

Minutes*

**Senate Committee on Educational Policy
January 14, 1994
2:00 - 4:00
Room 626 Campus Club**

Present: Kenneth Heller (chair), Anita Cholewa, Thomas Clayton, Robert Johnson, Manuel Kaplan, Carla Phillips, William Van Essendelft, Darren Walhof, Gayle Graham Yates

Regrets: Craig Bursch, James Cotter, Sue Donaldson, Megan Gunnar

Absent: Darwin Hendel, Michael Pawlicki

Guests: Vice President Anne Petersen

Others: none

[In these minutes: Miscellany; Research Strategic Planning Committee report]

1. Report of the Chair & Committee Discussion

Professor Heller convened the meeting at 2:05. He began by noting that there will be considerable pressure on the schedule and that the Committee will have to reserve time to set its own agenda and deal with issues it believes important.

In terms of U2000, he suggested that the Committee should try to stay with educational policy issues. Some issues affect educational policy more directly than others; if the Committee is not careful, it could become involved in EVERY planning issue. One thing in U2000 the Committee should keep its eye on, it was suggested, was (1) the relationship between education and research (which are not adequately addressed in the Research Strategic Planning Committee report, to be discussed at this meeting with Vice President Petersen), and (2) how institutional rearrangements affect graduate and undergraduate education and serve the needs of students at THIS university.

Professor Heller noted that there will be a meeting of the Committee with Vice President Allen on February 4 to discuss the latest planning proposals for University College. He agreed, in response to a question raised, that the issue of education versus training [raised in the meeting of the Finance and Planning Committee on January 11] should be taken up with Vice President Allen and that the role of the Committee with respect to programs such as the community college partnership programs will need to be clarified. It may, he said, be useful to invite faculty members involved with the programs to meet with the Committee. The community colleges, it was reported by one Committee member, are not taking a major responsibility for the partnership programs if "major responsibility" is defined as a significant role in curriculum development for courses taken during the last two years of the program. If it is defined as playing a role in the first 90 credits, then they are. It was agreed that the Committee should be provided information about the curricula of the two programs.

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

Professor Heller then clarified, for the record, that this Committee had indeed formally appointed the Morse-Alumni Nominating Committee.

He also informed the Committee that he had discussed with the chair of the Senate Library Committee issues related to copyrights and course packets. It was agreed that this is an issue the Committee should take up. [It was noted that a first discussion of the issues will be held on January 20 in a joint Senate Consultative Committee-Senate Library Committee meeting.]

This is not a trivial issue, it was pointed out, because the new interpretation of copyright laws makes life more difficult for faculty and students, especially in the humanities and social sciences. The restrictions on duplicating articles, and the need to obtain copyright permission, means faculty must rethink what materials they will require so that they remain available and affordable for students. In terms of a response, suggested one Committee member, faculty might work through their professional associations to restrict or eliminate professional journal copyrighting of articles.

2. Research Strategic Planning Committee Report

Professor Heller then inquired if Committee members had any observations to offer about the revised RSPC report in advance of Vice President Petersen's arrival at the meeting.

One concern, mentioned earlier, is about the connections between research and education, and particularly undergraduate education. There is a false dichotomy set up in the way we discuss research and education, it was maintained by one Committee member--as if they were so separate that they can be dealt with separately, when they are the two sides of the same coin. It may be that research is being taught to students, or it may be that research is being conducted by professional scholars with the aid of students--the interaction between the two is not clear. The way educational practice embodies research, or the way research is used in education, is not addressed in the report.

Is this a one-way or a two-way street? inquired another Committee member. Does this mean that basic research cannot be done outside an educational institution? It is a two-way street, it was said in response, and it certainly does not mean research cannot be done elsewhere. Rather, the point is about the ways we do research and the ways we do education--the two are intricately related to each other.

