

Minutes*

**Faculty Consultative Committee
Monday, March 27, 2006**

Present: Jean Bauer, John L. Sullivan, Jennifer Windsor, Carol Chomsky, Fred Morrison, Martin Sampson, Steven Ruggles, Richard McCormick.

Absent: none counted for a meeting called on short notice

Guests: President Bruininks, Vice President Charles Muscoplat, Vice President Richard Pfutzenreuter

[In these minutes: (1) UMore Park; (2) disabilities issues committee statement]

1. UMore Park

Professor Jean Bauer began the meeting by welcoming President Bruininks, Associate Vice President Charles Muscoplat, and Chief Financial Officer Richard Pfutzenreuter. She referenced an email from a committee member who could not be present, and then asked for an explanation of how this deal was crafted.

Professor Morrison said that Pheasants Forever had been looking at segregating a section of land from UMore Park which would remain in its natural state. The organization worked with legislators to draft a bill that would increase the overall state support for the stadium while retaining state control of this land. The proposal appears to have bipartisan support in both houses.

President Bruininks, when approached with this plan, considered whether it would still be a good idea if there was no funding tied to the plan. The answer was yes. This proposal would put over 2,000 acres of environmentally-sensitive land into a conservation reserve to be used for public good, not building. The western border of this parcel is an active farm which Dakota County hopes to purchase for use as a county park. This proposal also allows opportunities to develop the Northern section to support academic programs while preserving the research, education, and outreach function for the southern section through a 25 year partnership with the state.

Vice President Muscoplat said that some part of this transaction cannot be valued by common methods since the University retains a large tract of land, close to the metro area, in pristine condition.

President Bruininks noted that this proposal was first brought to him last Tuesday or Wednesday as a way for the University to provide a long-term benefit to the state while alleviating half the student fee for a new stadium. Without a stadium, the University will have a problem in 2012 with no public or private funding for a stadium, and this state will not give up its Division IA football. This deal appears to be a win with no risk for the University, with protection that cannot be guaranteed from a private buyer.

Q: Who developed this plan?

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

A: It mostly came from the community which wanted to add to the soon-to-be park land just to the West of this parcel.

Q: Who tied the sale to stadium funding?

A: Legislators.

Q: What does the state receive from this transaction?

A: The community, region, and state receive a firm commitment to preserve this area in a land trust, while the University maintains a strong position to develop the remaining land. The University also gets to work with the Department of Natural Resources to make the land accessible and manage the park system long-term. Stadium advocates also have a better chance to have a serious vote on the proposal.

Q: What is the maximum value of the land?

A: This is hard to assess since it borders city land but will remain green space. If the University was selling it to any other party, it would not be able to retain the rights to use it.

President Bruininks said that there is an economic benefit to not partnering with the NFL in a stadium deal. This proposal offers a financial model that works and an academic benefit to campus. It also allows the University to connect with citizens – 50 percent have a connection to the University but 75-80 percent have a connection through athletics.

Q: Does this sale limit development in the remaining property?

A: No. The University will still retain flexible development on the remaining land.

Q: Who administers the property?

A: The land will be managed jointly for 25 years and then turned over to the state. However, if the state misses even one payment, the deal is severed and the University retains possession of the land.

Q: What is the downside of this proposal?

A: The downside is that the state might ask the University to put up other land in exchange for future financing.

A member questioned whether the University could strike a deal for something else besides a stadium. Another member noted that the University would not get bipartisan support for a single issue around academic priorities.

A committee member noted that this is a framing issue – academic priorities versus the stadium. It needs to be made clear that the University is intent on strategic positioning and this is part of that goal.

Another member countered that the general public is not interested or savvy about strategic positioning – they just see lower student fees. However faculty are interested and need to be told that it is not a choice between strategic positioning and a stadium.

There was unanimous consent from members present for the following statement to represent the sense of the meeting:

We welcome the new proposal for exchanging part of UMore Park in return for support for the football stadium.

We believe that this step will help preserve environmentally sensitive areas of UMore Park for research and for public use and will help limit increases in student fees.

We reaffirm our support for the University's request for capital funding in this biennium and for long-term capital funding for biosciences.

2. Disabilities Issues

Professor Bauer informed members that that she had spoken with Professor McNamara about making several changes to the statement. He noted that it is his committee's right to present any statement for information at the Senate.

A member said that while there are issues with respect to the appropriateness of the statement and docket control, there are also established protocols for the presentation of such statements to the Senate.

Members then suggested continuing to ask for changes or postponement to the May meeting. If it goes forward as worded, FCC should be prepared to address why the statement is on the agenda.

--Mary Jo Pehl

University of Minnesota