

Minutes\*

**Faculty Consultative Committee  
Halloween, 1996 (Part II)  
1:30 - 4:30  
Room 229 Nolte Center**

- Present: Virginia Gray (chair), Carl Adams, Carole Bland, Victor Bloomfield, W. Andrew Collins, Sara Evans, Dan Feeney, Russell Hobbie, Laura Coffin Koch, Michael Korth, Fred Morrison, Harvey Peterson
- Regrets: Gary Davis, Michael Steffes, Craig Swan, Matthew Tirrell
- Guests: Provost W. Phillips Shively; Senior Vice President Marvin Marshak
- Others: Martha Kvanbeck (University Senate); Mary Sue Simmons (Program for Individualized Learning); Maureen Smith (University Relations)

[In these minutes: Discussion with Senior Vice President Marshak about the biennial request, access and quality, peer institutions]

**4. White Paper**

The Committee spent about 45 minutes discussing a draft white paper on the future of the University of Minnesota as a research university, drafted by Professors Bloomfield, Sara Evans, Len Kuhi, Judy Martin, and Barbara Reid. Professor Bloomfield noted the thoughts of Committee members and agreed to revise the paper.

**5. Discussion with Senior Vice President Marshak**

Professor Gray welcomed Senior Vice President Marshak to the meeting.

Professor Marshak began by noting that there was an ambiguity with respect to the Law School and the filing of cards to petition for a severance election. He said that based on conversations he and the President had had with members of the Board of Regents, he was "hopeful" about the outcome of the tenure discussion.

The Board of Regents will interview final candidates for President in early December; that means, presumably, there will be a list before that time. (The University of Michigan had five finalists, until the Ann Arbor News sued the University. Michigan has an even more stringent sunshine law than Minnesota; there is a pool of reporters to attend every gathering of regents. One of the five candidates dropped out; the other four candidates are provosts at Berkeley, Illinois, U of Pennsylvania, and Dartmouth. One of those four was quoted in the DAILY saying he was not a candidate at Minnesota.

---

\*These minutes reflect discussion and debate at a meeting of a committee of the University of Minnesota Senate or Twin Cities Campus Assembly; none of the comments, conclusions, or actions reported in these minutes represent the views of, nor are they binding on, the Senate or Assembly, the Administration, or the Board of Regents.

The Board may cancel the December Regents' meetings in order to spend the time on the interviews. The Committee has realized, Professor Gray said, that if there is no December meeting, and tenure is not acted on in November, then the tenure issue will be held over until January. It is for that reason, Dr. Marshak responded, that he is hopeful. If a new president is smart, Professor Gray added, he or she will insist that tenure be voted on before they take the job.

Professor Marshak recalled he had conversations with Professors Gray and Bloomfield, and whether the University should try to develop a new planning framework in advance of the appointment of a new president. That would permit presenting the new president with options, rather than a blank piece of paper. His view, he said, is that it would be desirable to do so. There is too much of an expectation that the new president will "ride in and fix everything" -- when the fact is that this is a very strong university, it does not need someone to ride in and fix everything, and that's not a realistic expectation anyway. There is room for presidential leadership, but that does not preclude preparation.

Professor Marshak recalled a conversation he had had with Mr. Bosacker, from the Regents' Office. He -- Professor Marshak -- had noted that the Regents have given the administration instructions to improve the quality of the University. In terms of the institutions that would be pertinent for setting a context and benchmarking, there are only six: the universities of California, Illinois, Michigan, Texas, Wisconsin, and Washington. Those are the public universities that are either equivalent to or better than Minnesota. Professor Marshak said he was not particularly interested in what is happening at institutions of lower rank; the University should look ahead of itself, not behind it, as it tries to improve. Mr. Bosacker said that no one had ever told the Regents that there is some benchmark set of institutions that is reasonable.

As a consequence, he is preparing information about quality and access, and will assemble data on where the University is going. He will include the qualities and characteristics of those institutions, and what the University might learn from them. The Board is interested in some kind of planning going forward, in his view; it cannot be completed until the new president is in office, but there is much to be done beforehand. The white papers that FCC is preparing are a good start, but he said he would like to see a joint faculty-administration process as well.

Professor Bloomfield said the group of universities Professor Marshak identified was very good. When one thinks about how comparisons are made, one wonders what indices will be used. What are the critical indicators or measures?

One would start with salient characteristics; he -- Professor Marshak -- would describe Minnesota as a high-quality, research-oriented, land-grant, primarily urban, comprehensive institution with an academic health center. One can then ask, about those other institutions, which of those characteristics they share (e.g., Illinois is not urban, Michigan and Washington are not land-grant, etc.). Among the AAU universities, Minnesota has the smallest percentage of full-time students (about 45%); the next lowest is the University of Toronto, at about 65%. (Toronto, incidentally, is not often thought about but might be an appropriate comparison.) The remainder of the AAU universities typically have over 80% full-time students. Minnesota is unique in this aspect, and this must be recognized. It is neither good nor bad, but it does skew many other comparisons, such as graduation rates. (To look at graduation rates, one should look at comparable cohorts at other AAU universities.)

