Minutes*

Faculty Consultative Committee
May 18, 1989

Present: Mark Brenner (chair), Andrew Collins, Warren Ibele, Norman Kerr, Lynnette Mullins, J. Bruce Overmier, Ronald Phillips, W. Phillips Shively, Michael Steffes, Charlotte Striebel, James VanAlstine, Walter Weyhmann

Guests: Dean David Brown (Medical School), H. Mead Cavert (Medical School), Associate Vice President Edward Foster (Academic Affairs), Gayle Grika (Footnote), Dean P. T. Magee (Biological Sciences), Maureen Smith (Brief)

1. Report of the Chair

Welcome Professor Brenner welcomed Professor Walter Weyhmann to the meeting, who on July 1 joins the Committee because, under the restructuring of Senate Committees, the chair of the Senate Finance and Planning Committee is designated as an ex-officio, non-voting member of the Consultative Committee. Professor Weyhmann is the chair-designate.

Move to the 50-minute class hour Professor Brenner then reported that the College of Biological Sciences has expressed concern about the adoption of the 50-minute class hour (which is effective Winter Quarter, 1990). It seems that CBS has been caught off-guard by the move; with the change in the start time of first hour classes, the timing is such that the situation of taking a first-hour class on one campus and a second-hour class on the other are reversed from what they have. That is, one could previously take a first-hour class on one campus and a second-hour class on the other (which campus was which was not clear at the meeting); with the schedule change, the class period order which is possible is reversed--and CBS, in advising students, has inadvertently neglected to take the change into account. The question at hand was whether or not other colleges are also unprepared for the implementation of the 50-minute class hour policy.

In a quick telephone survey of some other colleges, Professor Brenner informed the Committee, it appeared that at least CLA, IT, and Education have incorporated the change into their schedules and are planning on the change. It was agreed that information about their preparedness for the change would also be sought from the colleges of the Institute of Agriculture, Forestry, and Home Economics as well as Veterinary Medicine in order to ascertain if the St. Paul campus colleges were having trouble with the change; if, however, it appeared that only CBS is unprepared, no action or recommendation about a delay should be considered.

Professor Brenner also told of a letter from Professor Richard Goldstein inquiring about the possibility of staggered class hours and reduction of the 15-minute break between classes, because it appears that students by and large try to avoid scheduling East Bank and West Bank classes back-to-back. Professor Goldstein also argued that using the actual class times to identify the periods was more complicated than simply returning to use of period I, II, III, etc. The Committee concluded that it did not

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

wish, at this point, to take any action on the proposals.

Report of the Task Force on Support Services Professor Brenner reiterated the caution which had been expressed at the meeting on May 15 and by subsequent telephone calls: The draft report is not to be circulated or shared. It was pointed out that the report is being rewritten in a number of places and that release of the draft would be spreading misinformation. Professor Brenner also noted that the Committee would include on the agenda of its next meeting identification of how the several consultative committees, called for in the task force report, should be appointed.

Proposal from the Council of Graduate Students (COGS) Professor Brenner advised the Committee of a meeting he had held with representatives of COGS, who find that the views and interests of graduate students are not represented by MSA. The communication between the two groups ranges from haphazard to non-existent, and graduate student senators are removed from the Senate because they do not attend MSA meetings--of which they received no notice. The COGS representatives also pointed out that the commonality of interests between graduate students and undergraduates is very small. The COGS officers have agreed to provide a proposal for separate representation of graduate students in the governance system; it will be circulated with the next agenda for SCC.

Close of Meeting Professor Brenner briefly closed the meeting for two items. During this time the Committee by acclamation elected Professor Collins to serve as vice chair for 1989-90.

2. Principles for Distribution of Faculty Salary Increases

Associate Vice President Foster joined the meeting to discuss with Committee members how the faculty salary increases might be distributed. He was asked about a concern several faculty had expressed: Would the amount of money set aside for retention be so large that one could only obtain a reasonable increase by becoming a retention case? In some instances, faculty who had not otherwise sought or considered offers would begin to do so (and in some cases department heads, and perhaps deans, were urging faculty members to seek out offers). These questions had been raised, however, when it appeared the total increase available might only be 3-4%; now that the legislature appears to be close to providing 7% each year of the biennium, those fears will be allayed--if the retention funds are not slated to grow in proportion to the increase. Dr. Foster confirmed that the retention fund pool proposed is $500,000 and that all amounts above that would go toward salary increases (except for the fringe benefits questions which remain to be settled).

Dr. Foster also pointed out that retention funds are provided from Academic Affairs only when the college and department agree to a match; the faculty in the units must be prepared to accept a proportionate reduction in the amount available for their own salary increases when funds are to be diverted for a retention case. One Committee member contended that these matches can lead to a conflict: As the amount of money for salary increases shrinks, the faculty will be less and less willing to sacrifice for their colleagues, which means the University could be in danger of losing some of its best faculty.

