

Senate Committee on Educational Policy
Minutes
May 30, 1986

Members Present: Brenda Ellingboe, Susan Collison, Andrew Collins, Lawrence Goodman, Mary Young, Patricia Thomas (staff), William Hanson (chair), Gretchen Kreuter (ex officio), Sheila Corcoran, Ian Maitland, Thomas Daniels, Marvin Mattson, Van Gooch and Kathy Ebnet (via phone from Morris)

Guests: Preston Townley, Dean, School of Management; Jerry Reinhart, Acting Director, Student Services, Undergraduate Programs, School of Management; Irwin Rubenstein, member, Twin Cities Assembly Steering Committee; Howard Shutt, student.

Minutes: The minutes were approved as written.

School of Management

The student members of SCEP invited Dean Townley and Jerry Reinhart to participate in a discussion of the educational implications of the School of Management's response to Commitment to Focus. Dean Townley said that the School of Management had been considering program changes two years before Commitment to Focus was written. There was concern over the quality of the undergraduate program, i.e., the number and quality of large size classes and the amount of time spent for faculty/student interaction. The School of Management has the worst student/faculty ratio in the University (30-1). After considerable discussion and feedback from students and faculty, this document, recommending that School of Management downsize its program for quality control, was produced. In Commitment to Focus, it was recommended that the School of Management reduce its size by 50%. However, the School of Management suggests a 25% overall cut in size while holding the Department of Accounting even.

He acknowledged there would be less opportunity for students outside the School of Management to take business classes. It would also stop the College of Liberal Arts independent study courses which allow these students to take business courses. Additionally, a G.P.A. standard of 2.7 would be applied to all students taking 3-level courses in the School of Management.

Lawrence Goodman asked if Continuing Education and Extension (CEE) students were also required to meet these admission requirements. Jerry Reinhart answered that these CEE students were not required to meet the 2.7 G.P.A. standard because there was no way to limit them.

Howard Shutt asked why the reduction was happening so quickly. Dean Townley stated that it was being spread out over a two year period. He said that Commitment to Focus was trying to give the institution some momentum, balancing reasonable changes with time constraints. He emphasized that the initiative for reduction occurred in the School of Management; its goal is to be one of the top five public business schools in the country.

Brenda Ellingboe said that students were concerned with access to the business program itself and to business classes for students with non-business majors. She asked SCEP to take action on this issue before the Regents' June meeting, possibly recommending a 10% reduction over two years.

William Hanson indicated he was uncomfortable with taking such specific action because of such short notice and so little information available. However, it was appropriate for SCEP to express concern over the issue of access, he said.

Andrew Collins drafted the following motion which passed unanimously:

The Senate Committee on Educational Policy wishes to call attention to potential restrictions on access to business coursework for non management students at the University as a result of proposed downsizing in the undergraduate program in the School of Management.

Lower Division Report

Irwin Rubenstein stated there was little enthusiasm in the Senate Consultative Committee for the Hanson report on coordinating lower division education. He said that the Twin Cities Assembly Steering Committee would sponsor a substitute motion instead.

William Hanson asked what it is specifically that the committee finds objectionable. Professor Rubenstein explained that the wording of the report, concerning the alternatives which were rejected, precludes others from considering them or doing further work in finding other options. He also stated that the overall flavor of the report was one of accepting the status quo. It doesn't go far enough in terms of the lower division. The committee felt that page six of the report, discussing the University's poor graduation rates, contradicted the flavor of the entire report. The undergraduate center appears to be an open door, one-stop shopping spree at the University; the steering committee contends it is a weakness in the report.

William Hanson replied that the report doesn't preclude further exploring of options, and his committee is willing to add such a statement to the resolution to clarify the confusion. He also pointed out that the report doesn't accept the status quo. Rather, it recommends curriculum changes and regular review of liberal education requirements in the various collegiate units. It strongly urges implementation of the Page and Wallace reports and specific administrative changes. He acknowledged that the undergraduate center doesn't have a lot of authority but a senior officer in Academic Affairs would have some centralized authority.

Irwin Rubenstein said that the Assembly Steering Committee wished to bring another opinion from another group. Therefore, it was offering a substitute motion.

Professor Hanson submitted the following amendment which would replace the last paragraph of the original SCEP motion and clarify the confusion about limiting research on other alternatives to the undergraduate center mentioned in the report.

The Special Committee's final report contains not only the recommendations listed above, but a number of others concerning curriculum, quality of teaching and learning, academic student services, creation of intellectual communities, and the role of the General College. In implementing this resolution the University should seriously consider all the recommendations in the Special Committee's final report. Nothing in that report, however, is to be construed as recommending that research on, experimentation with, or development of any techniques or organizational strategies for improving undergraduate education should be prohibited or discouraged.

Lawrence Goodman moved to accept Professor Hanson's amendment, and it was passed unanimously. No action was taken on the Assembly Steering Committee motion.

✓ Report on Liberal Education Requirements Gretchen Kreuter presented a report from John Wallace, Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs, concerning monitoring CLE requirements. She explained that for the past three years John Wallace had focused on the HOW of undergraduate education, not the WHAT--upon the nature and quality of the undergraduate experience, not upon curricular content. Now he believes it would be fruitful for SCEP and Academic Affairs to focus on curriculum and to develop a plan for carrying out the responsibilities assigned to them regarding CLE.

He proposes that a small ad hoc committee composed of one or two SCEP members and one or two members of his staff be established to develop a plan by the middle of fall quarter 1986. Such a committee would begin by looking at the problems already identified and would consider how the monitoring of CLE requirements should relate to other initiatives for the improvement of undergraduate education.

SCEP endorsed the ad hoc committee idea and suggested that such a committee be established at the beginning of fall quarter 1986 when the new SCEP members joined the committee.

The meeting adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Patricia Thomas
Administrative Fellow, SCEP