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Minutes *

**Faculty Consultative Committee
Thursday, April 30, 2009
12:00 – 2:15
7 Mondale Hall**

Present: Emily Hoover (chair), Gary Balas, Nancy Carpenter, Carol Chomsky, Shawn Curley, Dan Dahlberg, William Durfee, Janet Fitzakerley, Marti Hope Gonzales, Michael Hancher, Kathryn Hanna, Caroline Hayes, Brian Isetts, Judith Martin, Michael Oakes, Martin Sampson, Cathrine Wambach, Becky Yust

Absent: Susan Berry, Nelson Rhodus

Guests: Provost E. Thomas Sullivan

Other: Kathryn Stuckert (Office of the President)

[In these minutes: (1) Graduate-education report; (2) reorganization of the AHC; (3) replacement for Professor Hancher; (4) report from the faculty legislative liaisons; (5) H1N1 flu; (6) discussion with Provost Sullivan

1. Graduate-Education Report

Professor Hoover convened the meeting at 12:00 and asked for discussion about the graduate-education task force report. In particular, the Committee talked about what it would like to see happen after the 30-day consultation period has ended and about the extent to which committees of the Senate should take up the report. Committee members also touched on the nature of faculty governance within the Graduate School, the high quality of the report from the task force, the motions on the floor of the University Senate meeting later that afternoon, the evolving means of consultation (reliance on task forces followed by consultation with the governance system and others), and the extent to which the consultation has met or exceeded the expectations set out in the Policy on Reorganization.

2. Reorganization of the Academic Health Center

Professor Isetts next explained the discussions he has had with Senior Vice President Cerra about the Academic Health Center reorganization. The Committee talked with him about the extent to which there had been faculty consultation inside the Academic Health Center, the extent to which there should be consultation OUTSIDE it as well (there should be, at least with this Committee), and the "why" and the "how" of the reorganization.

3. Replacement for Professor Hancher

* 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.

The Committee agreed on names of individuals to be asked to replace Professor Hancher while he is on leave next year.

4. Report from the Faculty Legislative Liaisons

Professor Sampson reported that he sent a letter to legislative committee administrators transmitting the statement on the Regent Candidate Advisory Council. The Committee also discussed the University's constitutional autonomy and its relationship to federal law allowing state governments to attach conditions to the receipt of federal stimulus funds.

5. H1N1 Flu

The Committee discussed briefly the H1N1 flu and its possible impact on the University.

After examining the Makeup Work for Legitimate Absences policy, the Committee asked that the Committee on Educational Policy review it and associated policies to ensure that absences during the term and during final examinations be adequately and appropriately covered.

6. Discussion with Provost Sullivan

Professor Hoover welcomed the Provost to the meeting, who came in during the discussion of the flu. He said there have been individuals working on the University's response to a flu outbreak for the last week and also indicated the need for review of the policies governing absence from classes and examinations. The current policy requires documentation from a doctor in the case of illness, a requirement that creates a lot of transaction costs, creates a drain on Boynton Health Service, and could exacerbate a public health problem by causing students to go to a physician when they have a communicable disease. Professor Chomsky said the Committee might offer advice to colleagues to be flexible and aware of public-health issues rather than try to modify University policies to deal specifically with the circumstances of a flu outbreak. Professor Oakes expressed confidence that the administration is considering what must be done if the University must close during finals week. Provost Sullivan affirmed that is the case.

The Provost turned to the report on graduate education and next steps. He and the President will wait for the 30-day comment period to pass, go over the comments carefully, and then meet with this Committee, student groups, and others before making any decision. No decision has been made. Professor Balas suggested scheduling the report with governance committees during the 30-day comment period. Professor Curley suggested including the Graduate School Executive Committee among the groups to be consulted.