Professors teach students how to do research, but that is not the only area the Committee need be concerned with. The other part of that two-way street is the way students and faculty DO research; it is a process with an outcome that needs to inform the entire educational process. Both features should be addressed by the Committee. Another Committee member agreed that the two should not be contrasted in the RSPC report. If one issue is the recruitment of high quality students into post-baccalaureate programs, were the University to ignite an interest in research in its own undergraduates, a primary place to recruit such students would be its own undergraduate programs.

The question not answered is whether the argument being advanced says that being engaged in education is integral to research--or if research can be done outside educational institutions. It is not being argued that research cannot be done except in universities. The University itself provides the instruction that is needed by those in the other institutions. These are not the important questions; what is important is identifying what the University does well. What the University believes, said another

Committee member, is that there is a symbiosis between teaching and research and that each is done differently at a university than it would be were it done separately.

There are a number of references in the report, it was pointed out by one Committee member, to the development of new programs and increasing the number of graduate programs. Yet other language, in the discussion about program size and number, talks about discouraging the proliferation of programs. To talk about new programs seem surprising in light of the U2000 goal of reducing program proliferation. Another Committee member said the language should likely be read as calling for getting rid of unneeded programs and adding new programs that are needed. It can also be read, observed another, as saying that there should be no net increase in the number of programs.

At this point Vice President Petersen joined the meeting and explained that the committee had met earlier in the week and had approved a number of wording changes in the report; she distributed copies of the revised executive summary. The number of recommendations have been reduced from eleven to four, primarily by aggregation; priorities have also been established. There are some issues in the full report that are not covered in the executive summary, she explained, which will need correction; the linkages with the U2000 planning process also have to be made clear. One minor issue that has provoked some amusement is the title of her office, Dr. Petersen commented, in part because the acronym "VPRDGS" is unpronounceable; she said she would welcome suggestions for a change.

Professor Heller then outlined the concern about the inadequacy of the report in addressing the link between research and education. Dr. Petersen recounted that the committee had also struggled with that issue and considered but discarded language speaking to the issue; the report simply notes that the two must be clearly linked. The question is one of balance, she noted; the two are synergistic. More language could be added to the report, she said, but the topic is one on which it is easy to say a little and difficult to say a lot. One knows what a research university is--a place where faculty generate and disseminate knowledge. But this Committee has talked about evaluation of faculty and how it is based primarily on research rather than education or the linking of education and research. She said she would welcome any suggestions the Committee might have on improving that evaluation.

One of the points discussed by the Committee, Dr. Peterson was informed, was the importance of linking research with UNDERGRADUATE programs and making that linkage more regular so that undergraduates would EXPECT to be involved in research. Dr. Petersen agreed that a strong statement is needed early in the report on this point, although there is some language on it already. There are also "turf" questions raised when this issue is brought up; her office has no responsibility for undergraduate education, she noted.

Is this a problem of a conflict between institutional demands and a policy goal? asked one Committee member. If it is a policy goal for the University to advance the relationship between (undergraduate and graduate) education and research, the report should enunciate that policy statement irrespective of "turf" questions. The present language of the report speaks to strong undergraduate programs, which is not the same as a policy statement about the dynamic relationship that should exist between research and education. Dr. Petersen said she agreed and thought that the RSPC would as well.

There are things the University could do, it was said; it should be encouraging undergraduate participation in research but now there are impediments to doing so. Undergraduates take a lot of time--

they represent a "net cost" in research--but teaching through research is part of why research is conducted at a university. Dr. Petersen disagreed with the assertion that undergraduates are a "net cost." She said that in her experience they are involved because they want to be and that if they are excited, they are involved heavily. Once she started including undergraduates in her research, she related, she took any who were interested; for those who "took" to it, they brought an enthusiasm and excitement that encouraged everyone else. She said she would be glad to suggest that the report say more on this issue.