Professor Evans suggested that the University should find some forms of measurement that might highlight the unique elements, in comparison to those other universities. There should also be indices of elements where the institutions are comparable, but identifying the unique elements might correct mis-impressions.

Professor Marshak related that he has made up a graph, for a number of peer institutions, that plots access (along the y axis) and quality (along the x axis); the result is a small scattergram. Berkeley is the most difficult to get into and is perceived to have the highest quality. Then there are the other California schools; there appear to be tradeoffs in access and perceived quality. Minnesota is in another cluster, with Michigan, Washington, Wisconsin, and possibly Ohio State, where each of them had chosen, because of public policy, a different position. But there is not another university that is both as open as Minnesota and as high quality, in the balance of those kinds of indicators. The California system is not open at all; Iowa is about as open but not as high quality; Wisconsin is arguably higher quality but considerably less open, with considerably more out-of-state students.

Wisconsin's tuition revenues are notably higher than Minnesota's, with a lower base tuition rate and fewer students, because they have a lot of non-resident students who pay a lot of money, which in turn finances reduced tuition for Wisconsin residents. (And that has an effect on Minnesota: on the Twin Cities campus, the largest group of students comes from the metropolitan area; the second largest group comes from Wisconsin, and they pay Wisconsin tuition; the third largest group comes from greater Minnesota. The Wisconsin students pay lower rates than Minnesota students to come to the University because they are subsidized by nonresident students attending the Madison campus!)

What he is saying, Professor Bloomfield suggested, is that there is a general inverse correlation between access and perceived quality. That is true. If one says that, then what is the question that is put to the Regents? Are they asked to choose? Access and quality are trade-able in constant dollars: if you increase dollars, you can increase quality. The Regents said "move east" on the graph: stay high on the access axis but "move east" on the quality axis, which means increase quality and hold access constant. That is not a constant dollar solution but is rather an increasing dollar solution, Professor Marshak observed. He and Donna Peterson have been presenting these arguments to members of the legislature, that the direction the University wants to go is not a constant dollar direction. It wants to increase quality while holding access constant.

What kind of response are they receiving, Professor Evans inquired? In general, reasonably good, Professor Marshak replied. And also from the Governor's study group. One can see, when talking to people, that some in the legislature believe there is a "golden egg" that the University has somewhere, in some far corner of the University; if only told where it is, they would all agree it does not have to be part of the University, and it could be cut off and the money used to solve all the problems. Professor Marshak said that they have been able to demonstrate that the "golden eggs" are exactly where the legislators want them: the biggest one is in the Medical School, the next biggest is IT, and the next is CLA, where all the students are. The legislators are digging around where there are only golden grains of sand; the egg is where they want it to be. Asked if they want to reduce money to the Medical School or IT or CLA, the legislators do not. The Governor's study group has finally been educated that there is no golden egg in some peripheral area that no one wants.

If one looks at state dollars per student, where does Minnesota stand in the comparison group of universities? Professor Marshak said they did not have that analysis yet. Faculty perceptions are that Minnesota is at a lower dollar-per-student ratio than are peers, Professor Bloomfield observed; if that is not true, and if the state is as relatively generous in Minnesota as California and Michigan, then the University has a harder case to make in "moving east." And then the University must ask itself why it is costing so much to provide relatively lower quality education.

Professor Marshak said he did not know about the group as a whole, but that the University will have a hard time showing it is poorer than the University of Wisconsin, Madison. That is particularly true in salaries; theirs are as abysmal as at Minnesota.

Professor Gray referred to Professor Marshak's graph. There is a general correlation between lack of quality and access, with Minnesota being somewhat of an exception. One could say that there is a bigger gap between quality and access at Minnesota, she said; one could say there is a mismatch between the undergraduate mission and the rest of the University. What that does is put a great strain on faculty: they have to be geared up to compete at the research level, but then must recast their efforts in teaching because they do not have the kind of student body that most of the University's peers have. It must be recognized that this comes at some cost. It has been troublesome that faculty are geared up to deliver a level of education that not many students are geared up to receive, so the faculty must do something else to provide students what they ARE ready to receive.

Professor Marshak said he tried to answer a question for himself, although is unsure of the reliability of his data: are the great graduate universities the same as the great undergraduate universities? Can one have a great graduate university and a lousy undergraduate program, or are they highly correlated? It appears that they ARE highly correlated, and that is intuitive. But there are (approximately) two parallel lines on a graph, running from lower left to upper right, with one higher than the other. The upper line represents the private institutions; the lower the publics.

What is quality undergraduate education and how is it measured? There are possible reasons for the parallel lines. One is cognitive dissonance: if one pays a lot of money, it must be good. Students who pay low tuition think the place is not good because they did not pay a lot for it. Another reason is that at private institutions, tuition revenues are crucial, so they BETTER provide good service.