Dr. Foster moved on to explaining the current status of the plan for salary increases. The President's Cabinet will be meeting over the next two weeks to consider the issues and to develop budget recommendations for the Regents. There are several issues to be addressed which will have an impact on the amount of money available for salary increases; they revolve around questions about how to allocate costs over groups.

The computation of the funds for equity has apparently been settled; they will come from the entire appropriation, not just the salary base. Another problem has arisen, however; the civil service staff have inquired about the source of funds for comparable worth adjustments and have proposed that they should be treated in the same fashion as the faculty.

The allocation of the increased cost of health insurance remains unsettled. Two things must be remembered: first, the cost is the same for academic and civil service employees on any single campus--but that cost is a bigger proportion of the salaries of civil service employees than academic employees; and second, there is a discrepancy between costs on the Twin Cities campus and on the coordinate campuses. The legislature has decreed that it will fund the cheapest plan available in the area; any excess costs of other plans must be paid by the employee who chooses the plan. In the Twin Cities, with a number of options available and competition for service, the least expensive option is not Blue Cross. At the coordinate campuses, however, Blue Cross does remain the cheapest alternative. The question then is how to spread the costs: by system, by campus, by faculty and civil service, and so on. Generally, the more the costs are spread over a larger group, the less money there will be for Twin Cities faculty salary increases--and the amount taken out could be more than the 1.25% which has been mentioned. One Committee member observed that a Twin Cities faculty member must pay $750 to have Blue Cross--and must also accept a slight lower salary increase to provide Blue Cross coverage to coordinate campus faculty. Dr. Foster said that was correct but recalled for the Committee that originally the State was going to provide separate funding to pay for the increased costs on a system-wide basis; what happened instead was that the salary money was increased and the University expected to deal with the issue.

Although no vote was taken, there appeared to be a consensus that fringe benefit coverage should be level across all campuses and that the increased costs of health insurance should be paid on a system-wide basis; it was argued by one, without contradiction, that it was only fair to the coordinate campuses even though slightly lower Twin Cities salary increases would be the result. As an aside to the principal point, one Committee member maintained that fringe benefits should be separated from salaries as the basis for decisions; use of total compensation might later be relied upon in comparisons with other institutions and could eventually do a disservice to the University.

Associate Vice President Foster next distributed two tables which had been prepared by Academic Affairs based in part on data provided by Management Planning and Information Services (MPIS). One table portrayed the calculation of an "Entitlement Index," which was based on how different from the mean of their peers salaries were in different collegiate units compared to each other (primarily the Big Ten plus Iowa State, with additional institutions in the case of some of the professional schools). That is, for example, the Law School is farther behind its peers than CLA is behind its peers. Also included in the table was a "Retention Index," which consisted of all successful retention cases in each college from 1983-89; the number of cases was calculated as a percent of the total faculty in the college. Dr. Foster acknowledged that there were problems with the data (as, for example, when the peers of a unit are not Big Ten schools but rather Stanford, Harvard, and MIT--the data will suggest the unit doesn't have a problem but it clearly does have a problem). He commented that he has, over the years, seen many hours devoted to refining the data, and that no matter how much work is put into them there are always problems with them.

The second table blended the market data (the "Entitlement Index") and the "Retention Index" with the collegiate unit priority as set out in Academic Priorities; the result was a distribution of units on a matrix which might suggest varying levels of funding (i.e., of money allocated for marketplace comparisons) for salary increases depending on where in the matrix a collegiate unit might be.

Dr. Foster was asked if the retention data included resignations; he said it did not but that Academic Affairs was trying to gather that information. Asked what the senior vice presidents had in mind for market adjustments (including noting that the Committee on Faculty Affairs (SCFA) had called for a maximum of 1% unless the increase was greater than 8%), Dr. Foster said they also had talked of 1% although the choices had not yet been fully assembled. A question was also raised about the market data; one committee member recalled having seen other numbers which had the colleges ranked quite differently in terms of the gap from the salaries of their peers; Dr. Foster said he would ask MPIS about the reason for the difference.

Professor Brenner asked Dr. Foster if the administration wished to have the sense of the Committee; he said they would, and wanted its reaction to the recommendations of SCFA (which included, in addition to the 1% limit on money for market pressure adjustments, a call for the remainder of the increases to be based on merit but with justification required for any individual who receives a raise below an agreed-upon minimum). In calculating the calls which will be made upon the expected 7% increase in salary funds (approximately 1% for equity, .25% for retention, and 1.25% to some unknown higher percent for health insurance), it was noted that the actual increase could be in the range of 4%.