There are concrete things the University could do, a follow-up comment noted, such as waiving indirect costs on undergraduate salaries. Currently the educational mission of the University is not recognized in research contracts. Should the University take steps to encourage research groups to hire undergraduates and to support them? This may tie into the financial aid offered to students. There is a great deal of research money at the University that is not, but could be, used to help support undergraduates. The University could go further, added another Committee member; if undergraduate student aid packages are being reviewed, those packages could be changed to include support paid to them as researchers, if they qualify. Dr. Petersen concurred with these sentiments.

The way language is used in the report is confusing, said one Committee member; is this a research university first or an educational institution first? In his view, the latter is first but research is integral to the kind of education the University provides. Dr. Petersen said the committee would agree; a research university is an educational institution in which the faculty generate as well as disseminate knowledge--and in Minnesota, that is how the University is different from other schools and colleges. It is NOT the intent of the report to describe the University as a research institute.

For whom is the executive summary written? Dr. Peterson was asked. It needs must make its points more clearly, and with fewer shorthand terms understood primarily within academe, if the intended audience is primarily external. Dr. Petersen agreed; she noted that this is the only Committee that has requested the full report and she worries that few will read it; that makes the executive summary all the more important.

Dr. Petersen reported that the RSPC committee had been somewhat split on making a recommendation about faculty development. The faculty members on the committee felt strongly that doing so was critical--even if she could not act on it--because it is so integrally related to research and graduate education, so it stands as a separate recommendation on the shorter list. She asked the view of the Committee.

One Committee member said the recommendation was crucial. In all of the discussions about U2000, faculty members have the perception that faculty are lost in all the planning. That is not the intent, to be sure, but it is the appearance. It is important that faculty development be given a prominent place in this report.

Another problem, Dr. Petersen responded, is that the recommendations are intended to initiate an on-going process, not provide a statement of the faculty role. The committee feels a strong faculty group should look at the information in the report and decide what actions should be taken. That would be helpful, it was said.

It has been said before in these meetings, one Committee member told Dr. Petersen, that faculty development is not improvement by new hires. The implied hierarchy in the document for implementing

faculty development--through the chairs and DGSs--is unnecessary. Those people, in fact, may NOT be the best ones to know what a good faculty development program would be in a given unit. Dr. Petersen agreed--but pointed out that the ones to decide should also NOT be only the deans and vice presidents. There is a hierarchy implied here and there is no sense, it was then said, that a faculty governance system would oversee the implementation of the document; it should contain principles, not details, except where necessary.

What is meant by faculty development? Dr. Petersen was asked. Better teachers? Better researchers? It is intended to refer to the faculty role in all its aspects, she replied; it is not spelled out. It could be read to not include teaching, it was said--which is not what is intended.

There is also a sense that the faculty are not much in control of their own development and must be prodded--although that also is likely not intended. The faculty are seen as an inert mass. The opportunity for development must be provided, said another Committee member; it isn't clear how one MAKES faculty take advantage of that opportunity.

This topic is being given thought, Dr. Petersen told the Committee. The RSPC committee was worried about the problem of the department head who does not pay attention to faculty development, who DISCOURAGES faculty from taking advantage of development opportunities, or who does not know how to encourage faculty to take advantage of opportunities. Faculty development should be a responsibility of a chair; if nothing is happening, the University must make sure that impediments are removed and opportunities provided.

Further, as faculty go through their careers, they are not the same person all along the way. Often, especially during the tenure review process, they may neglect some areas; in some departments, there is a sense that teaching is not supported in the early years but that the balance changes later. It is an unusual faculty member who spends an entire career obtaining research grants--but most units act as though that is the case with all faculty. The committee tried to deal with this phenomenon. Department heads can be assisted in how to best support faculty to continue to be engaged in at least aspects of the faculty role; if not, they may not know how to work with a colleague who is "burnt out."

Why not say all this in the report, inquired one Committee member, so that faculty know you understand these things? It is a fundamental issue. Dr. Petersen agreed they could be added [and subsequently reported that the language was revised].

