

Minutes*

Senate Committee on Educational Policy
Wednesday, December 4, 1996
1:00 - 3:00
Room 238 Morrill Hall

Present: Laura Koch (chair), Avram Bar-Cohen, Anita Cholewa, Corey Donovan, Darwin Hendel, Gordon Hirsch, Thomas Johnson, Robert Leik, Judith Martin, Kathleen Newell, Tina Rovick, W. Phillips Shively, Gayle Graham Yates

Regrets: Elayne Donahue, William Van Essendelft

[In these minutes: athletic travel exception; policy revision; early examinations in athletics; Twin Cities course and curriculum committee; Incentives for Managed Growth; length of semester class period; tuition remissions; policy on reorganization]

1. Athletic Travel Policy Exception

Professor Koch convened the meeting at 1:00 and began by reporting on a request for an exception to the athletic travel policy. Associate Director Donna Olson wrote to note that the basketball team needs to leave on December 14 at 4:30; the rule forbids a departure before 6:00. Inasmuch as all Twin Cities exams were completed on Saturday by the time the team needed to leave campus, the Committee unanimously approved the exception.

2. Assembly Agenda Misprint

Professor Koch noted that the December 5 Assembly agenda had a misprint, which provoked several messages to her. The policy on overlapping classes read "students shall not be permitted to enroll in back-to-back courses that are both on the Minneapolis campus or both on the St. Paul campus that start or end within 15 minutes of each other. . . ." It appears that students are not allowed to enroll in back-to-back courses, which was not the Committee's intent. There will be a change proposed, because students ARE to be permitted to enroll in back-to-back courses, provided they are at least 15 minutes apart.

3. Early Examinations

Dr. Donahue sent her a message about students on one of the women's teams, Professor Koch then reported. Eleven students in four different courses were giving exams on Thursday and Friday of this week (the last week of classes); there is currently no policy that forbids doing so.

Provost Shively said he believed the policy allowed early examinations if by unanimous consent. Dr. Cholewa said she did not believe that the earlier policies in force prohibited such early exams, but other Committee members were less certain; some thought the exam could not be changed.

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Early exams put students in an awkward position, Professor Koch commented.

There is no prohibition on a faculty member making accommodations for individual students, is there, asked one Committee member? There is not, Provost Shively and others said.

Provost Shively said that he would pass on the information about this practice to the deans.

4. Twin Cities Course and Curriculum Committee

Professor Koch then recalled that the Twin Cities Undergraduate Course and Curriculum Committee (TCUCCC) would again be on the agenda of the Twin Cities Assembly. It has been brought twice previously to the Assembly; there have been significant majorities in favor of the Assembly, but there have been insufficient people present to pass a bylaw amendment.

Professor Richard Skaggs has proposed amendments to the proposal that he believed friendly, to abbreviate the TCUCCC responsibilities so it would only be a dispute resolution group and would have no review authority. He believed that the amendments would help avoid the impression, in CLA, that the TCUCCC would go on a hunting expedition, looking for problems. That is an odd reaction, said one Committee member, since the proposal, in many ways, is designed to protect CLA. After discussing them for awhile, the Committee concluded that the amendments were not friendly.

One Committee member inquired what the intent of the TCUCCC is; Professor Koch said it is to have an overview of the campus. Another Committee member noted that it anticipates the advent of RCM, about which many colleges--not just CLA--are worried. Colleges may choose to begin offering courses that are inappropriate, but there is no mechanism, short of the President, to prevent them from doing so. This proposal is intended to be preventive, said another Committee member, rather than having the University allow inappropriate duplication to develop and then needing to arbitrate a resolution.

Asked how many times the proposal could be brought to the Assembly, Professor Koch said there is no limit. It was agreed that the proposal would remain as it appeared on the Assembly docket.

5. Letter on Incentives for Managed Growth

Professor Koch next distributed copies of her redrafted letter on IMG; instead of being sent to Associate Vice President Kvavik, it is addressed to Professor Gray, chair of the Senate Consultative Committee. It was thought that the letter might have more impact if it carries the endorsement of SCC.

One Committee inquired whether the train of IMG has already left the station. Provost Shively said it was moving along--and then noted that he is in a slightly awkward position, as a member both of SCEP and of the Executive Council, and somewhat more favorably disposed than the majority of the Committee to IMG. One view, however, is that "at the University, no train has ever left the station." There is a lot of steam in the proposal, however.

