

Minutes*

Faculty Consultative Committee
Thursday, April 23, 1998
1:00 – 4:00
Room 238 Morrill Hall

- Present: Victor Bloomfield (chair), Kent Bales, Gary Davis, Mary Dempsey, Gary Gardner, David Hamilton, M. Janice Hogan, Laura Coffin Koch, Marvin Marshak, Fred Morrison, V. Rama Murthy, Harvey Peterson, Matthew Tirrell
- Absent: Carole Bland, Virginia Gray, Russell Hobbie, Michael Korth, Leonard Kuhi
- Guests: President Mark Yudof; members of the Senate Committee on Finance and Planning (for the 2:00 – 4:00 period); Mr. Gerald Fischer (University Foundation)
- Other: V. J. Agarwal (ACE Fellow); Martha Kvanbeck (University Senate); Maureen Smith (University Relations)

[In these minutes: Report on the Biological Sciences Policy Council; Senate committee reorganization; faculty participation in planning and setting the intellectual direction of the University; discussion of the budget with President Yudof; a capital campaign]

1. Report on the Biological Sciences Policy Council

Professor Bloomfield convened the meeting at 1:00 and reported first on his meeting with the Biological Sciences Policy Council (BSPC), on which he serves as the representative of FCC. This was an organizational meeting; Provost Bruininks and Senior Vice President Cerra gave a change to the Council and asked it to think about programs that should be emphasized and how initiatives should be implemented in terms of personnel, buildings, equipment, and public relations. They also talked about appointment of an external review committee, which would be provided a self-study to be prepared in advance of a site visit. Events are on a short time-line, because they hope to have the external review committee report by early Fall Quarter; there is much work to do before that.

Professor Tirrell, who also attended the meeting on behalf of Dean Ted Davis, said that what came into much sharper focus was that the biological sciences reorganization is more likely to be successful if the buildings and the programs are organized on the same timetable. If there is to be program development and new initiatives, they must be ready soon so they can affect the construction of physical facilities.

There was worry among Committee members that there is a disconnect between the planned use of an external review committee and the timetable required for academic program plans for the new building. Professor Hamilton also cautioned, following a report that the University is authorized to bond for \$35 million of the building now and will receive or bond for the other \$35 million in the next

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biennium, that the total cost will exceed \$70 million even with very tight cost controls. There simply are things that one cannot predict, he said.

The Committee then discussed the timing and phasing of the construction of the new molecular and cellular biology building. Irrespective of whether half is built first and a second half later, or a shell constructed and final completion later, the facility must be completed by 2002.

Professor Morrison observed that the President intends to push on making hard decisions quickly on academic issues, and not only in the biological sciences but also in the other programs for which capital construction is planned. Programs will not have a year or more to plan, he warned; they will have to decide within a few months.

2. Senate Committee Reorganization

Professor Bloomfield next distributed a proposal, for discussion, for reorganizing the committee structure of the Senate and Twin Cities Campus Assembly. The focal point of the administrative structure of the University is the president, the senior academic affairs officer (which has carried various titles), and the colleges; the focal points of the mission are instruction and research. He developed a proposal which would identify six committees (Faculty Consultative, Student Senate Consultative, Faculty Affairs, Educational Policy, Finance and Planning, and Research) as ones that would be chartered in the Bylaws, and suggested that the rest be chartered in the Rules, which would mean that a majority vote at a meeting would be sufficient to create or disestablish a committee. The proposal called for continuing all existing committees at present, and perhaps reviewing their roles later.

The point, Professor Bloomfield said, is to think about the appropriate structure of faculty governance and consultation. It has been impossible, in some cases, to accomplish changes in the committee structure that virtually all agree are desirable and necessary, because of the absolute majority required to change the Bylaws and the lack of sufficient attendance at the meetings. The AHC faculty are not happy with the proposals that have been made, and some of the Arts, Sciences, and Engineering faculty have requested a consultative body. This proposal is an attempt to make the governance system more flexible, to allow it to adapt to whatever changes in the administration may take place, and to focus on the two senior officers and the colleges as the appropriate locations for most consultation. He also noted that it has been 10 years since the Senate examined its committee structure, so a review is due.