One Committee member said he agreed in general with the SCFA recommendation but contended that with explanation required for any raise below a stipulated minimum its proposal was not pure merit; it would be preferable to have no requirement for written justifications to be provided to the central administration for any salary. By setting such a minimum, there would be implicit floor established; department heads will be loath to give increases below it. Establishment of such a floor would also constrain the raises that could be given to highly meritorious faculty, since the departmental salary funds are a fixed amount. The merit increase should be permitted to be zero. Dr. Foster pointed out that in the past there have been two approaches to this requirement: One has been to retain in the files an explanation of any raise below x%; the other has been to submit a written explanation along with the departmental salary recommendations. It would, therefore, be possible to have no minimum percent, below which explanations to the central administration would be required. The Committee as a whole appeared not to take a position on this issue.

It was observed, without dissent, that the addition of the planning priorities was commendable and that it reflected the Committee recommendation that salary money be distributed in accord with University priorities. The discussion which ensued, however, was complicated, occasionally heated, and seemed to leave some Committee members perplexed or confused (or both).

Dr. Foster observed that one question to be answered is whether or not there should be a mandate to the colleges to give larger increases than central administration provides funds for. One Committee member noted that historically colleges provide about 1% more, on average--although, Dr. Foster added, not all colleges do it and not every year. He also speculated that those units which receive funds for marketplace adjustments might feel the pressure is off to give that additional increase whereas colleges that do not receive those funds might give the additional 1% or so anyway.

It was argued by one Committee member that if this plan called for such a mandate to the colleges then it should be opposed, because the deans should have discretion to use their funds in the best interests of the college. In the first version of the use of marketplace data, presented earlier to the Committee by Vice President Donhowe, it was pointed out, the colleges would all have been required to deliver a certain salary increase but some colleges would receive less than the amount needed; the difference would have to come from internal reallocation and retrenchment. The selection of which colleges would receive less would depend on the University priorities established in the planning process. Under this revised plan, however, it appeared that all colleges would be given funds for salary increases but there would be a separate central pool for marketplace adjustments; this pool would then be distributed differentially among the colleges--partly on the basis of market/retention (from the calculations in the table) and possibly partly on the basis of priorities in planning.

The drawback to this latter approach, it was contended, is that the extra amounts to the colleges could then <u>only</u> be given as salary increases and there would be no reallocation required and the planning process would not be furthered. The planning process spoke to number of positions and amount of equipment, for example, not to whether or not faculty members were poorer or richer than their colleagues or peers. If the differential allocation of funds (the market pool) can only be distributed in the form of salary increases, it will create the illusion that the University is implementing its plans but will not in fact be doing so.

Opposition to this proposal, the Committee member concluded, should not be seen as opposing the use of salary funds to accomplish planning objectives; rather, the opposition is to trying to reach planning goals in way that is tied to marketplace pressures--which only leads to a differential distribution of faculty salaries.

Another Committee member proposed that since the calculation of market amounts to be provided to each college was based on department-by-department comparisons, the funds available under the market rubric should be returned to the colleges, and to the departments, in the amounts the departments contributed to the calculation of how much the college should receive--in other words, the process should be reversed when the funds are being distributed. If it is assumed that the distribution of market funds is <u>not</u> a merit issue, then it is only fair to distribute the money to those departments which have the market problems--otherwise it is possible a dean might not provide money to a department which was under terrific market pressure. The merit money, however, would still be distributed at the discretion of the deans. Further, the distribution of these funds to the department should not be extended to the individual level; decisions on individual faculty members should be left to the department heads.

One caveat to this mechanical and arithmetic distribution system was noted: The original data which led to the calculation of market pressures must have included the use of appropriate peer groups. If high quality departments were compared to their appropriate peers, and not found to be wanting, they should not receive marketplace funds. If, however, the peer group used was the Big Ten or some other random group, then the data are not valid because they will not take into account the <u>actual</u> peer group--and concomitant market pressure and competition--and will lead toward mediocrity because the best departments will be pulled down as a result of failing to receive funds to compete in their real market. When the right peers are not being used, the University is using "colleges and departments of the same label rather than the same quality." In the absence of data on the appropriate peer groups, the effort becomes an exercise in futility.

Yet another Committee member expressed deep reservations about distributing market funds based on Academic Priorities. Market pressure and planning priorities are two separate issues. The Academic Priorities document intended to adjust funding imbalances among the academic programs of the University in accord with the planning process; the planning documents do not call for lower quality in lower priority units; to put them at a disadvantage in allocation of market funds will likely lead to a decline in the quality of those units. There has been no suggestion in the planning documents that the faculty in lower priority units should be given lower salaries.

