

Minutes*

Faculty Consultative Committee
Thursday, May 1, 1996
1:30 - 3:00
Room 140 Nolte Center

Present: Virginia Gray (chair), Carl Adams, Carole Bland, Victor Bloomfield, Gary Davis, Sara Evans, Dan Feeney, David Hamilton, Russell Hobbie, Laura Coffin Koch, Michael Korth, Fred Morrison, Harvey Peterson, Michael Steffes

Absent: W. Andrew Collins, Craig Swan, Matthew Tirrell

Guests: President Nils Hasselmo

Others: Martha Kvanbeck (University Senate); Maureen Smith (University Relations)

[In these minutes: Administrative appointments and searches; discussion with President Hasselmo about the legislative session, tenure, the Kellogg Commission report, shared governance and faculty involvement with the Regents, and the Rochester Center; food service changes]

1. Committee Business

Professor Gray convened the meeting at 1:30 and asked for a motion to close the meeting; it was moved, seconded, and unanimously voted to do so. During the closed session the Committee discussed the following two matters:

- The Committee's recommendation to President-elect Yudof about the nomination of Dean Robert Bruininks to the position of Executive Vice President and Provost; of those present at the interview with Dean Bruininks, Committee members voted unanimously to endorse his appointment
- The need to use normal search processes to fill major administrative appointments, the need to have faculty members on the search committees, and the differences among the various positions in terms of titles and the status of incumbents; on the last point, Professor Gray was delegated to speak with President-elect Yudof

2. Discussion with President Hasselmo

Virginia Gray welcomed President Hasselmo to the meeting, who asked that his first comments be "off the record" because he wished to provide an update and commentary on the status of the University's biennial request.

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The President then reported on the tenure discussions with the "Committee of 8" and working out compromises on tenure code changes that will be acceptable to the Board leadership and the Faculty Senate. His assumption is that a reasonable accommodation can be reached, for presentation to the Faculty Senate in June.

Professor Bloomfield inquired if there would need to be a special Faculty Senate meeting in June. The President said that consultation with the Board and the Committee of 8 would be needed; he was not sure about a meeting. A meeting on June 5 may be required. He and the Committee discussed the perspectives of Board members on the issue and how events might play out.

The President reported that he has appointed a search committee for the Vice President for Research, with the concurrence of President-elect Yudof; Regents' Professor Avner Friedman is chair. With Dr. Yudof's agreement, he will also probably appoint a search committee to identify candidates to succeed Chancellor Johnson at Morris; recommendations from the Morris campus will be sought.

It would be interesting to have an examination of the report of the Kellogg Commission on the student experience in light of what the University has been doing. The President said he would appreciate consideration of the report by SCEP and the Senate Consultative Committee. Many of the items in the report have been on the University's agenda for some time.

Professor Bland suggested that the University should be able to get some good publicity as a result of the issuance of the report. The University has addressed many of the undergraduate concerns and has been ahead of the curve. The length of time to the Ph.D., however, was a surprise; it has grown considerably. The time to both the master's degree and the doctorate are educational policy questions, the President agreed; review is needed.

Professor Bloomfield said he was struck by the title as much as by the content; there is nothing in the report about the mission of research universities. The emphasis is on students and education; is there a perception that the education of undergraduate students, in particular, is an area where public research universities are in danger? The research mission of public universities, many would argue, is equally in danger, and they may lose out to the elite private research institutions if they are not careful. The absence of mention of research is striking.

This is only one of several reports to be issued by the Commission, the President said. He and others raised that concern as well; the research function does not come as clearly into focus as he would have wished. He will remain on the Commission after he leaves the presidency, and will continue to make that point.

Professor Bland suggested talking with the Institutional Relations people about getting some publicity for the University vis-a-vis the report. President Hasselmo said he has done so; their feeling is that the University has gotten good publicity about its efforts, and a review of the report might not add to the positives that have been accomplished.

There are things the University can gain from the report, Professor Adams said--new areas to look at or confidence that efforts undertaken have been successful. Is there a role the faculty could play on the larger national scene by constructively criticizing or endorsing the report? In some official way, the

faculty might offer comments; would that be helpful? The President said he thought it would be, and referred to the list of upcoming topics of projected reports; he said he would be glad to be a conduit for faculty sentiments (President-elect Yudof will be the official University representative; he will continue as emeritus commissioner). He welcomed questions from the faculty about the topics, and views on whether there are aspects of the report that are slanted or misguided. Professor Adams suggested this be on the agenda of the Committee in the future.

With respect to the absence of language about research, the President said it is almost a defensive reaction to clamoring that universities teach in response to direct societal needs, to say that there must be responsiveness to social needs but in ways that are appropriate to universities. Some of the non-academic members of the advisory committee that worked with the presidents were quite vocal in their challenges.

Professor Bloomfield referred next to an electronic article about the convergence of public and private universities. Public institutions are seeking more and more private funds, and their tuition is increasing; privates are receiving more aid and federal grants and so on. That may not be bad, or it may be another example of the rich privates getting more and the public sector being starved. As a matter of public policy, for the Kellogg Commission on the future of state and land-grant universities, should there be a position taken to defend the importance, in all aspects of higher education research, for public universities? Is that being done effectively?

