

Minutes*

Faculty Consultative Committee
Thursday, January 27, 2005
1:15 – 3:00
238A Morrill Hall

Present: Marvin Marshak (chair), Gary Balas, Susan Brorson, Jean Bauer, Charles Campbell, Carol Chomsky, Tom Clayton, Gary Davis, Dan Feeney, Emily Hoover, Morris Kleiner, Kathleen Krichbaum, Judith Martin, Fred Morrison, Jeff Ratliff-Crain, Martin Sampson, John Sullivan

Absent: Mary Jo Kane, Scott Lanyon

Guests: Interim Dean Victor Bloomfield (Graduate School); Senior Vice President and Provost E. Thomas Sullivan; Professors M. J. Maynes and Jennifer Windsor (CLA Council of Chairs)

Other: none

[In these minutes: (1) Scholars Walk; (2) strategic planning and discussion with Provost Sullivan; (3) capital budgeting process and CLA; (4) various items]

1. Scholars Walk

Professor Marshak convened the meeting at 1:15 and welcomed Interim Dean Bloomfield to discuss the Scholars Walk.

Dean Bloomfield thanked the Committee for the opportunity to discuss the project and for the suggestion to put on the web the list of individuals to be recognized. A number of people have reviewed and corrected information; he asked people to take another look to be sure the information is correct.

The Walk will start at the McNamara Alumni Center and run into the campus across the Mall through to Appleby Hall. There was a question about whether there would be sufficient funding to extend it, but the Foundation and the Alumni Association are now fairly confident that the funds will be available.

This project was started by President Bruininks when he was Provost and he asked Dr. Bloomfield to chair a committee of academics to decide what awards would be recognized on the Scholars Walk. They had discussions about whether the group should be self-perpetuating or if the project should be turned over to the All-University Honors Committee. For the next year or two, they have concluded, the Scholars Walk Committee should continue to oversee the initial development.

There are several categories of award recipients that will be recognized.

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

- The most outstanding external awards (Nobel, National Academy, Field, Pulitzer, McArthur Fellow, American Academy of Arts and Sciences, National Book Award)
- The most distinguished internal professorships (Regents Professor, McKnight Distinguished Professor, McKnight Presidential Chairs and Professors)
- Rhodes, Marshall, and Truman Scholars to recognize students
- Members of the Academy of Distinguished Teachers (recipients of the Morse-Alumni and Graduate-Professional Teaching awards) and recipients who pre-date the establishment of the Academy
- Honorary degree recipients from the University
- (These are less well defined, and they are trying to get the colleges to help): major disciplinary awards. The question is what is major enough; they should be equivalent to the National Academies.
- The historical giants of the University who were here before there were Regents Professorships and the like. Dean Bloomfield said he has emailed the DDD list to ask for suggestions and has received a few; he encouraged Committee members to talk with colleagues and think about who might fit in this category.

Construction on the Walk started this summer. The landscape architect, Gary Fishbeck of HGA Associates, has been devoted to the project, as have the alumni and University representatives. Mr. Fishbeck's vision is that the Walk should be a monument to last 500 years. The Walk is to be lined with trees; what lives that long? Bur oaks—and Mr. Fishbeck has scoured the market to purchase all the available bur oaks he could find. He also asked not only who the current nominees are but also about the number of people who would be honored over the next 100 years, a question that it is a challenge to respond to.

The portion of the walk between Computer Science and Aero Engineering is not particularly attractive, Professor Marshak observed. That is phase 2, Dean Bloomfield said, and they are thinking about a 180-foot photo-mural commemorating achievements. It would include names and faces but the purpose would be to commemorate achievements, not individuals. That portion will be different from the rest of the Walk and the details have yet to be worked out. Professor Hoover wondered if they have thought about ways to incorporate in the Walk plants developed at the University, of which there are many. Dean Bloomfield urged that Committee members send him such ideas.

What is the current number of honorees, Professor Balas asked? He has not added them up, Dean Bloomfield said, but there are about 250 members of the Academy of Distinguished Teachers, perhaps 30 or more members of the national academies, 16 Nobel Laureates associated with the University.