What she just said, Dr. Petersen was told, was quite different from the interpretation one takes from the document. It appears to make faculty development a management question and makes the line of authority clear. Her comments, however, represent what faculty want to see the University do--address the different needs of faculty at different times in their careers. Faculty want to know that the University will pay attention to changes in individual careers and to the faculty as a whole and how faculty can do their work in optimum fashion. Dr. Petersen said she appreciated the suggestions.

Apropos some editorial comments, Dr. Petersen said the plan is to get a good copy editor before the final report is prepared in order to clarify the message.

One Committee member asked how important collaboration with other institutions is. Is this collaboration to improve efficiency? Does it go beyond the state? Dr. Petersen said Professor Phil

Shively has been working on collaboration on a half-time basis for her for the past year. She said she worries that the report does not well represent the work he has done, which is very exciting. Most of the collaboration would be OUTSIDE the state, although much could work as well in Minnesota (such as the library collaboration, with an eye to stretching acquisition budgets). She said she was surprised at the extent of existing efforts; there is much faculty collaboration already with Iowa State, Wisconsin, and the Dakotas. Professor Shively has proposed collaboration as one way to be more cost-effective, not only in libraries but also, for example, in faculty, where a program here might not be broad enough or deep enough; by collaborating with a neighboring university, a more well-rounded program might be developed. He is now working with five departments in the University who, jointly with their counterparts at Wisconsin, could be top ten departments--and without such collaboration are less likely to achieve that status.

Asked how these efforts compare with those being undertaken by the College of Education with St. Cloud and Winona, Dr. Petersen said the Shively proposals are more a "collaboration among equals" in the sense that both are research universities. In-state collaboration could be seen as capitalizing on or complementing strengths in the state. There are also political implications to the efforts of the College of Education; they demonstrate that the University is reaching out to meet the needs of the state as well as capitalizing on faculty strengths in the non-metro locations.

The Education programs are using innovative approaches to education at the graduate level, Dr. Petersen said, and these need to be considered more. Administrators at vocational-technical institutes enrolled in a doctoral program at the University are using a peer cohort model, on the assumption that they can learn much from their peers. It has been interesting to discuss this with the Policy Review Councils of the Graduate School--it has not been an explicit educational model before and it may be able to help all. The traditional model of graduate education is apprenticeship--one on one education--which is very expensive. One can ask if it is the best model in all cases.

One Committee member mentioned that she had read the entire report and urged that Professor Shively be retained as the overall report editor, because his report to the RSPC was a model of succinctness--it gets right to the point with few words and good illustrations. Several of the points in the RSPC report seem too dry; what Dr. Petersen has articulated is what should be written in the report. Dr. Petersen commented that the full report is too long and it may be that the executive summary should be a little longer. But there is much in the full report--tables and data--that could be used as benchmarks. Other Committee members endorsed the suggestion that Professor Shively would be an excellent choice as document editor--rather than relying on a copy editor who might not understand the faculty role.

One Committee member expressed surprise at the brevity of the language dealing with support for graduate students--only one paragraph. Did this committee see this as a priority? It will be tough to improve many programs if there aren't funds that graduate students can count on. The committee DID see it as a priority, Dr. Petersen responded; the problem with saying any more is that it did not have the data it needed. The evidence is anecdotal and it needs to be increased to be credible. On the subject of graduate students, it was also said, the implications of the change in the fringe benefit rates should be made clearer.

In terms of the presentation of the report, said one Committee member, any term that has been confusing to SCEP members should be explained.

On another topic, one Committee member observed that a barrier to interdisciplinary research is a

lack of knowledge about who potential collaborators might be--faculty do not know each other. Dr. Petersen said ORTTA is working on compiling a list of faculty members and the projects they are working on. That list, it was said, should be put on an electronic bulletin board.

Professor Phillips--who had been asked by Professor Heller to serve as acting chair because he had to depart for another meeting mid-way through this one--then thanked Vice President Petersen for joining the Committee and adjourned the meeting at 4:00.

-- Gary Engstrand

University of Minnesota