development is codifying policy on a website from which it is hard to download and which is poorly indexed. What is also needed, Professor Bland added, is an executive summary. This is a Human Resources problem, Professor Morrison told the President; there should be two paragraphs describing the policy and hypertext to connect to the policy itself for those who needed the details.

Dr. Brenner agreed with the need for action, and pointed out that many policies are difficult to gain access to because of Regents' policy, which requires pdf (portable document format), and thus use of Adobe Acrobat. This is very user-unfriendly, his office did not want it that way, and he urged that all policies should be in html so they can be read and downloaded by anyone. Dr. Brenner said he also hoped that there would soon be shorter policies (adopted by the Regents) and separate procedural documents (subject to administrative and Senate action).

Professor Gardner noted that many research-based companies have manuals for Ph.D.s, and the University should explore what they have done.

Professor Marshak inquired what other research universities do; why cannot the University adopt their manual, and think very carefully about why it would need to make changes?

Dr. Bruininks said he would refer the matter to Vice President Carrier and consult with her on setting up a group to develop a manual.

Having no further business, Professor Morrison adjourned the meeting at 1:30.

-- Gary Engstrand

University of Minnesota