

Faculty Consultative Committee (FCC)
May 2, 2019
Minutes of the Meeting

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 reflect the views of, nor are they binding on, the senate, the administration, or the Board of Regents.

[**In these minutes:** Discussion with Regent Ken Powell; Liberal Education Redesign Committee Update; Discussion with Provost Hanson and Vice Provost and Dean of Undergraduate Education McMaster]

PRESENT: Amy Pittenger (chair), Sheri Breen, Phil Buhmann (vice chair), Sue Chu, Colleen Flaherty Manchester, Tabitha Grier-Reed, Lynn Lukkas, Peggy Nelson, Ned Patterson, Eric Watkins, Les Drewes, Frank Gigler, Jessica Larson, Peh Ng, Donna Spannaus-Martin, Wendy St. Peter, Philip Zelazo

REGRETS: Jennifer Goodnough, Robert Blair, Catherine French

GUESTS: Regent Ken Powell and Executive Director and Corporate Secretary Brian Steeves, Board of Regents Office; Vice Provost and Dean for Undergraduate Education Bob McMaster; Executive Vice President and Provost Karen Hanson

OTHERS ATTENDING: Brianne Keeney, Office of the President

1. Discussion with Regent Ken Powell: Professor Pittenger convened the meeting, welcomed Regent Ken Powell and called for a round of introductions. Following introductions, Regent Powell thanked Professor Pittenger for the invitation to meet with the FCC. Unfortunately, he noted that Regent David McMillan would not be able to join the conversation because he is ill. Regent Powell then proceeded with some opening remarks, which included:

- The Board of Regents declined President Kaler's recommendations to rename four buildings on the University's Twin Cities campus: Coffman Memorial Union, Nicholson Hall, Middlebrook Hall, and Coffey Hall. That said, Regent Powell acknowledged the scholarly work of the Task Force on Building Names and Institutional History, which he noted, put in countless hours researching the institution's history and the leaders these buildings were named after. He said he is personally grateful for the task force's work, and, in his opinion, the statement the Board adopted (included in the April 26, 2019 Board [minutes](#)) also reflects this appreciation. Regent Powell went on to recognize Professor Pittenger's leadership in the renaming conversations and encouraged governance to work collaboratively with the administration to bring the campus community together to learn more about the University's history and how historical research is conducted. These types of conversations are ongoing learning opportunities.
- Regarding the presidential transition, noted Regent Powell, President-Designate Joan Gabel has made several trips to Minnesota to meet with senior leaders, student leaders, governance leaders, etc., and has had a number of briefings on issues facing the

University across the system. He noted that she also recently launched a national search for a provost to replace Provost Hanson who has graciously agreed to continue to serve through the presidential transition and until a new provost is hired. In addition, President-Designate Gabel recently announced her plans to restructure the President's Office. The [new structure](#) realigns the office into two core areas: one with a primary focus on strategy, and the other with a primary focus on operations.

- Regent Powell said while the election of the new Board of Regents has not yet taken place this year, it sounds like the election may happen sooner rather than later. Brian Steeves, executive director and corporate secretary, Board of Regents Office, added that it's been reported that time is being held on legislators' calendars for Tuesday (May 7) for the election, but there has been no formal announcement to confirm this report. As part of this process, noted Regent Powell, Regent McMillan will come to the end of his tenure as Board chair, and the Board will elect its new leaders this summer.
- In terms of the biennial budget request, last fall the Board approved a budget request of \$87 million in new money for the 2020 - 2021 biennium. Regardless of the outcome of this legislative session, President Kaler will bring a 2020 operating budget for the Board to review in June, which will be followed by a special meeting later that month when the Board will vote on the budget. Although tuition increases have been held below the rate of inflation for several years, said Regent Powell, the Board is not eager to increase resident tuition due to a lack of funding from the legislature. Regent Powell also noted that it is uncertain whether the legislature will bring forward a bonding bill before the end of the legislative session or not.
- Lastly, Regent Powell noted that the Board is very interested in undergraduate enrollment across the five campuses. He reported that the Board endorsed an enrollment plan for the Twin Cities campus a few years ago, and that it will take action at its meeting next week to endorse similar plans for Crookston, Duluth, Morris and Rochester campuses.

Upon conclusion of Regent Powell's remarks, Professor Pittenger opened the floor for questions and comments. A number of faculty voiced significant concern about the special April 26 Board meeting, which, in their opinion, should have been a discussion about the institution's values, how it upholds these values, and how it makes decisions based on these values rather than a discussion about four former University leaders and what they did or did not do. A number of faculty also said that they were disappointed that the conversation turned into an attack on scholarship. In response, Regent Powell said that the Board is comprised of twelve independent regents who have the right to express their thoughts/opinions on issues that come before them. In his opinion, the Board looked at this issue in the broader context of racism and segregation, and came to the conclusion that they were not comfortable removing the names on the four buildings in question.