When will the first names be displayed, Professor Marshak asked? The test machining of the plaques will be this spring, Dean Bloomfield said, and they will start with the members of the Academy of Distinguished Teachers.

Professor Marshak thanked Dean Bloomfield for the update.

2. Discussion with Provost Sullivan and the Interim Report of the ad hoc Subcommittee on Strategic Planning

Professor Marshak next called on Professor Martin to make an interim report from the ad hoc subcommittee on strategic planning (Professors Lanyon, Martin, and Ratliff-Crain) appointed at the meeting the previous week. Professor Martin said this "pre-report" was intended to get people thinking about the issues prior to the discussion scheduled at the next meeting of the Committee. Her report was as follows:

- 1) The definition of the University: it reads as Twin Cities document only and needs an umbrella statement for the system level and parallel statements from the coordinate campuses.
- 2) The goal of being in the top three public research universities in the world: If that goal remains intact, clarify what it means to be a top three institution. Make sure that the President and other senior officers who must explain the goal have *a separate document* defining what quality means and what the goals are. Perhaps say that it means "top" in multiple fields, but not in every area—no university can achieve that. In next phase, use the question: What would you do to get there?
- 3) The report should be very clear: What is the University vis-à-vis MNSCU and the private colleges; the research faculty link is necessary but not sufficient because there is the problem of mission creep.
- 4) The real (and potential) value of a University degree is missing—the report must positively exploit the fact that breadth of exposure to knowledge at the University is a strength and that interdisciplinary inquiry is central. Students here have the potential to break out of boundaries for research and teaching—as they could in Michigan if the University of Michigan and Michigan State were merged. The report should also recognize that balance is easily tipped if the focus is too much in one area.
- 5) Framing concepts: in the vision, the contribution of the University to the state's quality of life should be central; in teaching and learning, the aspirations are too limited.
- 6) International aspirations should be strengthened. University students should study around the world, but has not part of its strength been that the University has trained leaders of the rest of the world? Does it not wish to continue to do this?

They also had specific language suggestions. (1) Change "research-focused university" to include teaching. (2) Under mission, teaching and learning, amend it so that it reads "to share that knowledge, understanding, and creativity by providing a broad range of educational programs in a strong and diverse community of learners and teachers, to prepare graduate, professional, and undergraduate students to function" (new language) in an information-rich, knowledge-rich, demanding world, and to serve non-traditional students interested in continuing education and lifelong learning. (3) Under values, "attracts top faculty and bright, curious students" add "retains the former and graduates the latter."

Provost Sullivan joined the meeting while Professor Martin was making her report. Professor Marshak welcomed the Provost and reported that the Committee had decided to think through the strategic planning process in parallel with the task force in a way that is intended to be complementary and supportive. The Committee appointed a small ad hoc subcommittee to start off its work.

Provost Sullivan said he agreed with virtually all that Professor Martin had said. Before speaking to the points she had made, he made two announcements.

-- The final candidates for Regent have been identified and the legislative vote is scheduled for February 16, so the February Board meeting will be the last for the outgoing members of the Board. The March meeting will be the first for the new members. The timing is interesting because the strategic plan will be presented to the Board for information in February and for action in March.

-- He will appoint a University-wide committee, and has asked each dean to appoint a parallel college committee, to determine if the University is assertive enough about candidates for the national academies and similar awards. In talking with candidates for deanships, he said that all of them were underwhelmed by the University's academy membership, knowing how strong the faculty is. Perhaps this is part of the Minnesota culture of understatement and modesty. Other institutions are aggressive about nominating candidates. He said he will lead and monitor the effort. One is seeing a lot of national and international rankings using these kinds of faculty awards—and giving them substantial weight in the rankings, including the University of Florida study.

-- As they work on the strategic plan, it has become apparent that the University has not strategically reviewed financial aid and scholarships. He is appointing a committee to review all issues related to scholarships and financial aid—from student recruitment to the donor connection. This will affect both undergraduate and graduate financial aid.

-- Because there is a new Vice President for Research, and the appointment of the Dean of the Graduate School will be announced soon, it is a good time to consider whether there should be more coordination of research at the University. He said he was thinking about appointing a research council that would include the administrators responsible for research to work with him and the Senate Research Committee. He said he would like the advice of the Committee on this idea. The purpose would be to coordinate information about research throughout the University.