Professor Morrison expressed support for the proposal, but suggested that the Judicial Committee and the Committee on Committees should be recognized in the Bylaws, and that the Senate Consultative Committee should explicitly be recognized. He also suggested that the membership and other details of committee establishment not be spelled out in the Bylaws, so they could be changed to reflect changing circumstances.

Another proposal, prepared by Ms. Kvanbeck, calls for changing the Bylaws themselves to require that they may be changed by majority vote of those present and voting at a meeting, rather than requiring an absolute majority of the membership. This proposal should perhaps also be introduced, Professor Bloomfield said, but expressed a desire also to pursue his initial proposal.

All those FCC members who spoke (several) favored the proposal to loosen the restrictions on the creation and disestablishment of committees. Professor Hogan reported that this was also the view of the

Committee on Committees. Professor Koch offered a caution that any changes be introduced in such a way that it does not demean or devalue the work being done by the many Senate and Assembly committees not addressed by the proposal. She also wondered if a simple majority vote was sufficient; if people disagreed with what a committee was doing, they could simply abolish it. Professor Bloomfield said that a 2/3 vote could be required, or perhaps a majority vote at two successive meetings.

Ms. Kvanbeck noted that the second proposal went to the Senate last year, but was voted down, primarily, she believed, because the students misunderstood the intent. Almost all of the University's peer institutions do not have these absolute majorities required to change their committee structure, and Robert's Rules advises strongly against having absolute majorities. She also recalled that the curriculum committee for the Twin Cities campus had overwhelming support – but could not be established simply because there were too few Assembly members at repeated meetings to reach the number required for an absolute majority.

Professor Morrison suggested that the second proposal be forwarded to the Senate Consultative Committee, and the Senate, for action, with the proviso that a vote to establish or disestablish a committee require either a 2/3 vote at a regular or special meeting, or a majority vote at two successive meetings. The same requirements could obtain for constitutional changes; the constitutional changes would nonetheless require an additional step, because they must be approved by the Regents as well.

Professor Dempsey urged that the recommendations of the task force on faculty consultation not be lost. Faculty governance at the department and college level badly needs strengthening. She reported on meetings with AHC and ASE faculty, and commented that there is much pain there; the faculty from the units report that there has been very little consultation (e.g., on the compacts). Professor Bloomfield reported that he and Professor Tirrell had spoken with President Yudof about ways to develop more communication with faculty at the college and department level, and on matters of intellectual importance as well as more routine budget matters.

The Committee agreed to forward to the Senate Consultative Committee the proposal as outlined by Professor Morrison.

3. A Committee on Academic Appointments

Professor Bloomfield next drew the attention of Committee members to a proposal to create a committee on academic appointments, one that would advise the administration on the allocation of positions to the colleges. He, and several other FCC members, felt that a change from the originally proposed position- and budget-determining authority of the committee was appropriate. This attitude was reinforced by a conversation he subsequently had had with Dr. Bruininks.

The proposal as written was rather legalistic, and would not receive administrative support. Dr. Bruininks did, however, welcome the creation of an advisory group to help him gain perspective on intellectual developments and the consequent priorities the University should recognize. The idea is a good one, although the committee should not have control over budgets or appointments. Dr. Bruininks did accept the idea that faculty should participate in program planning.

The membership of such a committee, Professor Bloomfield suggested, could be drawn from the McKnight mid-career faculty, the Regents' Professors, the Morse-Alumni winners, the Senate Research

Committee, and perhaps from FCC. It should consist of eminent scholars in the full flush of their careers who are concerned about the intellectual future of the University.

Committee members offered several comments on the idea.

-- (Gardner) Such a committee could perhaps exercise some control over the state subsidy, which will be the most important decisions, and should be more than simply a consultative body.

-- (Morrison) Such a committee should NOT be required to act on every position decision; that would lead to more centralized bureaucracy. But it could talk about unit sizes.

-- (Morrison) The place the faculty are missing out, now, is in the compact process. If that works as it is supposed to, it is an agreement between the college (the dean) and the University (the provost), and faculty should weigh in on both ends of the process. It appears that Academic Affairs has had no conversations with the governance structure about the policies that underlie the compacts, and that is where academic policy will be made in this administration. Faculty must participate, and not after the policy has been set. The President should be pressed on how there can be faculty discussion in the compact process; up to now, there has been none, either in the colleges or in Academic Affairs. Moreover, what should be in the compacts includes agreeing that A, B, and C will be strengthened, C, D, and E are strong and need to be maintained, and in F, G, and H the programs need to be reduced.

