

Minutes

Senate Consultative Committee October 26, 1989 University of Minnesota, Crookston

- Present: Warren Ibele (chair), Karin Alexander, Martin Conroy, Gunnar Johnson, Norman Kerr, Steve Ebel, Matthew Kirkwood, Lynnette Mullins, Ronald Phillips, Burton Shapiro, Michael Steffes, Charlotte Striebel, James VanAlstine
- Guests: Ron Jorgenson, Chancellor Donald Sargeant, Experiment Station Director Larry Smith, Rabun Taylor (Footnote)

Chancellor Sargeant welcomed the Senate Consultative Committee to Crookston and gave a brief history of the campus. Some of the points he made were these:

- Full year equivalent students have dropped from 1000 to 750, reflecting the decline in the number of Minnesota high school students; UMC has not lost its market share.
- UMC attracts students from the middle two quartiles of high school rank, and most come from the immediate area; the goals of the college must be set appropriately.
- UMC can deliver quality undergraduate education; peer institutions have larger classes.
- Telecommunications is important to UMC; they have been hurt by the legislative moratorium on expansion of telecommunications and want classes with East Grand Forks, the University of North Dakota, and North Dakota State to improve the quality of education.

Director Smith then provided Committee members with a brief overview of the operation of the Experiment Station. It consists of 1456 acres (plus 300 additional acres which are rented) and everything produced is for their work or for the station in St. Paul; they also have a lot of off-campus sites, from the Canadian border down to Renville. They have 31 support staff and 6.5 FTE scientists; there is also a lot of work done in cooperation with departments on the St. Paul campus (e.g., Agronomy, Plant Pathology, Soils, Entomology, Animal Science, Horticulture). The Station is the headquarters for sugar beet research.

Mr. Smith also commented on the disappointment the campus felt when it was unable to hook into a fiber optic network which would have permitted programs to be brought to the campus and a 2-way interactive system.

Committee members also discussed the child care center: who uses it, costs, and its relationship to the educational program of the campus.

Faculty Consultative Committee
October 26, 1989
University of Minnesota, Crookston
(part of SCC meeting of the same day)

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Guests: Chancellor Donald Sargeant, Rabun Taylor

1. Report of the Chair

Professor Ibele reported briefly on developments having to do with the grievance procedures. He had received an annotated version from Dr. Borgestad outlining the administrative objections; he suggested response should be made with care and not rushed to the next Senate meeting. Professor Striebel said that she also had gone through the proposals from the Attorney's Office; their objections fell into two categories, she said. One was a series of drafting changes to which no one had any objection. The other consisted of two or three changes which the drafters found to be totally unacceptable (e.g., limiting grievances specifically to the employment contract, which would eliminate a substantial majority of the grievances the policy was intended to cover). It is possible the policy would be scuttled rather than have it gutted. Professor Ibele said that FCC would leave it to the drafters to advise them whether or not the procedures could be fixed in an acceptable way.

2. Discussion with Chancellor Sargeant

Chancellor Sargeant joined the discussion; Professor Ibele invited his comments on whatever issues were of concern to him. Dr. Sargeant said he very much enjoyed receiving the minutes of the Committee and that it in reality had more opportunities to consult with the President than did he.

Dr. Sargeant also affirmed his faith in the governance system, although noted that at Crookston the issues dealt with are narrower in scope simply because of the different nature of the campus. The UMC FCC is elected but he brings most of the agenda items; the committee has not met very much. He said, however, that he believed in the process and wanted the advice of the faculty.

Dr. Sargeant noted that there were three separate units at the campus, the Experiment Station, the Extension Service, and the campus itself; they try to work as one to provide services to the community and try to minimize fences between the units.

Committee members took up with Dr. Sargeant the disappointment that UMC had confronted when developments in telecommunications had been placed on hold. There was interest in expressing some sort of official suggestion that UMC be permitted to act, because installation of a fiber optic line and remodeling of a classroom to be used in conjunction with it would have provided opportunities to draw on a wide range of expertise across the region (including, for example, the Plant Biology symposium currently underway on the St. Paul campus). Dr. Sargeant explained the situation in greater detail to the Committee and indicated that while telecommunications improvements would not be a savior, it is something they need to have on the agenda for the 1990s.