Provost Sullivan then returned to Professor Martin's report and offered several comments. He emphasized that the document being presented for information to the Regents in February will be open for comments before it goes to the Board in March for action. He said he regards it as a document in progress and that it always should be; he anticipates changes before it is brought back in March.

-- The revised report addresses the system question.

-- They have started discussion on important qualitative benchmark measures to assess progress in reaching the goal.

-- The document will articulate how the University will achieve the goal.

-- The report will not discuss directly differences between the University and MNSCU.

-- They have tried to address the question about degrees and about interdisciplinary work.

-- Teaching and research are emphasized throughout the document. There was deliberation at length about putting teaching next to research. They decided not to juxtapose them because the document speaks more about the research and graduate education mission (and the University has a statutory responsibility to differentiate itself in those areas). Professor Martin said the subcommittee talked about the need to keep in mind that most faculty are doing research and teaching and that the two are INEXTRICABLY linked. The report uses that word, Provost Sullivan commented.

-- The report boldly will make the connection about quality of life: The University is the state's number one asset; if it does well, the state does well. If the University does not do well, the state suffers.

-- There is now language on outcome expectations, about the skill set students should have when they leave. The language came from a committee that is doing "fabulous" work on this issue, chaired by Associate Dean Robin Wright; he did not think they could improve on the language of the committee.

-- They have improved the language about international aspects of the University.

-- They have included language about training leaders.

Provost Sullivan said he wanted to share his thoughts about the work of the academic strategic planning task force as it moves beyond the document going to the Regents. He said that no decisions about priorities have been made. They are carefully looking in general at three areas.

1. The design of the present University: "do we have the right academic clusters to build excellence in teaching and research?"
2. The entire admissions picture: how the University admits students, how it supports them, and how this connects to the academic profile and outcome expectations.
3. Faculty culture: Does the University have the right culture/environment/standards to identify, attract, reward, and retain faculty to achieve the highest levels in teaching and research?

These three areas cover the entire University, Provost Sullivan concluded, and comprise a very big agenda that will not be achieved by March 20. They are focused now on the first item, concomitant with the second: If there is a redesign or rebalancing of the shape of the University, which could affect admissions. They are in the very early stages of discussion and the task force members are excited about all three.

Professor Ratliff-Crain said he was also excited about the student issues. Would some be more campus-oriented and some more University-wide? And would the National Merit Scholars be for all campuses? They would, Provost Sullivan said; these issues are system-wide.

The three areas make sense, Professor Sullivan said, but he suggested a fourth: administrative culture, which can have a huge impact. The assessment of the administrative culture, he advised, should not come from within the institution. There is another task force examining the administrative side of the

University, Provost Sullivan observed. It is one that has no faculty, Professor Marshak pointed out, to which Provost Sullivan replied that Professor Marshak should discuss this with the President. This issue is addressed in the planning document, Provost Sullivan added; it identifies five priorities, one of which is to look at organizational culture to decide if the University is organized in a way to get the job done.

There will be a lot of publicity about the plan; is there a communications plan, Professor Campbell asked? There will be, Provost Sullivan said. This issue is now under discussion.

Is the admissions discussion focused on undergraduates, Professor Krichbaum asked? Largely, Provost Sullivan said. Graduate admissions is partially centralized, she observed. Professor Hoover recalled that this Committee had discussed admissions and not one individual could identify how students are admitted. How will he use the Senate committees to take the discussion to the next level, she asked Provost Sullivan. In general, if the task forces make recommendations by March 20, the President will decide which ones he likes and which he does not and then begin the process of communicating with relevant constituencies, which would include the colleges and Senate committees.

There is a glaring omission from the primary areas of focus, Professor Morrison said: the research mission. That is nowhere on the list that includes structure, admissions, and faculty culture. But the University is trying to sell its research mission. Provost Sullivan said that the structure and faculty culture discussions are connected to and speak to the importance of research at the University. If he tries to use these themes to sell the University, Professor Morrison said, people will point out that there is nothing about research. Professor Marshak said that those three areas were selected because there are more problems with them than there are in other areas. Research is seen as having fewer problems. Provost Sullivan noted that the strategic planning document speaks directly to the research question with goals and benchmarks.