(Bloomfield) Participating in the compact process is key, but unless the committee is a kitchen cabinet that is informed by the compact discussions, it will be unable to do the job it should. The question is how to develop a mechanism that is not enormously time-consuming.

-- (Koch) Those selected to serve on such a committee must be knowledgeable about what is going on in the units. FCC gave President Hasselmo a hard time when he proposed to withhold one-fourth of open faculty positions for reallocation. Moreover, with a committee of a dozen, there would not be "representation" from the colleges, so the membership of the group would be important, and they would need to have a University-wide perspective.

-- Professor Bales had distributed materials describing the work of a position-allocation committee at Berkeley, and pointed out how one of the best chemistry departments in the country made the case for hiring someone. The committee consists of all elected faculty. He agreed that there cannot be representation in the way there is in Congress, but faculty represent large parts of the institution. They are informed by what they know about their own college and department, but also have all the information available to the institution about the case that is made. The faculty at Berkeley believe the committee makes reasoned decisions. This proposal might be seen as running counter to the idea of placing more authority at lower levels, but it does not take any authority away from the colleges. Deans must make the case, all the way up. This system creates a paper trail, unlike the one at the University. To create a system in which there is not even a semi-controlling role for the faculty in decisions, at the defining moment of position allocation, will be to accelerate the process of disintegration at the University. Who will control the growth of departments? (The deans and provost, as is now the case, Professor Bloomfield observed.)

-- (Marshak) It would unwise to create a committee without authority, and to put the best faculty on it. The University is better off if they are left to do their research. But it is important to have faculty

participation in the compact process; proceeding with the process without faculty participation means decisions about where the University is going are made without the faculty. Professor Marshak also distributed copies of a statistical study he had conducted of the top 30 research universities and the link between salaries, rank, and number of positions. The conclusion, he said, is that if one wants to raise the ranking, one must raise salaries. The University could also add positions, but it costs three times as much to raise the rankings that way, compared to increasing salaries.

-- (Bales) The committee should not just be advisory, nor can it readily be involved in the dean and chair discussions. As long as it is only advisory, it will not do much nor will it grow into much.

-- (Bloomfield) Many decisions are made on the basis of advice, not the legal authority of a committee. Such a committee could exert considerable impact. It is also not necessarily the case that a committee without power is wasting its time. The administration is unlikely to grant authority to a committee, and if FCC says it does not want any other kind of body, then it is forfeiting its place at the table to give thoughtful advice.

The Committee concluded the discussion without reaching a conclusion on how it intended to proceed.

4. Discussion of the Budget with the President

Professor Morrison welcomed President Yudof and some of the members of the Senate Committee on Finance and Planning, and urged that in order to have a free-flowing conversation about various budget ideas, that the meeting be closed. It was moved, seconded, and unanimously voted.

In the course of the hour-long discussion with the President, the topics touched upon included:

- The relationship between salaries and the number of positions in NRC rankings
- Support for faculty
- The recent Carnegie Commission report on undergraduate education at research universities
- Support for the humanities and social sciences
- Research leaves
- How to weight worthy priorities
- The link between funding, buildings and programs, and themes presented to the legislature
- Technology/computing resources, and how they are distributed and used
- Faculty participation in the compact process

Professor Bloomfield thanked the President for joining the meeting.

5. Capital Campaign

Professor Bloomfield next welcomed Mr. Gerald Fischer, President of the University of Minnesota Foundation, and Linda Berg, from the Foundation, to discuss the outlines of a possible capital campaign. By agreement with Mr. Fischer, the Committee agreed that the discussion would be off-the-record. The discussion focused on the themes that might be central to any capital campaign. Mr. Fischer urged that Committee member call or email him with any suggestions or thoughts.

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Professor Bloomfield thanked Mr. Fischer and Ms. Berg for speaking with the Committee.

-- Gary Engstrand

University of Minnesota