IMG addresses concerns that everyone has; "you'd have to be crazy not to have them," it was said. Perhaps the most relevant step for faculty to take is to try to have a role in the application of IMG, so

educational considerations are factored in. How that would be accomplished is not clear; successful intervention requires someone both with knowledge of budgets as well as educational goals and vision. Part of the problem is the implementation and tracking of the program; it may be that the provost and deans are in the best position to monitor IMG.

Provost Shively said he believed it very appropriate for SCEP to raise the questions it has. The provosts and deans ARE in the best position to track IMG, and he has already indicated that on balance he supports IMG the way it has developed. Most of the concerns SCEP raised are ones he shares, however; reiteration of the concerns by SCEP is desirable.

Dr. Shively said he believes the University will move to IMG. Will it be subject to changes, asked one Committee member? It has already changed a great deal, and could change more. This Committee is already looking at mechanisms for dealing with problems; raising the issues adds energy to the need to do so. A letter from SCEP will probably not stop IMG, so it becomes an attempt to affect implementation.

Will there be a statement from someone soon, asked one Committee member, that IMG will in no way compromise or bar progress towards the goals of U2000? Provost Shively said he could not honestly assert that IMG would not undermine progress toward those goals; any change of the magnitude of IMG carries with it uncertainty. One cannot make that guarantee, but one can say it is intended that IMG is not intended to undermine achievement of those goals. The proposal now is modest, but there are still dangers in it.

It was agreed that the letter should specifically request that it be involved in implementation of IMG. A change of this sort will be monitored and evaluated, will it not, inquired one Committee member? Will there be an evaluation? Somewhere in that process, there should be regular reporting to SCEP. Provost Shively said he did not know of any process for monitoring implementation of IMG. One important issue, in any institutional change effort, is to learn whether the change is heading the institution the way it wishes to go, said one Committee member; it may be that the critical measures can serve as a guide. What measures should focus on IMG in particular, however, has not been addressed.

It was suggested that the letter include a statement that IMG should be monitored, both movement toward goals and negative side effects, and that a report to the Senate should be made after two years. It was also agreed that SCEP should ask that IMG be taken off the table, but if not, then it should be monitored. The Committee concurred.

One of the most disconcerting thing about IMG is that it is all about growth, about getting more; it's not about sustaining what the University already has, one Committee member opined. One worries about the language and the implication that people should do things to expand, rather than pay attention to what they are supposed to be doing. The faculty need to hear more about this than they have, agreed another Committee member; it was said earlier that it is obvious that IMG is not intended to undermine U2000, but a lot of people feel this is a new "white knight" and they can forget about U2000. There is a need for clearer statements on where the administration wants to go with IMG.

It should also be acknowledged, said one Committee member, that IMG is intended to address problems that now exist, and has as a goal better correlating resources with student enrollment.

Professor Koch said she would revise the letter in accord with the comments made and send it to Professor Gray. She said she hoped that the Senate Consultative Committee would put the matter on its agenda, once the letter has been received.

6. Length of Semester Class Period

Professor Koch recalled that she had sent an email to Committee members about the possibility of proposing to change the length of the semester class period from 55 minutes to 50 minutes. There has been concern, in the Semesters Coordinating Group, about the number of requests for exemptions that have been made from the 55-minute period. The Law School has made a request; CLA is apparently going to do so.

The rationale for this is that as more and more collaboration with the University of Wisconsin occurs, the institutions need the same schedule. The calendar will be identical, but their classes are 50 minutes, with a 15-minute change period. Does the Committee wish to consider reverting to the 50-minute period, Professor Koch asked, or does it feel strongly about retaining the 55-minute period?

Committee members discussed the implications of a change. One said the calculation of minutes of instruction was never an interest, so a change to 50 minutes would be acceptable. Another commented that PR is the biggest issue: sticking to 55 minutes increases student class time, while 50 minute periods decreases it. The point is whether the University wants to make a statement or take its lumps.

CLA is making the shift to the common University workload policy, Provost Shively reported, which will mean there will be added contact hours for CLA faculty and students, even without a change to a 55-minute hour. The net effect, averaged over the campus, will be neutral in terms of seat time. The CLA faculty has expressed concern, because the Semester Transition Committee had said there would be no change in workload in connection with the transition, but for CLA faculty--especially with a 55-minute hour--would have increased workload. This is part of the concern that has been expressed.

