

Minutes

Senate Consultative Committee May 30, 1991

Present: Warren Ibele (chair), W. Andrew Collins, Amos Deinard, Paul Holm, Norman Kerr, K. Darby Laing, Karen Seashore Louis, Aric Nissen, Kim Retzlaff, Thomas Scott, Burton Shapiro, Charlotte Striebel, Erin Sutter, Jim Swick, Tina Tidrick, Shawn Towle, James VanAlstine, Shirley Zimmerman

Guests: Associate Vice President Edward Foster, Geoff Gorvin (Footnote), Vice Provost Anne Hopkins, Professor Thomas Huntley (UMD Medical School), Patricia Kovel-Jarboe (Academic Affairs), Maureen Smith (Brief), others

1. Report on Progress on the Undergraduate Initiative

Professor Ibele began the meeting by welcoming Vice Provost Anne Hopkins to provide a progress report on the Undergraduate Initiative.

Dr. Hopkins distributed copies of a written progress report and noted that there are a number of questions, posed by the President, which the Initiative is trying to answer.

The first set of questions is who our students should be, how they should be recruited to the University, and how will it be possible to make them attend and graduate. There are two important activities in this area. First, there is a dispersed system of recruiting and admissions; there is a central office as well as offices in the freshman-admitting colleges. A group is currently reviewing both the central and the collegiate offices; the report of the group is due in June. It should serve as the basis for developing an actual recruitment plan which will rationalize what the college and central offices should each do. Second, future questions about what the enrollment policy of the University should be need to be addressed. At present there is a cap, on the basis of the agreement with the legislature; that agreement expires in another year. The arrangements for the future need to be discussed with the legislature next year.

One substantial success is the implementation of the Common Entry Point, for students entering this Fall, and the procedure by which the University will handle preparation requirements. About 75% of the students who have been admitted have met all of the preparation requirements; most of the remainder are only missing one. There are differences among the colleges on this score.

There have been a series of reports, and more are coming, about efforts to recruit students of color; they are under review for implementation. Some of the proposals will be supported in the 1991-92 budget.

The second question is what the undergraduate curriculum should be like. The most important element of the answer for the Twin Cities campus is the report of the Task Force on Liberal Education, which has been adopted by the Assembly; Academic Affairs will now implement the recommendations, in stages. In addition, a number of colleges are making significant curricular revisions; Dr. Hopkins explained, by way of example, the plans IT has made.

The third question is about how to provide advising and counseling. The Task Force report called for a comprehensive plan; her office, she told the Committee, has already prepared such a plan. It has taken her a year to understand advising at the University, she said; her sense is that, apart from what occurs in the classroom, there is nothing more important to be sorted out because it has a major

impact on student success. In cooperation with the Senate Committee on Educational Policy, she has appointed a committee to provide advice on advising: There exists a series of reports on advising which have sat on the shelf but which contain a wealth of information. In addition, no one has said a great deal about what the faculty role in advising should be. The committee will be asked to look at the reports and identify, in a quick way, what the University should do. It will also address, in a general way, what the role of faculty in advising ought to be. The committee has been asked to report this summer. She has funds available (about \$500,000) for advising but has not distributed it on a recurring basis because she is not convinced that the colleges have identified useful ways to spend it. The problem is important enough that the maximum impact can be achieved with the dollars available.

Other items related to this same question include the academic progress audit system, a computerized program that will be available to students and faculty: One can call up the student's record and "play out hypothetical majors"--that is, if one is a political science major but wants to consider being a sociology major, the program will automatically list the course requirements for the student. When fully operational it should permit faculty members to be much more effective advisors.

The fourth question raised by the President is how to ensure quality teaching. This is a difficult question and the University is not as far along in answering it as it perhaps should be. There are recognition programs for teaching, and teaching is incorporated as a criterion for promotion and tenure decisions, but more can be done. Dr. Hopkins told the Committee, however, that she was impressed by how seriously teaching was taken as she read through the P&T papers from five colleges.