Regarding future conversations about this topic at a forum/fora, several FCC members felt strongly that the discussion should focus on how the University thinks about its history rather than trying to legitimize the report of the Task Force on Building Names and Institutional History. Additionally, many thought that there needed to be a strategy for managing a discussion of this nature to ensure it remains productive and constructive. Regent Powell agreed and added that while it is not possible to constrain people from sharing their opinions, there is a way to

manage outcomes and he cited the example of the statement a majority of the Board endorsed at its special April 26 meeting, which commended the faculty for its academic integrity.

While members appreciated the statement that the Board endorsed, many felt that the message conveyed in the statement was drowned out by the rhetoric and emotion in the room that day. Additionally, a number of FCC members perceived the silence of the Regents who supported the statement as an endorsement of what the Regents in the minority were saying; a few loud voices hijacked the conversation. While there does not need to be cohesion among the members of the Board on discussion topics, Regents who disagree should stand up and say so; civilized debate can be productive and valuable.

Finally, several members opined that the statement endorsed by the Board got lost in the media's coverage of the issue. The press implied in its coverage that the Board's decision not to rename the four buildings was the result of academic dishonesty related to the task force's report. The vast majority of people outside the University have not and will not ever read the Board statement, and, as a result, have formed opinions based on inaccurate information. Professor Pittenger, on behalf of the committee, thanked Regent Powell for a good discussion, and Regent Powell, in turn, thanked members for their candid comments.

2. Discussion with Executive Vice President and Provost Hanson and Vice Provost and Dean of Undergraduate Education McMaster: Professor Pittenger welcomed Executive Vice President and Provost Karen Hanson and Vice Provost and Dean for Undergraduate Education Bob McMaster to the meeting and said the two main topics for discussion are:

- Getting a progress update on the work of the Liberal Education Redesign Committee (LERC).
- Strategizing how to structure the co-sponsored forum/fora that the FCC and Provost's Office have talked about hosting.

To begin, Professor Pittenger turned to Vice Provost and Dean McMaster for a LERC update. Vice Provost and Dean McMaster reminded members that LERC was established in the fall of 2017 by Provost Hanson, and is chaired by Professor Sally Kohlstedt. He noted that the decision to revisit the University's liberal education requirement was ultimately spurred by the University of Minnesota's Strategic Plan.

Vice Provost and Dean McMaster said he believes LERC is nearing a final set of liberal education models to present to the faculty for discussion. He added that he is encouraging LERC not to come to the FCC or the Senate with a final decision already made, but rather to bring choices because ultimately the faculty own the curriculum.

He went on to say that he also believes the models that will be brought forward for discussion will have a similar structure to the existing liberal education curriculum design, e.g., core and theme requirements.

Next, he highlighted some possible changes to the liberal education requirements:

- Elimination of “double dipping,” e.g., a course that fulfills both a core requirement and a theme requirement.
- Retention of core requirements, and theme requirements, but ethics will be taken out of the theme category and mathematics will be removed from the core category. Instead, similar to WI courses for writing, the University will have Q courses for quantitative reasoning and mathematics, and E courses for ethics. This means that ethics and mathematics will be infused into existing courses.
- Change the name from “liberal education curriculum” to “general education curriculum.” The sense is that the verbiage “general education” better reflects the curriculum.

In terms of consultation on the proposed changes, Professor Kohlstedt and other LERC members have met with the University’s Advising Steering Committee because it will be the advisers who will have to help operationalize this endeavor. In addition to the FCC, other groups that LERC representatives have or will consult with include the CLA Assembly, college governance units, Office of Undergraduate Education (OUE) Student Advisory Committee, and the Senate Committee on Educational Policy (SCEP). Once all the consultation is done, said Vice Provost and Dean McMaster, the plan is to come back to the FCC for further input and have this as a topic of discussion at a fall Senate meeting. Professor Pittenger noted that she hopes Professor Kohlstedt will share the details of the model(s) being considered broadly so that the University community has time over the summer to review them and be able to provide meaningful input when this item comes to the Senate in November 2019. Another motivation for distributing this information sooner rather than later, said Professor Pittenger, is to be able to solicit provostal candidates thoughts on what the University is considering.

Moving on, Vice Provost and Dean McMaster outlined the concerns related to the new liberal education requirements, which included:

- Total number of credits needed for students to graduate. Currently, 30 credits is being discussed, which is three-credits more than the existing model of 27 credits, which allows double dipping of every LE course.
- Alignment with the Minnesota Transfer Curriculum (MnTC).
- Implications for collegiate budgets.
- Length of time it has taken for LERC to conclude its work.
- Effectively messaging the status of this project to faculty and students over the summer.