Another reason, said one Committee member, is because CLA has a large number of 4-credit classes that meet for only three hours. Even though that is not a concern now, it creates a double problem for CLA. Provost Shively agreed, and said that the semester transition is being used to make the switch, to bring it into compliance. It is also a big change for students.

One Committee member asked what the percentage increase and decrease would be with the 55-minute and 50-minute class period. The increase would be 2.6%; the decrease would be 6.6%. Those numbers are predicated in part on a 14-week semester, and the actual semesters will be slightly longer.

Many believe that a 4-credit quarter class changed to a 3-credit semester course. If little is done to change the course, there is a gain of time, Professor Koch pointed out; the exact arithmetic conversion would be from 4.5 credits to 3 credits. This may provide a leisure and a pace that is good for students, educationally, said another Committee member.

It is important to note that there will be mostly 15-week semesters, said one Committee member; when they are shorter, it will be because of Labor Day and State Fair. Given that, the 50-minute hour does not result in a significant reduction in instructional time. 50-minute periods also makes the

comparison between MWF and TTh classes simpler: 50 minutes MWF and 75 minutes TTh.

Professor Koch outlined what will have to occur, through the Senate, if there is to be a change in the Semester Conversion Standards. Another possibility would be to seek a blanket presidential exception, but it would be better to have the approval of the Senate. The policy on classes and schedules, implementing part of the Semester Conversion Standards, has not yet been adopted, but it reflects the 55-minute class period; it will also need to be changed before being brought to the Senate and Assembly for action.

It was moved, seconded, and unanimously voted to recommend to the Senate that the class period be changed to 50-minutes. The primary defense of the change, one Committee member commented, is that in most years, the 50-minute hour will mean no change in instructional time for students.

The issue of staggered starting times for Minneapolis and St. Paul has not yet been addressed, Professor Koch said in response to a question, but it will be.

7. Tuition Remission

Professor Koch next inquired if the Committee members had any comments or suggestions on the tuition remission policy that Vice President Brenner had presented to the Committee.

Provost Shively said he preferred the direct charge system that Dr. Brenner has proposed, but there are a couple of side effects that are not desirable. One is that even if the computer systems were working, there will be a lot of accounting necessary at the department level to calculate the benefit for individual GAs. Another is that it creates an incentive for departments and PIs to hire only post-prelim graduate students; most will probably be interested in supporting their graduate programs, but a number of units do not hire their own graduate students (e.g., General College, the Composition Program). Those units will be more inclined to hire post-prelim students.

One alternative would be to have pools at the college level. One reason for going to the direct charge system is because there is great variation across college in what the tuition and graduate student salaries are. If the college had its own pool, the effect would be exactly the same as if the change were made to direct charges; there would be no difference in the cost of fringe benefits, and the accounting would be a lot easier. There would be less incentive, or more diffuse incentive, to rely on advanced students. Another advantage of the direct charge system is to reduce the number of courses required in the graduate program. There may also be problems in this, and it needs more examination; it would probably not affect cross-college appointments.

It appears that the proposal is better than what has gone before, Professor Koch said. There will probably have to be some central buy-out of part of the deficit, it was said.

8. Policy on Reorganization

Professor Koch next turned to Professor Martin to lead a discussion of a proposed policy on reorganization. Professor Martin explained that the policy is about the degree to which the Committee, or the Senate, wishes to be involved in discussion of transfer, reorganization, addition, and deletion of

colleges and departments. The draft summarizes existing policies. It appears that many are not aware of existing policies.

What is being reiterated, Professor Martin said, is to clarify existing policies, not create new authority. For example, it calls for Senate approval of establishment or elimination of colleges, after being reviewed by SCEP and the Finance and Planning Committee. Establishment of new collegiate units will occur at the campus level, would be approved by the Assembly on each campus, and reported to the Senate for action through SCEP. Proposals to establish or eliminate departments, centers, and so on (intra-collegiate and cross-collegiate) are to be reported by campus to the Senate for information before being presented to the Regents. Intercollegiate transfer of departments are to be reviewed by the Senate before being submitted to the Regents. Proposals for collegiate reorganization and addition or deletion of undergraduate and graduate majors are to be reported to SCEP for information. They are not now so reported.