There is not much in the way of a teaching evaluation policy at the University, she observed. The Senate Committee on Educational Policy started this year to discuss strengthening the policy, and that should continue. The University is doing well in increasing the quality of programs for teaching assistants. There has also been a program of improving the quality of large classes, which she said she hoped would be able to continue. This entire issue does need additional attention.

The fifth question is how to provide a good learning environment. There are a number of ways to think about this issue, Dr. Hopkins commented; one way is to attend to the quality of classrooms and study spaces. Over the past three years classrooms have been improved; that program will continue. Inasmuch as most students do not live on campus, they need places to study and to sit and talk; the University is doing better on study spaces but the entire effort will probably take 10 to 15 years to get the appropriate amount and quality of space.

One casualty of the legislative process was the special appropriation of \$3 million for instructional equipment; the University had hoped to make it recurring. There will be trouble in funding instructional equipment next year.

One must get into class to have a learning environment; one of the first things she did when she arrived, Dr. Hopkins recalled, was to try to increase the availability of 1-XXX and 3-XXX courses, primarily general education courses. Now it is time to determine if there was any impact on the closure rates of classes. There were more seats and sections, but it is not known is how much of the problem was addressed.

Treatment of students is another issue--whether the University hassles or helps them. This subject consists of a wide range of practices; there are certain things the University does which appear to be "just plain hassles." Plans about several of them are being made and they will gradually be attacked.

Also being considered is the question of computerized facilities for instruction. President Hasselmo is interested in the University using different teaching strategies and technologies, broadly defined; Dr. Hopkins commented that she has been unhappy about the availability and fee structure for the use of computers. A proposal has been made (although temporarily on hold) which would have every student pay fees so that a wide range of computer facilities would be available for instruction at no individual charge. At present there is a disincentive to develop computer-based or computer-reliant instruction because each student must pay additional fees and because students cannot get access to the equipment they need.

The sixth question from the President has to do with creating a sense of community, which is the most elusive objective. It is an area that Vice President Hughes is pursuing.

The last question is how the University will know it is improving. There are clear indicators that there are problems; the retention and graduation rates are very troubling. These are two of the indicators which will be used to gauge the changes. A survey is also being conducted among currently enrolled students; while there are limits on their usefulness, surveys can be effectively used as diagnostic tools--big trouble spots can be identified. If data can be provided by collegiate unit--which this one will permit--the colleges can develop plans to make changes and monitor the results. The survey will be repeated annually so that one can see changes.

One of the riders in the legislative appropriation requires that the University must submit a plan for improvement and measurement thereof. Dr. Hopkins said she and others will spend time this summer developing a response to the requirement. Something more could be done, along this line, with accreditation reviews; the University does not use these reviews in an institutional way to evaluate how it is doing.

Dr. Hopkins was asked what will be the implications, if any, of the new admissions standards at the State Universities for the University. She said that their new preparation requirements are of most interest; they will, in four years, have a set of requirements which are not precisely the same as the University's. There have been discussions with the State University System about developing a common set of requirements; such an outcome would certainly be desirable because it would reduce confusion among students and the impact on the high schools would be maximized. These new State University standards, she told the Committee, are the means that system is using to control enrollment.

Will this mean that some high school graduates cannot get into higher education anywhere? More likely, Dr. Hopkins said, is elimination of the notion that one has access at all times at any place on a drop-in basis. That is not really access anyway, she observed, because programs are overloaded and instruction has not been as good as it could be. These enrollment caps are not low but they should encourage more orderliness in dropping in and out of school. There is, in addition, room for growth in the community and technical colleges. But the State will need to face the issue of what access means and who should be able to go where and for how long; no one has addressed these issues yet. Taking the appropriations bill and all of its riders, it does appear to be the right climate for changing admissions standards or institutional size; the emphasis is on these factors rather than access.

That will likely turn around, one Committee member observed, if it turns out that there are high school graduates who cannot get into a school. Dr. Hopkins observed that there are large numbers of college students who are not new high school graduates; the chance that there would not be room for new high school graduates who want to go to college is very remote.