Members’ questions/comments:

- Did LERC take into account the fact that the ability for students to double dip has both a cost and a benefit, asked Professor Flaherty Manchester? Vice Provost and Dean McMaster said LERC literally had hours and hours of conversations on this point. What it has basically come down to is that if double dipping is eliminated, total credits needed will need to be adjusted to compensate for this change. He added that students, on average, arrive at the University with 20 credits, and for science and engineering, these students, on average, arrive with 30 - 40 credits.
- Please talk about how the adjustments to the total number of credits will impact students, said Professor Grier-Reed. This issue has also been a point of conversation as well, said Vice Provost and Dean McMaster, particularly as it relates to the equity of making this

change because not all students come into the University with 20 - 40 credits, for example. There are students who arrive at the University with zero credits, and these students are often low-income and/or first-generation students. For the most part, there is still space in the curriculum where another requirement is doable in terms of completion; however, for science and engineering, food science, and music education, which requires 128 plus credits, this is where there could be problems. LERC is very mindful of this issue.

- Will faculty be trained on how to go about adding quantitative reasoning to their courses, asked Professor Watkins, or will they just be expected to fit them in without any training? Vice Provost and Dean McMaster said he is not able to answer this question at this time, but added that another aspect of this discussion, which Professor Kohlstedt will likely speak to when she meets with the FCC in a couple weeks, has to do with the governance and oversight of the curriculum. There are a lot of different LERC member opinions about how strict the administration should be in overseeing the curriculum.
- Once a decision is made, when would the new liberal education requirements be implemented, asked Professor Lukkas? Assuming the Faculty Senate votes to approve a new model in fall 2019, the new model could likely be implemented by fall 2021. It will take a couple years to recertify the entire curriculum and get everyone on board.
- Do the liberal education requirements require faculty approval, asked Professor Gigler? Yes, said both Vice Provost and Dean McMaster and Professor Pittenger.
- Clearly, thought is being given to how the LE curriculum change will impact collegiate budgets, said Professor Buhlmann, but what about the budget of students? Will the change in requirements have a financial impact on students? Vice Provost and Dean McMaster said the budget of students will depend on whether they can graduate in four-years. If total credits increase to 30-credits, said Vice Provost and Dean McMaster, he worries about this, particularly for science and engineering students. A counter-argument to this concern is that requirements cannot be established for just one college. In Vice Provost and Dean McMaster's opinion, the highest denominator needs to be factored into this equation versus the lowest denominator in getting students to graduate in four-years. That said, if students can get through the curriculum in four-years, there should be no impact on their budgets.
- Professor Watkins requested Vice Provost and Dean McMaster pull the data on how many science and engineering students are able to get 27-credits in four-years. Provost Hanson said the pinch point is that science and engineering students have to satisfy the ABET accreditation requirements. She added that ABET has also been trying to reduce its requirements because it recognizes that keeping students too long without graduating is not good.
- In Professor Nelson's opinion, the longer LERC waits to distribute what is being considered by the committee will result in more pushback from the faculty. Professor Pittenger said that Professor Kohlstedt will meet with the FCC on May 16, and this would be a good time to reinforce why this information needs to be distributed sooner rather than later.

Professor Pittenger thanked Vice Provost and Dean McMaster for the update and a good discussion on this important topic.

Next, Professor Pittenger said that the remainder of the meeting would be spent brainstorming and conceptualizing with Provost Hanson how the forum/fora that the Provost's Office and FCC plan to host could be structured. Committee members and Provost Hanson generally agreed on the following:

- Hold a forum/fora that is both educative and forward thinking addressing history in general, the University's past, and its values going forward.
- Earmark a portion of the forum/fora to explain how historical scholarship is conducted.
- Do not directly tie the forum/fora to the report of the Task Force on Building Names and Institutional History.
- Identify the audience for the forum/fora as well as the intended goals and outcomes to be accomplished.
- Structure the the forum/fora so that there is no hierarchy; all participants will be evenly matched and respected.
- Consider a moderated venue, e.g., [Better Angels](#), where people can respectfully disagree with one another while finding some common ground.

At the end of the discussion, it was agreed that Provost Hanson and Professors Pittenger and Buhlmann, FCC chair and vice chair, respectively, would meet with the History Department to get their input/ideas on a forum/fora that would ideally be non-confrontational, respectful and educative.

Professor Pittenger thanked members and Provost Hanson for a good brainstorming session.

4. **Adjournment:** Hearing no further business, Professor Pittenger adjourned the meeting.

Renee Dempsey
University Senate Office