Professor Clayton said he hoped not to be parochial but that he was concerned about the writing programs, which have steadily deteriorated as they try to teach more people to write at less expense. The University should try to teach generic good English, along with reasoning, rather than relying only on the disciplines to teach English and reasoning. Provost Sullivan agreed wholeheartedly.

Apropos the issue of changing the culture, Professor Kleiner commented, he said he hoped that the University develops a financial system that leads to more cooperation rather than individual incentives. Will that appear here or in a later document? Not here, Provost Sullivan said. The budget model committee is looking at that issue, a group on which Professor Campbell serves. The proposed changes he is talking about will have profound implications for the budget model, Professor Campbell told the Provost. The order of approaching things is now right—strategic planning first, budget model after, Professor Campbell said.

Professor Chomsky said it was not clear to her what the level of specificity of the recommendations in the document would be. Would they be elaborated choices and goals, with the details to be worked out later? The goals are in the strategic planning documents already available, Provost Sullivan said; the present intention is that the March document will have specific recommendations. The President will decide what should be taken to the Regents but, the Provost said, he believes the President wants details (although not implementation, which will follow). The March recommendations, he promised, will go well beyond goals and aspirations.

What kinds of things might be included, Professor Chomsky inquired? For example, should the University abolish or merge [hypothetical] Department, Provost Sullivan said. The President wants to look at every academic program—colleges, departments, centers, institutes—to see if they are designed in ways to promote excellence and build academic synergies. The document throughout has the words "and action"; it will not just consist of aspirations. He invited the Committee to provide its views about the next iteration of the document.

Professor Marshak thanked Provost Sullivan for joining the meeting.

3. The Capital Budgeting Process

Professor Marshak next welcomed Professors M. J. Maynes and Jennifer Windsor from the CLA Council of Chairs to discuss the capital budget process. Professors Maynes and Windsor had earlier sent a letter to Professor Marshak, distributed to the Committee, outlining their points. The letter read as follows:

On behalf of the CLA Council of Chairs, we would like to bring two related issues to the Faculty Consultative Committee for discussion. The first issue is the pressing need for physical space for some of the University's most central units; the second is the nature of the planning processes surrounding decisions about current and future space allocations.

University planning processes are complex and multifaceted. That said, space and other planning processes over the years should reflect institutional values and priorities. It would seem logical that the quality of units and their centrality to the mission of the University should play a large role in planning priorities. It is not obvious that recent decisions regarding space planning have followed such logic. On the contrary.

For example, most of the units on the West Bank are suffering from space shortages, and the shortages are most egregious in the case of five of CLA's largest departments in the social sciences: economics, geography, history, political science, and sociology. These five units play a huge role in all three of the University's main missions of teaching, research, and service. Jointly they serve about 2,400 undergraduate majors and over 600 graduate students – and they serve them well; among the faculty in these departments there can be found numerous winners of the University's major undergraduate and graduate teaching awards. There have been six award winners in the past three years alone. Faculty members are highly respected, visible, and productive. Doctoral programs in all of these departments rank in the top twenty-five in their discipline nationally according to the most recent National Research Council rankings; two of them are in the top ten (see attached table). Among their peers in public universities, all but one is in the top ten. Faculty members in all of these departments are also active public intellectuals who are engaged in outreach activities ranging from radio and television commentaries, polling and analysis, and public service to community partnerships, activities in K-12 schools, and supervising service learning projects of many sorts.

Despite this quality and centrality to the University's mission, however, recent planning decisions have ignored the needs of these units even while decisions have been made to build new space on the West Bank for other less central and less highly ranked units. We appreciate that there are other fiscal factors that surround this capital project. However, in this time of tightening budgets

and all of the anxieties that go along with that, it is difficult to maintain faculty morale, and recruit and retain first-rate faculty and students, when University's plans for the foreseeable future offer no relief to the crowded conditions on the West Bank. As the attached table shows, the space shortage is a serious one. Among these five units alone, there is a current space deficit of nearly 20,000 sq. ft. (see attached table). Available space equals only 78% of the amount of space that these units should have according to the Minnesota Facilities Model. In the worst case – History – only 56% of the needed space is actually available. In that department, newly hired professors are without offices; the department's two Regents Professors share their very small offices with visitors and graduate students. Teaching assistants are doubled up at desks and research assistants have no offices at all. Insofar as institutional priorities are reflected in space planning, it would appear as if excellence and centrality to the University's mission do not count for very much.