The Committee took up a series of issues with Dr. Sargeant and touched upon the following points:

- The campus is about where it should be in terms of number of faculty; there have been no net additional positions since 1980, and any changes have come through restructuring or reallocation.
- Travel money is mildly problematic. Committee service is extremely expensive (pay plane fare or drive 700 miles round trip); here again telecommunication improvements would help some.
- Space on the campus is adequate and maintained extremely well. A lot of people take pride in the quality of their work.
- Students come from a number of areas, although 2/3 come from within 200 miles. UMC does participate in college days in the high schools.
- The ability of the campus to recruit faculty varies by field; they can do better in history than in agronomy, which has fewer eligible candidates. Some pools can have 5 people; others have 150.
- The University should be more liberal in hiring spouses. They have contacted the Grand Forks Chamber of Commerce to do a mailing about spousal hiring. The lack of industry in the immediate Crookston area does hurt them somewhat.
- UMC sometimes has trouble retaining faculty it would like to keep. There is little money available to sponsor research risk taking or creativity; connection with Twin Cities departments would be a help. It was suggested that the Graduate School grant-in-aid funds might be available.

There was considerable discussion of where students go after they attend Crookston. About half go to four-year institutions in the area; about one-quarter go to the Twin Cities campus. Dr. Sargeant said he had cautioned the President about using "graduation rate" as a criterion for evaluating Crookston and Waseca. A lot more students transfer than graduate from Crookston--if they know they're going to transfer, they don't need the 2-year degree. They have, in addition to graduation, training and development functions. Although specific data were lacking, Dr. Sargeant guessed that the rate of transfer to other institutions had increased in recent years and was over 50% (although the graduation rate would be less).

Enrollment over the next few years is a concern; having already participated in the decline in the number of 18-year-olds over the past decade, Crookston does not want to absorb the next 15% decline which is predicted for that age cohort. As a 2-year institution, however, they cannot build the sort of reputation which will lead people to drive longer distances to attend. Some of their programs, with a narrow focus, face dropping enrollments, whereas the liberal arts programs, like those at Morris, are seeing an increase in enrollment. Since they have three technical programs and one arts and science, they have followed the pattern of technical colleges, which is declining enrollment.

Dr. Sargeant thanked the Committee for making the trip and said its visit helps reinforce the campus's pride in being a part of the University.

3. Change in the health care plan

Committee members moved next to a discussion of the change in the health care coverage. Among the points touched upon were these:

- According to Dave Swanson, Director of Employee Benefits, the University is at the mercy of the state since it participates in the state plan.
- The University tried to retain Boynton Health Service as one of the providers; the state struck it because it was too accessible and the faculty used it too much (to which one response was that the faculty will seek the same amount of health care, and will instead go to Riverside or downtown, which will take more time and decrease productivity).
- There is another list of specialists, not yet published, which will contain a lot more physicians. The release of information was very poorly planned.
- It is possible that some physicians will refuse to join the state plan because of the limits it imposes, such as on testing; some physicians may see it as preventing them from delivering proper health care.
- Why the faculty could not individually pay more and retain Aware Gold has not been made clear.
- "The process stinks."
- For Crookston faculty, many of the major clinics are in Grand Forks: Will the state plan cover physicians in North Dakota?

Committee members were unanimous in their dismay at the lack of consultation and the poor organization which has characterized the change to the state plan.

4. Discussion with Professor Will Rawn, UMC Consultative Committee

Professor Ibele welcomed Professor Rawn to the meeting and invited him to speak about any special concerns of the faculty.

A concern about governance arose. Professor Mullins noted that it took a big issue to prompt participation; Professor Rawn said they needed to look at different models for committees. The UMC consultative committee has wondered for the past two years what it should do. Although the small size of the campus might reduce the need for a formal structure, there must be an occasion to bring the faculty of the four departments together because they teach 12 or more credits per quarter; finding time is difficult. It was suggested that perhaps one afternoon should be set aside for meetings, as was once the custom on the Twin Cities campus. Without meetings of the campus FCC to discuss concerns, the only way the Chancellor has to gauge faculty opinion is by the old-boy network. There is a need for better organization because there are a number of faculty who do not believe they know

what is going on; there also ought to be less after-the-fact consultation.

It was also suggested that the chair of the campus FCC should have his or her teaching load reduced in order to be able to perform the duties without having a detrimental impact on career. The restricted flexibility in funding might make it difficult to provide substitute teaching, but there are graduate students in area institutions who perhaps could fill in.

Professor Ibele suggested that perhaps he could communicate some of the points discussed to Chancellor Sargeant.

A short discussion of research interests concluded the meeting. Some faculty members occasionally wish to do research but they need the support of the rest of the University and the teaching load makes the conduct of research problematic. As more PhDs are hired, this could become more of a problem. Another potential difficulty is that some believe the academic vice chancellor to be of the view that any research must be directly related to what the faculty member is teaching.

The Committee thanked Professor Rawn for joining them, and adjourned at 3:00.

-- Gary Engstrand

University of Minnesota