This touches on what might be considered a hidden agenda behind this report on state and land-grant universities: it emphasizes the enormous contributions made to the nation by those universities. The Big Ten presidents met with Senator Lott and other Senate leaders on education, and spoke about the contributions of the Big Ten (10 of the 11 are public), such as the fact that about 25% of the Ph.D.s in the country come from these schools. They are trying to put public universities forward, while also trying to avoid a collision with the private schools. There is a strong movement in Congress to take money away from the wealthy private institutions and distribute it, but the problem is that the money may be distributed politically, rather than in a way that institutions would think academically sound. There is the same tension between public and private institutions in the AAU, the President commented, and there is an uneasy balance between the two that occasionally come to the fore on policy matters. The President said he did not know if there would be a break between the public and private institutions.

The President said he had been asked by Professors Bloomfield and Gray to comment on shared governance, now that he is about to become an elder statesman. He said the University has a very good system of shared governance, even with the stresses and strains it has had; when compared with other universities, the system here does very well. One reason is that the faculty who participate are faculty who have the respect of their peers and who are leaders in research and education. The structure draws heavily on the core productive faculty; when that situation is not the case, faculty governance becomes a sham.

There have been stresses, but the faculty governance system has held up "pretty well." Analyzing specific difficulties gets into personalities, but the administration has to take some responsibility for the events of the recent past; it was unable to control forces that drove agendas that some seen as damaging, rightly or wrongly. Sometimes control is not possible, but the tenure discussion was clearly infected by other issues. There was also a breakdown in confidence between him and the Board of Regents; that

affected the situation, because it made him less persuasive--although it is not clear he could have been more persuasive under any circumstances. He ended up taking a stand that the Board leadership did not like.

As far as the structure is concerned, it is important to continue the interaction between administration and faculty leadership that has existed; FCC discussions with President Yudof should continue at least as intensely as those that have occurred with him. His regular meetings with the chair and vice chair of FCC were very helpful; they gave early alerts, allowed time for discussion of issues in more depth, and in a way that is not possible in a public meeting. That contact should continue, and President Yudof will be receptive to it.

There was discussion about how the faculty could interact more directly with the Board. That depends very much on the Board leadership. There were dinners with FCC and Board members in the past, that led both to substantive discussions as well as personal relationships between faculty and regents that are important. There have been a series of dinners with faculty and one member of the Board; FCC might wish to facilitate such events with other regents. It might also find it useful to talk with small groups of 2-3 regents. The purpose should not be to lobby, but simply to talk about the University; the more it can be done regularly, without troubling issues, the better it would be.

In the more formal structure, the President said he would not oppose faculty representation on the Board committees, akin to that held by the students. He warned that other groups, however, could also call for representation. He said he would not favor a faculty regent, and noted that the trend is away from "slots" for particular groups.

The Committee discussed how informal discussions with regents might proceed.

Professor Adams said that if the faculty become directly involved with the regents, that undermines the role of the President as president of the Senate and spokesperson for the faculty. That is always an ambiguous role, but faculty representation to the Board makes the role less forceful. If the President of the Senate (the President) arranges informal interactions between regents and faculty, the system is functioning. That is better than the governance structure going to the regents--to assume that the President sees the advantage to meetings and orchestrates the interaction. That reinforces the President's role and achieves the end being sought.

President Hasselmo said that was a good point; the faculty who have met with the regent have included those in the governance structure, but they were not selected on that basis. It might be better if it is done that way, so the meetings do not only include those faculty visible in governance. He suggested the Committee take up the subject with President Yudof; perhaps he would be willing to sponsor such relationships. The President said he did not know how interested all Board members would be, or what the perceptions of the Board would be.

Professor Bloomfield said he thought it would be useful for the chair and vice chair of the Board, President and Executive Vice President, and chair and vice chair of FCC to talk about relationships and how to communicate. President Hasselmo agreed.

The President then reported that the experiment at the Rochester Center, a collaboration between

the University and MNSCU, is doing very well. The relationship with IBM has been very productive, and led to \$25 million in IBM grants. That is an asset, and the President expressed appreciation for faculty who have made it possible.

Professor Bloomfield said he did not know any of the details of what goes on at the Center, but that it might be a model for other kinds of interactions; he asked the President to describe it more.

The University offers 24 programs and degrees at Rochester, the President said, using faculty who both are on location and who participate through interactive TV. University College has been there a number of years, and has a resident director who helps arrange upper division courses. IT provides masters level courses, Pharmacy is also represented. A provost is being appointed, jointly between the University and MNSCU; the job will be coordination of activities and strategic planning for the future. There is aggressive community representation from both IBM and the Mayo Clinic; the community very much wants a University campus. Under ideal circumstances, that might be logical, but the University does not have the resources to establish a campus, and the politics would be challenging. Instead there is the Center, with the University and Winona State and Rochester Community and Technical College providing programs. Through distance learning, the University will be able to provide more programs in the future. It is an experimental site; the day of the branch campus may be past, because of the opportunities in distance education.

Hearing no more questions, Professor Gray thanked the President for joining the meeting.

3. Committee Business

The Committee then turned to other items of business, including the meeting schedule for the next year, nomination of the Senate vice chair for next year, and a review of Senate docket items. The Committee spent some time debating how to reframe a resolution from the Committee on Student Affairs on the need for student study space. The moves by food service to reduce the hours of cafeterias and restaurants, and the concomitant lack of space for students to study in was noted, and a point should be made about that change.

SCEP met before this meeting and acted on the report on teaching evaluations; it adopted a resolution on the subject. The report proposed a different set of questions for use by students; the resolution asks for approval of the Senate to develop a more specific proposal for the fall.

Professor Gray adjourned the meeting at 3:00.

-- Gary Engstrand