In terms of the public institutions, the ones above the line were places such as the University of Virginia, which is public but thinks of itself as private. Minnesota was below the line for publics. The data were based on surveys of students, and the view was that the undergraduate education was not as good as the graduate. Much of this may have to do with the University's open admissions; there is tremendous heterogeneity in the student population, even in honors programs. Professor Gray is right, he said; it does make the work hard.

At the same time the University adopted the goal of increasing the percentage of entering students in the top portion of their class, it also had a large proportion of students coming in through General College. The University is getting more and more students from each end of the spectrum, which makes it more difficult to teach them.

Professor Marshak agreed, but said one can turn the point around and say that the economy of

Minnesota is outperforming the economy in the rest of the country, because it has increased participation in high quality higher education more than most places. As a public policy issue, is the approach a good one? Look at the economy. He has been arguing at the legislature that Minnesota has indeed invested a lot in education, K-12 and higher, but that the payoff has been high. The state is receiving \$50 million per month above revenue forecasts, it has articles in the paper about fast-food places unable to open because they cannot find people to hire, it has a situation where students complain about work-study because no one wants to work for \$7.50 an hour when they can make a lot more than that being a waiter. The public policy consequences of driving this research university education to 25% of the population, rather than 10%, seems to be a winner -- but now the state turns around and says "we can't afford it." What he and Donna Peterson have been saying is that the state can't afford NOT to do this; it is the quality of life and economy of the state that are at stake.

What Professor Gray is saying that it is harder to teach in this situation. Yes, it is, Professor Marshak concurred -- but that is the price of maintaining the economy of the state as it is, as well as the social fabric of the state. This state IS more open and less hierarchical. Professor Gray responded that she did not believe the University should be less open, only that when one thinks about faculty salaries, for example, it should be realized that the job at Minnesota is more challenging than at other places.

The University has often excused some of its problems by saying it is a uniquely urban university where students drop in and out and many have jobs, Professor Bloomfield commented. Certainly UCLA and Washington and perhaps Ohio State are in a similar situation; why are Minnesota's problems worse than those institutions? Because the students are totally different, Professor Marshak replied; at UCLA, they get the top 8-10% of high school graduating classes. One reason the University cannot come out well in the U. S. News study is because 25% of the points go for the fraction of students in the top 10% of their high school class who attend the school. When the University has, as a matter of policy, that 80% of the students come from the top quartile, it cannot do well on that measure. UCLA is 90% of the top 10%. The numbers are similar for Washington -- 80% from the top 10%, or something similar.

Professor Gray asked, if one arrayed universities by selectivity, where the University would be. Of the GOOD universities, Professor Marshak said, at the very bottom. The University would be at the bottom of a list that included a lot of not-very-good universities as well. If one calls it selectivity, Minnesota is at the bottom, Professor Bloomfield observed; if one calls it access, Minnesota is at the top.

Washington is a good model for the University, Professor Marshak said. UW is expanding; it is building two new campuses. The students do not want to go across the mountains, so the three institutions west of the Cascades are overflowing; the three east of the mountains are languishing. This is a good way to talk about Minnesota; there campuses in the state that under-used, and the farther one gets from the metropolitan area, the more that becomes true. The entering class at MUD is now 65% from the metropolitan area (St. Cloud to Rochester). The percentage at Morris is also very high. But this is in part because the Twin Cities is where the people are, and particularly the students.

In the state, the economy is in tremendous shape, and even in Greater Minnesota that is true, except for the southwestern part of the state. In that area, the mean age of the population is increasing about .5 years per year -- which means there are no children. That is dangerous; the ability of those counties to care for senior citizens is being eroded; that burden will snap back to the state at some point. But it is because the economy is in such good shape that the University can ask for a lot of money for the

next biennium, and the point is being made that this is the payback for the investment in education that the state has made in the past. The question they pose is whether the state is willing to make the continued investment so that the children and grandchildren can have the same economic and social quality of life that the current population enjoys -- or will they be shortchanged? Those who argue against the University say that this is all very nice, but if the state does not support the nursing homes, grandma is going to move back home next week, not in ten years, and politicians have to deal with next week. That is the crux of the problem the University faces.

The University is making progress, Professor Marshak summarized. They make the point at the legislature that if it is going to hold the University to constant dollars, it will force public policy questions that the University alone cannot answer -- the state must help answer them. Does it want a more hierarchical society, where high quality education is limited to a smaller fraction of the population? Is it willing to de-emphasize the land-grant mission? Does it want the University to concentrate on the metropolitan area? These are questions the University cannot answer by itself.

When one makes those points to legislators, do some of them understand that this is a fair question? Are they prepared to think those thoughts? Some are, Professor Marshak said. The questions are scary, and some legislators would prefer that the University muddle along. But the University is not doing so and cannot do so.

Professor Gray thanked Professor Marshak for joining the meeting, and adjourned it at 4:15.

-- Gary Engstrand

University of Minnesota