

**Senate Committee on Educational Policy  
Minutes  
December 4, 1986**

**Attendance:** Mary Young, Sheila Corcoran, Leisa Knych, Marvin Mattson, Lawrence Goodman, Patricia Thomas (staff), Susan Collison, Gretchen Kreuter (ex officio), John Clark, Naomi Scheman, Robert Myers, Roland Guyotte (via phone from Morris).

**Guests:** John Taborn, Sallye McKee, Richard Heydinger.

John Clark served as acting chair because Chairman Andrew Collins was ill.

**Minutes:** The minutes were approved as written.

**Subcommittee on Liberal Education Requirements**

Gretchen Kreuter explained that the Senate mandated SCEP to monitor distribution requirements. She also said that the Implementation Task Force asked SCEP to help develop proposals from the recommendations of various reports, specifically addressing the issues of:

1. Developing common intellectual experiences for students.
2. Coordinating aspects of lower division curriculum.
3. Reviewing and upgrading curriculum in response to the revised preparation standards.

SCEP appointed a Subcommittee on Liberal Education Requirements, chaired by Gretchen, to discuss the issue.

The Subcommittee, consisting of Gretchen Kreuter, Naomi Scheman, John Clark, Susan Collison, Leisa Knych, and Patricia Thomas (staff), has identified the following five issues to address:

1. The number of courses available to students to meet distribution requirements.
2. The content of those courses.
3. A mechanism to monitor students' progress toward meeting distribution requirements.
4. New program development.
5. The distribution requirements themselves.

Gretchen said the Subcommittee is trying to work toward some recommendations that it will bring to the full committee to satisfy SCEP's responsibility for monitoring compliance of liberal education

requirements and meet the Task Force requests. She explained that many students and advisors think of getting the distribution requirements out of way as quickly as possible so they can get on to the important work of completing their majors. The Subcommittee would like to make students aware of the value of a good liberal education. Lower division exploratory courses and upper division integrative courses might be one way of incorporating liberal education throughout the student's academic career.

Discussion followed. Roland Guyotte asked if the committee had considered the level of preparation (or lack of it) for a student in a field far from his major. He wondered if this would be a problem in the integrative courses. John Clark said that the University could take on specific current thinking of where the students are lacking in their college educations and place this in a greater context. This would be an opportunity to fill in the voids in general education and give the students some more breadth. Lawrence Goodman wondered if these requirements would be imposed on all candidates for baccalaureate degrees and if every department would have to develop a seminar. Naomi Scheman said that students would come from a wide range of disciplines, and therefore, the courses would not be disciplinary-based. The integrative courses could be taught by graduate students and planned by the students participating in them. Faculty would be on-call and serve as experts. John said that the students could be given a choice. They could complete all of their distribution requirements at the lower division level, or they could take some of these courses as upper division students. Roland said that the University could create a link between exploratory courses and integrative courses. Students could look at the same issue twice, and graduate students could bind some of the education ideas and different levels of education together (undergraduates, graduates, and faculty). Gretchen suggested that the cross-disciplinary sequences could be a model for the upper division courses.

Marvin Mattson stated that he supported the concept of exploratory and integrative courses at the beginning and end of a student's academic career and recognized the importance of looking at the philosophies of the disciplines, but he reminded the Committee that the University must not forget the center link in the chain--the majors. The knowledge base of the majors cannot be weakened. Robert Meyers said that the liberal education focus should be introduced early in a student's education and then the student should come back to it when s(he) has acquired more knowledge. Naomi pointed out that no one is assigned to paying attention to the categories of group requirements and their linkages. Sheila Corcoran suggested that exploratory courses should be involved in

the methodology and perspectives of the disciplines and not be just introductions to potential majors. Lawrence said that all introductory lower division courses should be taught by full professors.

Gretchen said that the Implementation Task Force would make its report in January. It has several subcommittees that are dealing with specific issues. One group is now talking about the central question of what the University can do to improve the quality of education for large groups of students. A second priority of the Task Force is to examine the quality of undergraduate education and develop some tools and strategies to aid administrators in providing quality undergraduate education.

#### **Minority Task Force Report, John Taborn, Chair**

John Taborn made a preliminary report of his Committee's findings. He explained that the Committee's charge is three-pronged: 1.) to examine programs that are designed to impact minority students, 2.) to examine issues that affect minority faculty, and 3.) to respond to reports of the Collins and Hanson Committees. The Committee was divided into three Subcommittees to discuss student issues, unit-based programs, and concerns of minority faculty. The issues of recruitment, retention, and success rates of minority students and faculty were discussed at length. The Committee developed a comprehensive questionnaire that was sent to each college office. The Committee also interviewed all directors of programs which were established to serve minority students. It also visited the Duluth and Morris campuses and interviewed students, faculty, deans, and administrators. He said the Committee will be writing an interim report in the next few weeks. Although the University of Minnesota is a national institution, its primary focus has to be the state of Minnesota, Taborn said. Commitment to Focus must insure that everyone shares the benefits proportionately (also the negative results). It must be monitored for compliance. He felt that the initiatives which will be suggested in his report should be expanded to affect all students even though these initiatives deal with minority students.

**Undergraduate Students.** The Committee discovered that minority undergraduate students were not fairing that well at the University. They need remedial action or the situation will get worse. In 1985, 10.5% of all undergraduates were in General College. However, 26.9% of all minority students were enrolled in General College. John said that it is difficult to find viable data for minority students. He said that probably the following recommendations will be made by the Committee.

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1. The University needs to develop some clear data system to follow minority students from entry to graduation.
2. It needs to monitor impact of recommendations.
3. The quality of physical facilities for students needs to be improved.
4. The University needs to talk of a mechanism for some kind of central coordination of all minority programs/services.
5. Programs must intensify their early program recruitment, focusing on juniors and seniors in high schools.
6. Most programs have little or no faculty involvement. Faculty involvement needs to be increased.

**Graduate Students.** From 1980-1985, University Graduate School enrollment increased 3% while minority enrollment decreased 5%. We need to increase enrollment and retention of minority graduate students at a time when the national pool of minority students is decreasing. Minnesota must contribute to the pool and grow our own, John stated. There must be an intensive increase in recruitment by providing funding initiatives, creative undergraduate programs, and initiatives to departments which recruit minorities.

**Faculty.** The difficulty of attracting and retaining minority faculty is a national problem. Of the 4,187 total faculty employed at the University, only 3.6% are Asian, 0.005% are Black, 0.07% are Indian, and 0.007% are Hispanic. The University's minority employment rate does not look good when compared to other Big Ten colleges. The Committee suggests the following recommendations:

1. The University needs to establish a highly visible program for hiring and retaining minority faculty, especially Blacks and Hispanics. Five new faculty should be hired each year for the next four years and the University should create an endowed chair for minority faculty.
2. Retention should be strengthened through promotion and tenure of minority faculty. The University should recognize the scholarship of minority faculty and create mechanisms that enhance minority careers.
3. UMM has a problem keeping minority faculty. Should Master's prepared faculty be given leave to get PhD degrees?

4. A mechanism for developing a centralized perspective is needed. The Office of Provost of Academic Affairs should assume the principle responsibility for recruitment and retention of students and faculty and oversee planning efforts, developing goals, monitoring progress and compliance, and assigning necessary personnel to meet the objectives. This could be a temporary five-year assignment.

John Clark thanked Professor Taborn for his excellent summary and said SCEP looked forward to receiving the final report. Because of time constraints, a very brief question and answer session followed.