Dr. Hopkins was asked if it would be possible, for the purposes of advising and counseling, to

break down the very large collegiate units into smaller groups--given the diversity of students in those units. She said that advising during the first two years can be somewhat generic; it will not vary a great deal, in a college like CLA, no matter what the program the student wants to pursue. Moreover, the units are so different that no single model is appropriate. What has occurred is that colleges and departments have adopted practices they believe best--and these practices are widely divergent. The concern is whether or not they are effective--are students helped? That is difficult to ascertain, but what the University needs to be sure about is that any unit--department, division, or college--thinks about a wide range of options for advising and integrating the options.

In response to a question, Dr. Hopkins said that the University does not use "race norming" of test scores for the purposes of admissions and is thus not at legal risk for doing so. She reviewed briefly for the Committee the admissions process used by the University.

Dr. Hopkins was asked about the retention of students who took a full-time load and whether or not additional research on the question is being conducted. There is much research which demonstrates that one of the key factors in student success, she said, is their commitment to their education--and one of the key indicators of that commitment is the number of hours they take. It is this factor which is behind some of the changes being made in IT--they are trying to get students to take greater loads. One thing that surprised her was the average credit loads that students at Minnesota take. She was told, by a group of very bright honors students, that they never take more than 12 hours; one of them had to work, so could not take more, but the others just didn't bother--when they came to the University they were advised to take 12 credits because that is a full load. That, Dr. Hopkins commented, is not a full load; it is a minimum load to be a full-time student and will not lead to graduation in four years. There are those who are legitimately part-time students, who have other obligations and who need to work. But there are students who could push themselves to proceed with their academic work; it is certainly a better experience to do more of it at a time.

Who is responsible for encouraging students to take greater loads? The advisors? Or are students concerned about their GPA so take a lighter load to ensure their success? Dr. Hopkins said that one disturbing characteristic of the University is that no one is responsible for setting a policy of what students should do. She agreed that it is probably partly her job, but also the job of the Senate, the Senate Committee on Educational Policy, the Council of Undergraduate Deans. It may be that no one has paid any attention to it. She reported that in a meeting with professional advisors, on this subject she bluntly disagreed on what a beginning freshman should be advised: They said 12 hours is enough for any freshman; she told them 12 hours should be the advice given to someone who might have trouble in college or who has to work a lot. A good high school student should be taken 15 - 18 hours per quarter. Since that meeting, Dr. Hopkins told the Committee, she has talked to the deans; different directions may now be formulated. This is perhaps a "culture" issue which needs to be addressed. The possible impact of tuition "banding" was also touched upon.

The State's financial aid program, she also told the Committee, now will no longer support a student after 180 hours and a minimum load will be 15 hours. This is a good idea, and additional incentives like it are needed, but some students will be hurt by the change.

One Committee member inquired if there will be more concrete goals established for any of the issues Dr. Hopkins mentioned. The objectives remain very general. Does the University know where it wants to be in five years on graduation and retention rates? It would be possible to be much more specific in almost all of the areas, it was said--and unless the University is more specific, the changes will not happen. There must be more than just monitoring, it was argued; there needs to be a standard against which the monitoring takes place. Dr. Hopkins said that in some areas targets can be set, but

some of the changes must come in process--the nature of students' lives and what affects their ability to succeed may not be definable in terms of outcomes. She agreed that measurable progress should be made but expressed reservations about setting targets when the items which can be measured may not be the most important elements of quality in education. The things that faculty members most want to know--such as how much students learn--probably cannot be measured. The average credit load, by comparison, should show measurable change if the right incentives are instituted and students are taught to take more hours.

Part of the problem, Dr. Hopkins agreed, may be the 5-credit courses. Most curricular requirements are stated in terms of classes rather than credits; as colleges reduce the number of 5-credit courses, the University must be sure that students take more classes--otherwise the average number of credit hours taken may decline further. There is considerable variability in classes, one Committee member cautioned; there are 5-credit courses which are "easy" and 3-credit courses which are a lot of work. In this vein, Committee members discussed with Dr. Hopkins the reasons that students on average take well over 200 credits before graduating.