In addition to our concern about a potential mismatch between University priorities and key space needs for faculty, we would like to better understand the planning procedures and mechanisms surrounding space decisions. The planning for the West Bank Instructional Center again serves as a key illustrative example. As summarized in the attached table, to the best of our understanding, this capital project has taken several different forms in the last 2 years. We appreciate that there always may be some uncertainty surrounding capital projects. However, we are concerned that the final steps of the decision making in this particular project appear to have moved very quickly and with little communication with CLA. Without a predictable framework, Colleges are in the unenviable position of continually readjusting carefully planned long-term goals in the context of short-term exigencies. The greater the transparency and clarity in University planning processes; the better Colleges can plan for the future, and the better Colleges can frame their decision making within broader University goals.

Professor Marshak commented that the question is how the University's capital budget is put together. One issue, from his perspective, is that most West Bank buildings housing the social sciences were built in the 1960s, at the nadir of American architecture; whether one likes them or not, they are getting to be 40 years old. The whole West Bank needs to be renewed. Except the Arts Quarter, Professor Martin observed.

Professor Windsor explained that the CLA Council of Chairs (CLA has 30 departments) meets monthly and is autonomous from other college leadership, although its chair is a member of the Dean's executive committee). The question they have raised today is about space, more generally the question is about how faculty obtain the resources they need for teaching and research. She emphasized that they were NOT asking the Committee to arbitrate decisions that have been made by the administration about the capital request, but come to the Committee as the faculty's representatives on matters of serious concern.

Some of the most central social science units in CLA are "under-spaced" on the West Bank. They do not have enough office space, lab space, or TA space. It is not just a matter of the age of the buildings. They are also not arguing that only the "best" departments should receive adequate space, but the five departments are significantly short of space. They recognize that there is a great deal of good teaching and research across the University; their point is that a lot takes place in these five departments.

The second issue can be identified by an illustrative example. There was an opportunity to relieve space pressures in the Social Science Building in conjunction with the new facility planned with and adjacent to the Carlson School. There was a plan discussed with CLA in October, 2004 that had changed by November, 2004. The original plan (from summer, 2002) included centrally-scheduled classrooms that would have been available for CLA classes. Professor Sampson recalled that he was told to tell the legislature that one-half the building would consist of such classrooms and one-half would be for the Carlson School. The building is no longer in the University's bonding bill, consistent with the modification in expected purpose (it will be funded entirely by the University). In addition, Professor Maynes said, the renovation of Scott Hall, also needed for CLA, has been pushed "beyond the foreseeable future."

Professor Maynes commented that as chair of the department that has the largest space shortfall (History), she found the capital budget process troubling. West Bank departments were told of options that were under discussion, consulted on them, and then all were pulled off the table. There was a glimmer of hope that they would not be so crowded in the future—History has three new faculty for whom they have no offices—and now there is no relief in sight. She said they would like to know the process used so that they can put a date on the end of their crowding. They also understand the compact process, Professor Windsor added.

Professor Martin said that the Committee could make a statement that there is a disjuncture between the University's aspirations in the strategic plan and the reality that many departments (that are a part of these aspirations) are living under. If there are to be teeth in the goal of being among the top three public research universities in the world, it seems odd to have such a goal when it differs so greatly from reality.

How is space allocated at the University, Professor Hoover asked? Do colleges own it? If a project includes state funds, the University must pay 1/3 of the cost, Professor Marshak said, and the University now requires colleges to pay 1/2 of that 1/3, so a college must pay if it wants new or remodeled space. This means that CLA or History must come up with several million dollars, which is very difficult to do without a donor. With respect to existing space, departments can move and it brings down the entire system. Professor Morrison joked that Vice President Middlebrook assigned the space and it has stayed that way. Professor Bauer observed that there have been major department moves in which the Provost has been involved.