In the case of the Graduate School, these proposals are brought to the appropriate P&R Council, then the Executive Committee, and then to the Regents. Another step in the process is not problematic, as long as it does not require a lot of time, Dean Leik commented. Professor Koch pointed out that SCEP only reviews them, so no action would be required. It would be a matter of synchronizing the appropriate meetings. The question is what it means to say that the "protocol for consideration" of such changes shall include SCEP. This points need to be clarified, it was agreed. Presumably any SCEP discussion should be part of the decision-making process.

To what degree does the Committee wish things to remain as they are, with changes reported to the Senate or to SCEP for comment, Professor Martin asked, when the Twin Cities Curriculum Committee is adopted? That body may handle some of these issues. There is much on the books that is supposed to be done, although is not, but much of it would also go to the new committee. That would only pertain to undergraduate programs, Professor Koch noted; graduate programs would be different.

Reorganization of departments is of much more concern to the educational mission, it was said, while proposed changes in graduate programs (which might be nothing more than a name change) are more modest in impact.

The broader issue being addressed is the various types of changes and who is to receive information and review them, and what is their purpose in being involved? Is there a decision-making role, or a place to suggest changes to improve the proposals? For many years, the University had to deal with the issue of review and approval of new programs not only internally but also by the Higher Education Coordinating Board. That is no longer the case, it was said, and the process for review inside the institution needs rethinking. There is a new structure on the Twin Cities campus, with three provosts, and the role of SCEP can be very important. There has to be thought given to the process so that it works smoothly and not add time without adding value to the result.

In the case of campuses and colleges, there is to be approval; within colleges, reorganization is for information, Professor Martin affirmed. Presumably, the process would be similar to the discussions that occurred with the proposal to merge Human Ecology with Education and Human Development.

If there were a proposal to close CLA, and it came to SCEP and Finance and Planning, and the two

committees opposed the recommendation, they would so inform the Senate. The Senate could then do whatever it wished.

In the case of the reorganization of the biological sciences, there are proposals being developed to merge departments in Biological Sciences and the Medical School, with the merged department reporting simultaneously to the two deans, Provost Shively noted. Similar possibilities exist with Agriculture and Natural Resources. This is not a transfer of departments, because the CBS dean shares with the Medical School dean responsibility for a single department, while before they had their own departments. There was nothing in existing policy about mergers, Professor Martin noted. The original departments have been eliminated and a new one created; that should be reported to the Senate, it was said. There needs to be clarification of the term "reviewed" in the policy, and how that differs from reporting for information.

What is clear from examination of existing policies, Professor Martin commented, is that they did not envision the current University. There is, of course, nothing about the provostries.

These policies should be distributed widely, once adopted by the Senate.

Professor Martin said she would take the comments at the meeting into account and redraft the policy accordingly.

Dean Leik said he would also send to the Committee the new policy on merger or discontinuation of graduate programs. There appears to be no corresponding policy for review of undergraduate program changes. That is really the province of the college curriculum committees, it was said. Dean Leik said he is to be developing protocols for establishing new programs; if there is to be one for undergraduate programs as well, it would be desirable to develop them jointly.

9. Other Business

Professor Koch reported that she is appointing two subcommittees, one to consider use of student evaluation and one to consider grade inflation.

Dean Leik said he has had a concern about getting student opinion incorporated into self-studies when program reviews are conducted. Many programs are reluctant to include the information. They have submitted a proposal to FIPSE for a two-year process of developing a questionnaire, automating its use, so there could be an all-graduate student process of reviewing student opinion. Would this also be of interest at the undergraduate level as well? It is not course evaluation, but experience of the student in the program.

There is a connection with the critical measures, Dr. Hendel noted, in terms of building a mechanism to obtain information from students, on an annual basis, about their experiences. The other part would be to have a parallel system to look at graduates, after they have left.

Their proposal is for current graduate students, Dean Leik said, but could be used more broadly.

There has been a question about the examination schedule, the source of policies, and the policing authority with respect to athletic team travel to NCAA events. Students should not be placed at a

disadvantage because of participation in these events. This needs to be brought to the attention of faculty members.

It is not clear what can be done to help the women athletes in this instance. Perhaps Professor Koch could call the appropriate departments and indicate that scheduling exams in advance of finals week violates University policy, and that students have the right to take the exam at the appropriate time.

Having no other business, Professor Koch adjourned the meeting at 2:30.

-- Gary Engstrand

University of Minnesota