Dr. Hopkins agreed with an observation that course offerings do not correspond with the classes listed in the bulletins. The bulletins need to be pared down and the class schedules need to be improved so it is easier for students to identify courses they want.

Dr. Hopkins asked that the Committee let her know what its views on priorities should be; there are so many things to be done all at once and some guidance in choosing which should be done first would be welcome.

Professor Ibele thanked Dr. Hopkins for her report.

2. Progress on Restructuring and Reallocation

Professor Ibele next welcomed Associate Vice President Foster and Ms. Patricia Kovel-Jarboe to the meeting to discuss progress on the Restructuring and Reallocation plan. Ms. Kovel-Jarboe, Dr. Foster explained, is the coordinator of the restructuring and reallocation process in areas of funding cuts and transfers of individuals both within and without the University.

The Board of Regents has asked to be informed, as the budget is set, about what is being accomplished in reallocation as well as what the schedule will be for the full 5-year period. Dr. Foster distributed a summary sheet of the planned schedule and explained the numbers to the Committee.

How fast is the reallocation being scheduled, and money directed to high-priority programs? The University is about on target the first year; about \$4.5 million (of a projected total of \$20 million) in cash is being generated. The amount increases during the second year (primarily because no funds are expected to be freed up from the Waseca campus in the first year). The amounts then taper off slightly during the third to fifth years.

The reallocated funds, Dr. Foster said in response to a question, are being protected from the budget adjustments that will be required by the reduced legislative appropriation. Other funds will be identified to meet the budget reductions. Some units will receive reallocated funds but will also have to make cuts in the new budget. They are distinct, however, in that programmatic choices must be made by the colleges. Deans will be in trouble if they propose to give up some reallocated funds in order to meet 1991-92 budget reductions; the reallocated funds have been identified for high-priority uses. Cuts imposed for the 1991-92 budget will have to come from lower priorities.

Decisions about the 1991-92 budget, and cuts, will be presented to the Regents in June and July--assuming that the Governor signs the higher education bill.

One Committee member inquired when information about the internal college reallocations--which may be more critical than the transfers of funds among units--will be available. Colleges which have lost money, it was observed, "are willing to bleed for the greater good, but there is deep skepticism that the greater good will actually be carried out in the internal reallocation plans." Dr. Foster said he did not know when additional information will be available. The administration is sensitive to the issue, however; it has asked the college units, in budget hearings, to provide details on implementation of the plans. Whether or not what the colleges submitted to the academic vice presidents is sufficient to answer the question is not clear, but the administration, like the Committee, wants to be sure that the plans are carried out. Other Committee members agreed that this is an important issue and that the integrity of the process will depend on the fidelity of the colleges in carrying out the plans and in making the information available. It is also important, it was pointed out, that not only this Committee know, but that the faculty and students of the University know what is being accomplished. Dr. Foster agreed to follow up on the question.

Ms. Kovel-Jarboe next informed the Committee that there are two teams working on reallocation-related issues: a Waseca Transition Advisory group and a Technical Assistance Committee, the latter of which is working on system-wide issues. Both groups are charged with ensuring consistency in interpretation and application of policy that will be invoked for unit closings and other aspects of reallocation. The big issues being dealt with right now include voluntary termination for Waseca employees, unit options for timing of implementation, termination of obligations to students, facilities and equipment issues, and communication of information about reallocation.

The Waseca group consists of individuals both from the Twin Cities and Waseca campuses to make joint decisions and apply policy on the voluntary termination package. It is also working on "critical functions" that will have to be maintained until the day the campus closes and the personnel implications of those decisions.

Will any of the Waseca tenured faculty try to find homes on other campuses? Some ad hoc steps are being taken, Ms. Kovel-Jarboe said, where specific Waseca faculty have identified or have an interest in a college or department. There will need to be attention given to a process for effecting those transfers, although they will not include everyone. The issue will have to be examined after the voluntary termination package has been made available, when there will be a better sense of the number of people involved. Associate Vice President Carrier has met with all of the tenured Waseca faculty, so some information has been collected.

