

Minutes*

Faculty Consultative Committee
Thursday, February 24, 2000
1:00 – 1:50
Room 1 Law

Present: Fred Morrison (chair), Mary Dempsey, Les Drewes, Stephen Gudeman, David Hamilton, Roberta Humphreys, Leonard Kuhl, Joseph Massey, Marvin Marshak, Judith Martin, Paula Rabinowitz, Jeff Ratliff-Crain

Absent: Linda Brady, Susan Brorson, Richard Goldstein, Mary Jo Kane, V. Rama Murthy

Guests: none

Other: Maureen Smith (Institutional Relations); a representative from the Graduate and Professional Student Assembly

[In these minutes: Senate schedule next year; Fees committee; due date for grades Fall 2000; devolution of authority; task force on the bookstores (Twin Cities); issues from lunches with department heads/chairs]

1. Schedules

Professor Morrison convened the meeting at 1:00 and began by noting that today's Senate docket was very long and that it was likely to be equally long in April. It would, he suggested, perhaps be better to schedule three Spring Semester Senate meetings next year. The Committee concurred.

2. Fees Committee

Professor Morrison next noted that the rules of the Student Services Fees Committee call for three faculty members to serve. For some period, no faculty served; the Committee was asked this year to nominate three faculty. FCC referred the appointments to the Committee on Committees, which nominated three faculty who are willing to serve. There has been, however, some resistance from the chair of the Fees Committee to their serving. This is not a Senate committee, Professor Morrison pointed out; the Committee on Committees has made nominations, and without the participation of the faculty members it is possible the decisions about fees would be void. FCC and the Committee on Committees have done their job. He indicated that it is not the function of FCC or the Senate to oversee the Fees Committee, since it was established by the administration; the only function of FCC and Senate is to appoint three of the members.

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3. Fall Semester 2000 Due Date for Grades

Professor Morrison next reported that some FCC members had learned that the proposed due date for grades at the end of Fall Semester, 2000, is December 28. This unhappiness was conveyed to the Senate Committee on Educational Policy (which had decided not to recommend a later date); SCEP discussed the possibility of recommending sanctions on faculty who do not turn in their grades on time if the due date were pushed forward to January.

Committee members offered a number of comments on the matter, all of which opposed a December due date.

- What is this talk about sanctions? 85% of the grades are turned in on time; that is pretty good.
- Some of the grades are awarded by TAs, who are not in town over the holiday period.
- This proposal mixes up two things: (1) There have always been some faculty who turn in grades late, and that problem should be addressed. (2) Because of the new calendar, Fall Semester runs through the evening of December 23; no one is available to do the grading for several days thereafter; people go home. The questions are how to get faculty to turn in grades on time and what is a reasonable time period to allow grades to be turned in?
- The discussion in the Senate, during the change to semesters, clearly conveyed the understanding that the deadline would be after the first of the year.
- The problem is not with the early exams, it is with those that end late in finals period.
- Department chairs and deans are paid to manage; why take them off the hook? If they cannot motivate people to turn in grades, they should be replaced. (This was discussed in SCEP as well: chairs and deans have a responsibility to see that grades are turned in on time.)
- The 72-hour rule [existing Senate policy calls for grades to be turned in within 72 hours after the last final exam; it also grants the Registrar license to extend that deadline at the end of Fall Semester] is ridiculously short and requires attention; the due date should be the second Monday in January. In SCEP's view, this is advantageous for the faculty but a disadvantage for students. Such a date, however, would provide as much time as the Registrar and colleges had between winter and spring quarters to process paper; the processing should be faster now that the University has PeopleSoft. (!)

What, Professor Martin inquired, would the Committee like SCEP to do? Professor Morrison suggested that it recommend amendment of Senate policy to allow the faculty, not the Registrar, to set the due date for grades, and should perhaps stipulate X days before the next term begins (rather than a specific date). In addition, the Registrar should be asked to prepare a report for the deans and department heads of all faculty who fail to turn in grades on time; the deans and department chairs should then deal with the matter. This should be more saleable, especially if accompanied by an explanation of the impact on students if grades are late (in terms of financial aid, registration, etc.)