Another Committee member contended that some lower priority units, such as Nursing, were in desperate shape, and they are being told to shrink by giving no salary increases. They then lose their best faculty. Dr. Foster responded that Nursing, for example, is above average in the market comparisons and has had no retention cases.

Dr. Foster was asked why the original plan which Vice President Donhowe had presented to the Committee had been revised; he said that a number of the deans of the affected colleges had protested.

Professor Brenner brought the deliberations to a close by asking for a show of hands on whether Committee members supported the use of academic priorities in addition to retention and entitlement or only the use of the latter two factors; there were six votes cast, with two in favor of including planning priorities and four favoring only entitlement and retention--although one of the four stipulated that he supported the use of marketplace data but not in the way it was proposed at this meeting.

3. Extension of the Medical School Probationary Period

Professor Brenner welcomed Medical School Dean David Brown, Associate Dean H. Mead Cavert, and Biological Sciences Dean P. T. Magee to the meeting to discuss the Medical School proposal to extend the probationary period from 6 to 9 years for its tenure-track faculty. Dean Brown spent some time explaining the background of the proposal and noted that the Medical School is not saying whether the idea is applicable anywhere else in the University but that they do see it as necessary in their domain. The principal reasons the change is seen as necessary have to do with the length of time it takes to establish a record of accomplishment in research (especially given time it takes to have something published in one of the first-class hard science journals and to create a record in order to obtain grant funding). To evaluate a young faculty member in the four and one-half years that are actually available (that is, when one takes into account the notice provisions required by the University and the amount of time it takes to conduct a tenure review)--rather than the six years supposed--is simply not possible to do if it is to be effective; they need more time and so does the faculty member to build a record. Several Committee members expressed agreement with the problems of the compressed period of review prior to the tenure decision; one commented that his unit has been moving in the direction of a longer period--by requiring three years of post-doctoral work in addition to the six years prior to the grant of tenure.

In the clinical sciences, where research is based on investigations of patient-related experiences, it takes a long time to accumulate enough experience to publish--again, it cannot be done in four and one-half years. The problem is not unique to Minnesota; some people are just giving up on academic medicine because the realities do not permit reasonable chances to gain a favorable tenure review.

Dean Brown also said that this should help young faculty, who will not operate under such a severe time constraint, that it would not affect those who are able to develop a record of accomplishment early, and that the Medical School recognizes that the proposal is somewhat experimental and should be reviewed in five years to see if it should be abandoned or modified.

Dean Magee explained that Biological Sciences did not have major difficulties with the proposal; their reservations stemmed from the fact of the large number of joint appointments between the two schools and problems which would arise with having two different tenure systems. He added that the Medical School proposal would make much sense for Biological Sciences as well and that he personally favored the extended probationary period, although he would not presume to argue it should apply to the entire University. If the Medical School is permitted to adopt the longer probationary period, Biological Sciences would see that there are three choices: It can abandon the joint appointments (which it does not wish to do), it can adopt the same probationary period change, or the entire University can make the change.

Questions were raised by Committee members about possible AAUP censure if the change were to be made; it appears that the national President and Executive Director do not agree on the implications of the change. It was urged that the AAUP would respond to sensible reasons and would want to study the idea.

It was reported that only one of the departments of Biological Sciences had discussed the proposal and that unit had opposed the change; one Committee member who had been present said that the opposition appeared to be predicated on the feeling that there would be an escalation of criteria if the probationary period were extended to nine years. Another Committee member acknowledged that there might be an escalation but there would be a better base of information upon which to make judgments and that the proposal should be supported for the entire University. Academic Affairs should not be in the position of having to make comparable judgments on two different systems. Other advantages, it was argued, is that no one year would bulk so large in the career of a tenure-track faculty member and the longer period would permit longer-term research--the present system requires concentration on short-term research that will produce publishable work. The one major drawback would be that potential young faculty think that the sooner they are considered for tenure the better off they are.

Committee members appeared all to be of the view that the problems described by the Medical School are not unique to it and that the change should be considered on an institution-wide basis. Dean Brown expressed concern that the problems of the Medical School would not be addressed in a timely fashion if it had to wait on the possible implementation of change for the entire University (or campus) and suggested that the Medical School be permitted to make the change and then evaluate it later. Committee members, however, were reluctant to support a proposal which would create different tenure systems within the University.

Asked what criteria he would use to evaluate how well the change worked, Dean Brown replied that it was not a stable system and it would be hard to be objective now; the faculty mix will change over time and case histories will need to be documented.

It was agreed that FCC would appoint a task force to examine the issues surrounding a longer probationary period; Dean Brown urged that it be done quickly and offered to help in any way he could. Professor Brenner accepted offers of assistance from Professor Kerr and Dean Brown to write a charge to a task force.

The meeting adjourned at 3:00.

-- Gary Engstrand

University of Minnesota