Professor Campbell said that the Senate Committee on Finance and Planning has been the primary faculty/staff consulting body for the capital request. It is almost always presented with a fait accompli—the plans come entirely from within the administration. There was a Capital Improvements Advisory Committee, with one faculty member, Professor Speaks, who found the process very frustrating. When President Yudof abolished the advisory committee, the Committee on Finance and Planning established the Capital Improvements Subcommittee. They constantly ask the question about how the capital request squares with the institution's priorities. He added that it is not a good idea to think of the six-year capital plan as a queue. They learned that, Professors Maynes and Windsor commented.

Getting capital items into the compact process was a victory, Professor Campbell said, but it puts more pressure on deans. The Committee must insist that faculty are part of the compact process. They are, Professor Windsor said.

One question is how much the needs have been pushed by the dean, Professor Ratliff-Crain commented. Professor Windsor explained the various options that have been discussed and said she did not recall exactly where in the dean's priorities these facilities were, given that there are a lot of priorities for the college. However, renovation of Blegen Hall/the West Bank district to relieve space issues were highlighted in the 2003-04 and 2004-05 compacts. Professor Ratliff-Crain recalled that the Committee has in the past raised a question about the debt service falling on individual units; those that can afford it will build and those that cannot will be unable to obtain needed facilities. That gets to the question of University priorities, Professor Windsor said. If it is just about who has the money, that doesn't seem like the way to build a university. It appears to them, Professor Maynes added, that the nature of the project with the Carlson School shifted with the availability of donors; there was a better plan and then donor priorities took precedence.

Professor Morrison said that first, he would urge the strategic planning task force to talk about space—not in the plan but in the implementation. It can be part of the faculty culture item that Provost Sullivan mentioned. Facilities must be a part of the action plan, he said. Second, the University must face the realities of the situation: it can get space if it builds for X but it can't if it wants to build for Y. The trick is to get space for X and use what the University has for Y. Often that link fails. The last three bonding bills have contained little for general instruction and many units have had to pay for space themselves. That will always be true as long as the legislature requires the University to pay 1/3 of the cost. The question is how to maximize space for the University as a whole, and then how to allocate it to departments.

Professor Sampson observed that there are four departments in the Social Sciences building that are in the top 10 in NRC ratings for departments of public research universities. In the decade since those ratings were issued, there have been new facilities constructed on the West Bank for Law, Architecture, the Carlson School, Music, Dance, and Art—an enormous amount of important construction, none linked to those top-ranked departments. Each of those departments has space problems and feels its back is against the wall in terms of maintaining its national ranking. The disconnect is bigger than it appears at first glance. He commented that Blegen Hall is not the sort of classroom building that helps the university recruit National Merit Scholars. The long-standing proposal to turn an ineptly designed classroom building into space needed by strong departments and to put Blegen's classes into a new, presumably modern and well-designed classroom building linked to the Carlson school matches two stated priorities of the University. Despite this match with two priorities, a decision has been made to ignore for the foreseeable future the space and classroom quality imperatives associated with some top ranked departments and invest differently in the West Bank. The disconnect is glaring. It affects the futures of these departments and it leaves students in a poorly-designed classroom building.

Professor Marshak promised that this item would be on the agenda of the Committee in the future. He thanked Professors Maynes and Windsor for their report.

4. Various Items of Business

Professor Morrison noted that the finalists for Regent have been identified. The Committee discussed the races. He indicated that there is a strong pool of candidates, and that they all appear to support the University's goals. He indicated that he would write to the Regents Selection Advisory Council members to thank them for the effort they had put into the process. He encouraged Committee members to attend the Regent candidate forum next week.

The Governor's budget recommendation is extremely positive for the University, Professor Morrison reported.

The Committee next discussed the hiring process for the Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School and the Vice Provost for Faculty and Academic Affairs. After deliberation about what role the Committee should play, if any, it was agreed that Professor Marshak would write to Provost Sullivan to express his own views and to let the Provost know that other FCC members would also be making their views known.

The Committee will need also to decide if it wishes to express a Committee view about the candidates for Dean of the Graduate School and Vice Provost or if individuals will make their views known.

Professor Marshak adjourned the meeting at 3:00.

-- Gary Engstrand

University of Minnesota