Professor Martin said she would bring the issue back to SCEP for action.

4. Devolution of Authority

Professor Morrison next informed the Committee that there had been a working session of the Board of Regents to consider devolution of authority to various bodies. The Committee had previously approved the selection of Professor Miranda McGowan to serve on the drafting committee and Professor Morrison (or others) would serve as subject matter specialists. The administration, faculty, and regents each have a technical person and a subject matter specialist.

The question of devolution of authority and Board of Regents policy arises because some existing policies delegate authority to positions that do not exist (e.g., Senior Vice President for Finance). The simplification of devolution of authority is not simple, however; some responsibility for educational policy is delegated to the faculty and some is delegated to particular officers. A simple delegation of authority to the President or his designee would not work and this Committee must clearly say so.

A related matter is whether the deans and vice presidents should simply be appointed by the President or appointed by the Board of Regents on nomination of the President. It is in the interest of the faculty, Professor Morrison said, that the deans should be appointed by the Regents on nomination by the President, not just hired and fired by the President.

Professor Gudeman noted that the Finance and Planning Committee had recently had a discussion of the reorganization of the Treasurer's and Controller's offices, which was accomplished through the devolution of authority. The faculty had no voice in the decision, but the structure of the administration is very important. If the faculty are governing themselves to some degree, they should have a voice in the organization of the central administration. Financial issues are important. (It was noted that this was also discussed by the Faculty Consultative Committee earlier.)

Professor Martin noted that the Policy on Reorganization adopted by the Senate last year had provisions that dealt with this issue; it was agreed that the policy would be circulated to the Committee.

5. Bookstores Committee

Professor Gudeman now related that the Committee on Finance and Planning had heard from Mr. Crabb, Director of the Bookstores on the Twin Cities campus, about a proposed advisory committee. The Committee liked the general idea but did not think the proposed committee was appropriate. After discussing it for two meetings, it proposed that there be a task force appointed by the FCC to look immediately at the issues surrounding the bookstores; this task force would eventually become a standing joint subcommittee of the Committees on Educational Policy and on Finance and Planning. The Committee on Educational Policy agreed.

Professor Hamilton said that he believed bookstore operations were changing so quickly that the relationship between the University and commercial and on-line bookstores is being defined elsewhere, and the University is just sitting. Professor Gudeman agreed; many want more books, and there is a question about service and about the place of a bookstore in a university.

Committee members offered several comments.

- A number of other institutions have their bookstores run by corporations.
- The membership of the task force should be drawn from across the campus.
- What would the charge to the task force be? It should look at whether the University should get out of the bookstore business or if it could make the business work better. What should be the future of the bookstores on campus?
- Neighborhood booksellers should be included; there are a few, but it is disturbing that a major university has such a paucity of bookstores around it.
- The task force should also think about the other colleges and universities in the state.

It was unanimously agreed that a task force would be appointed if a suitable charge could be developed; Professors Gudeman and Martin agreed to draft the charge and circulate it to the Committee. It was also agreed that while this was a Twin Cities matter, the task force should not ignore the coordinate campuses, which could be affected by on-line book sales. The membership should include faculty, students, Mr. Crabb, and administrators, and should also include people familiar with e-commerce. Someone from outside the University might also be appropriate.

Professor Morrison said the Committee would return to this topic at the end of its meeting next week.

6. Meetings with Department Heads/Chairs

Professor Morrison next reported briefly on the issues that had been raised in the lunches with department chairs that the Committee had hosted over the last two weeks. The major issues were the increase in the Enterprise Systems and Internal Revenue assessments proposed for next year, the (at least perceived) inhibiting impact of IMG on cross-departmental teaching and research, and problems with Sponsored Project Administration and the Electronic Grants Management System.

With respect to IMG, Professor Kuhl said that while the system was sound, it has caused departments to compete with each other for students on the margin, and to do things or not do things because they might lose students as a result.

It was agreed that a summary of the issues would be provided to the department heads and chairs.

Professor Morrison adjourned the meeting at 1:55.

-- Gary Engstrand