Professor Durfee inquired to whom the comments would be directed; the Provost said they would come to him and the President. Professor Balas asked how comments on the strategic-positioning task force reports were handled and whether they were available publicly; the Provost said they went to the task forces and then he met with the task-force chairs to review them. Neither Professor Chomsky nor Provost Sullivan believed those comments were public; Professor Yust, who co-chaired one of the strategic-positioning task forces, concurred but said they were available to task force members. Professor Chomsky said there will be discussions in the governance committee, the records of which will be public,

and added that it might be problematic to have individual comments on the task force report published unvetted. This Committee, however, should see them and discuss them with the Provost and President. So they would not be "private" but nor would they be fully "public." Those who submit the comments may also believe they will be anonymous, Provost Sullivan added.

Professor Curley said it was his understanding that the task-force report would not be changed based on any comments. Provost Sullivan said it will be another opportunity to look at the issues after the 30-day comment period.

Provost Sullivan turned next to 7.12 statements and reported that approvals have been slowed because of the weight of the promotion-and-tenure process. He promised to get the remainder of the 7.12 statements done very soon.

As for the e-education report, Vice Provost Wahlstrom will be joining the Committee at an upcoming meeting, the Provost noted, and he endorsed the idea of creating a faculty group to examine the report. This is a big issue and the administration will need a lot of help in rolling out an e-education effort without the institution stubbing its toe either academically or financially.

Provost Sullivan observed that it is amazing that it is necessary to be talking in April, 2009, about the need for a faculty-information database. He said he hoped that once the new financial system is settled, the University will have the capacity to handle what is needed in faculty information and expertise. It will need to be an enterprise-model system; he said he would talk with the President and the experts in information technology to find out where the University stands. The Committee talked with him about the effort that Vice Provost Carney is leading and the demonstrations that have been provided for the Digital Measures system.

Professor Balas asked if, in light of the experience with EFS, it was worth it to do another system. Professor Yust assured him it is and that the Digital Measures tool is "fabulous." The system "talks" to PeopleSoft and can save a lot of money compared to having separate college systems. All faculty should be interested in this, Professor Durfee maintained, because it can also be used for faculty merit reviews. Professor Isetts asked about integrity; one concern is how the system would be used. Provost Sullivan said he assumes the most important use will be at the department and college level, not by central administration.

The Provost turned finally to the budget-decision process. It has not changed, he said, but the stakes are now higher. The administrative-unit compacts are completed in the fall and the academic-unit compacts in January and February. Now the University must see where it lands after the legislative session is over. All compacts go to a group of five people (the three senior vice presidents plus Vice President Pfitzenreuter and Ms. Tonneson from Budget and Finance), and the senior vice presidents each go through the compacts of units that report to him to review priorities and the use of funds and makes decisions. They have rich conversations to talk about investments; they have more than a dozen such meetings. They share preliminary thoughts with the President, who makes the final decisions after the legislature adjourns. The budget documents are then sent out.

The Provost said he was aware that the cost-pool budgets are a sensitive issue. He noted that University continues to model 5% and 8% cuts which should affect the cost pools. While the cost-pool budgets should be going down because of cuts, there will also be upward pressure on some of them

because of contractual, legal, and health/safety/other regulatory requirements, and debt service. He said he did not know at this point what the final or net balance between cuts and increases would be.

Professor Martin said the University needs an additional \$60 million per year, even without increases in compensation, simply to stand still. The figure is \$80 million with compensation, Provost Sullivan noted. He said it would be helpful for the Committee to have a conversation about those increases with a list in front of it, but agreed that "it is a tough number to have to swallow every year."

Professor Dahlberg recalled that when he served on the ad hoc committee to review the budget model, the deans were uniformly unhappy that they were not present when the cost-pool budgets were decided. Has that changed? Provost Sullivan said that administrative officers went to the Deans Council that last two years to explain their budgets and what they were seeking in the compact discussions. The cost pools are also discussed in the administrative and college compact meetings. The deans have the opportunity to probe and question throughout the budget cycle, he said.

Professor Hoover thanked the Provost for joining the meeting, and adjourned it for the Senate meeting.

-- Gary Engstrand

University of Minnesota