

Minutes*

**Faculty Assembly Steering Committee
Thursday, October 8, 1998
11:00 – 1:30
Room 626 Campus Club**

- Present: Sara Evans (chair), Kent Bales, Stephen Gudeman, David Hamilton, M. Janice Hogan, Roberta Humphreys, Leonard Kuhi, Judith Martin, V. Rama Murthy, Matthew Tirrell
- Absent: Linda Brady, Mary Dempsey, Marvin Marshak, Fred Morrison
- Guests: (for the first part of the meeting:) senators from the professional schools; (for the second part of the meeting:) department heads from the arts, sciences, and engineering departments

[In these minutes: many different subjects, raised in comments by senators and department chairs to Twin Cities FCC members]

Professor Evans convened the meeting with Senators from the professional schools and explained that the purpose of the meeting is for the faculty on the Steering Committee (the Twin Cities FCC members) to listen and learn what the problems and issues of the day are for their colleagues. The minutes will be summary, so there will be no attribution.

-- The impact of IMG is seen as negative, especially on cooperative efforts. There are also problems (in at least some places) with departments doing everything that IMG provides incentives to do (e.g., increase enrollment and research funding) but not then being recognized financially by the college.

If IMG stops at the level of the college, this raises the question of who distributes funds within a college and how that should be dealt with.

-- There is a conflict between expectations for research and for outreach; faculty who do much outreach are punished at salary-setting time because they have not done enough research.

-- Staff support for faculty activities is inadequate (and can vary widely between departments). There appears to be no faculty voice in department budgetary decisions, in at least some cases. Relatedly, there is too much to do; "if the University wants to be a world-class university, the faculty need world-class time to do research." The lack of staff support, increased bureaucratic demands, and the time it takes to develop the use of new technology all contribute to the lack of faculty time to do their work.

-- Faculty budgetary priorities identified by one college, by faculty survey, were (1) faculty salaries, (2) support for faculty, and (a distant third) new faculty lines.

* 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 represent the views of, nor are they binding on, the Senate or Assembly, the Administration, or the Board of Regents.

- Inequality across the campus in facilities.
- The need to speed up the process for obtaining permission for the use of human subjects in research. It was agreed that specific examples would be provided to Professor Hamilton.
- Use of the evaluation of teaching data. SCEP was provided information on how unreliable such data are.
- The food service, compared to other campuses, is limited. There is a need for more “minority” foods. Particularly on the St. Paul campus, there is also widespread dissatisfaction with the food service; prices have gone up and quality has gone down (it is “atrocious”). Some departments find they can obtain better food at lower prices by going to outside vendors. It was agreed that some mechanism for obtaining comments and feedback on the food service should be used.
- The change in tuition remission to GAs has made it more difficult to hire students. While they are paid more, the absence of tuition remission makes the positions less attractive.
- The PA staff who teach, who do faculty-like tasks, would like a greater voice in their job circumstances. The continuous appointments for PA staff, which are quite difficult to obtain, are known as “tenure lite.” The differential treatment in salary increases was very upsetting, especially those PA staff who teach and do research. (These concerns may be addressed by the report and recommendations of the Academic Appointments Subcommittee, chaired by Professor Bales, which will be making a report at the November 5 Faculty Senate meeting. If those who do faculty-like work can be identified, it will be possible to bring more rationality to the system of faculty appointments – but this will not address the need for more support staff.)
- The rising cost of health care and the declining options are a concern to PA staff.

Professor Evans thanked the professional school senators for attending the meeting and recessed the meeting briefly. She then reconvened it at 12:15 and welcomed department chairs/heads from the arts, sciences, and engineering departments, and again explained the purpose of the meeting. The points raised in the discussion were these:

- The creation of the digital technology center (in Walter Library) will not leave the University with library resources appropriate for a major research university. The collections will be dispersed, and when reassembled, only about 1/3 of the current collection will be accessible – and it is assumed that digital access will make up for the difference. That will not happen; there will be a second-rate library system with inadequate resources that will impede the work of the faculty. Many library resources will be moved to the Archives – and it is not clear that even faculty will have access to them. Some materials (e.g., history of science), moreover, will NEVER be made available digitally.
- IMG will have a significant impact on the libraries, which do not generate revenue. They could be shunted off to the side as the institution becomes more revenue-conscious; the libraries need special attention and should not be linked to revenue production.
- What is the administration doing about the potential loss of tuition with the change to semesters?

-- The “invisible faculty” – full time but non-tenurable – are increasing. The way they are treated is an issue, and their impact on the tenure system is worrisome (it undermines tenure). Hiring non-regular faculty also pulls the rug out from underneath graduate students, who are not hired as TAs. There is a need for guidelines on hiring regular and non-regular faculty. (Professor Bales reported on the work of the Academic Appointments Subcommittee.)

If there is the possibility of exempting a department from any proposed limit on the percentage of non-regular faculty, there could be pressure on departments to seek the exemption. There is a concern also that any limit will be seen as the number that must be achieved before any new tenure line will be approved.

What causes a department to hire adjunct faculty and educational specialists? A lack of funds. Moreover, in some cases faculty success is the problem; faculty obtain research funds and buy out teaching responsibilities. A high-quality department should have 4-5 faculty absent every year, so temporary faculty and TAs are used – but it is misleading to emphasize an undergraduate initiative when many classes will be taught by adjuncts and TAs. Departments need “excess” faculty to allow some to be on leave each year. (Some departments use retired faculty; other bring in outside distinguished faculty or use the vacancies as an opportunity to give young Ph.D.s a chance.) The problem is a reflection of the small size of the University’s faculty.

-- The roles and responsibilities of the faculty in research are a concern; it appears there is a set of rules foisted by the administration on the faculty in response to legitimate concerns about the exceptional status imposed by NIH. These rules will make research much more difficult and complex, will drive faculty away and could harm recruitment. There is a need to spell out responsibilities, but not through such a cumbersome structure. The University is also trying to fit the NIH model to everyone, and faculty must also deal with “truculent administrators” at ORTTA. Professor Hamilton is trying to make things better, and the faculty are impressed with the efforts, but the DOCUMENT is terrible. A related problem is that tasks formerly performed by ORTTA have been transferred to departments, but without any resources to do them. (Professor Kuhl said these matters are high on the agenda of the Senate Research Committee, which he chairs.)

-- The Graduate Assistant tuition benefit system is totally unworkable. (It also feeds the motivation to hire outside faculty, rather than graduate students.)

-- Faculty salaries are most on the mind of faculty; will the University continue on the road to bringing salaries into line with peer institutions? The 5% recommended in the biennial request is not enough; there has also been talk that the units would be expected to come up with another 2% or 3%; that “sounds like an old, bad story.” FCC should ask the administration either to renew the commitment to improving the competitiveness of faculty salaries or to stop deluding the faculty that that is the goal.

-- The mandate for writing across the curriculum appears not to carry any funding with it. Without resources, the plan is hollow, nothing but fancy words. Delivering writing instruction will be difficult; faculty are not used to doing it and graduate students are not competent to do it; the quickest way to derail the plan is to provide no funding. Vice Provost Swan must be told that new resources are a sine qua non of implementing the program. In addition, the proposals are due October 23, but writing instruction can only be delivered in small classes, which require additional staff; there is a complete disconnect between the schedule for proposals and the need for funding. Relatedly, as departments move more to a recitation

model of instruction, there will be heavy demands on classrooms. There has been no discussion of how all these pieces fit together.

Professor Evans thanked everyone for coming, and adjourned the meeting at 1:20.

-- Gary Engstrand

University of Minnesota