Professor Ibele thanked Dr. Foster and Ms. Kovel-Jarboe for joining the meeting.

3. Motion on Seating a Duluth Faculty Representative

Professor Ibele next introduced Professor Thomas Huntley, from the Duluth Medical School, and explained that there had been correspondence with Professor Huntley about the "Duluth seat" on the Faculty Consultative Committee.

Ms. Laing then moved "to seat the Duluth elected representative to the vacant seat on this Committee." Professor Ibele ruled the motion out of order. He explained that he has written to General Counsel Surell Brady about interpretations of the Senate constitution and that it would be

premature to act in advance of Ms. Brady's advice. In the meantime, however, Professor Huntley has been invited to attend the meetings as an observer.

Another Committee member then moved to invite Professor Huntley to participate in the discussions, and to seat him at the table, but not to permit him to vote; the motion was seconded. Asked if the motion could be linked to whatever advice Ms. Brady might tender, Professor Ibele explained that that would depend on the nature of the advice. If Ms. Brady advises that the issue will have to be decided by the Senate, the Committee will have to defer to its parent body. At the request of Ms. Laing, Professor Huntley was asked to speak to this second motion; he told the Committee that he would have asked that the ruling of the chair be appealed. **On vote taken, the motion was unanimously approved.** Professor Ibele invited Professor Huntley to join the Committee; he responded that the motion adopted was unacceptable and left the meeting.

4. Senate Policy on Ratio of Class Hours to Credits

Professor Ibele recalled for the Committee that the Senate had adopted a policy calling for (at least) a one-to-one ratio between weekly contact hours and credits for a course; it was then forwarded to the administration for implementation. Associate Vice President Kvavik has now sought guidance from the Committee on one particular question: Should a long reading list substitute for class meeting time? While it may be an understandable policy, it would be impossible to administer, and Dr. Kvavik seeks an interpretation of the policy.

Committee members discussed the history of the change from a 3- to a 4-credit course module in the early 1970s, the extent to which departments adhered (or did not adhere) to the rationale for the change, the reason for the Senate policy, and the merits and drawbacks to lengthy reading lists. It concluded that the question should be referred back to the Senate Committee on Educational Policy inasmuch as it was the body which drafted the policy in the first place.

5. Draft Report of the ad hoc Ombuds Committee

Professor Ibele next turned to Professor Striebel for the draft report of the ad hoc Ombuds committee. Professor Striebel explained that the ad hoc committee had been appointed last Spring and had met almost continuously during the year; she commended committee members for their hard work. The report is being circulated to individuals who would be involved in the changes; she said the committee would welcome any comments on it.

Professor Striebel then described the contents of the report. The first section describes the dispute resolution models available at the University, which include litigation (in the grievance policy), mediation (available through a number of offices, some informal), and ombuds (in the Student Ombuds Service (SOS), the EEO office, and External Relations).

The purpose of the report was to design a structure and function for an expanded ombuds service that would not change radically any existing service but that would fill in the gaps. There are a number of constituents, and types of disputes, for which there is no ombuds service available. The report also tried to structure services so that there is less overlap and more organization in the approach to disputes.

The structure the report proposes is essentially a committee. The committee wanted to have a number of people involved in the ombuds function, and since there will not be several full-time equivalent positions available, it recommends a total of seven .2 to .4 FTEs to represent the seven

identified constituents. It also calls for an advisory board to oversee the entire dispute resolution function.

There would be an ombudsperson to serve as the intake point for all grievances. The dispute would then be sent to the appropriate track (the SOS, EEO, or the new ombuds service--"Staff and Community Ombuds Service"). Thereafter an ombudsperson would be assigned to the dispute and would follow it through to a conclusion. The first thing the ombudsperson does is collect information from the complainant and the respondent and identify those facts which are agreed to and those which are in dispute; the ombudsperson then tries to settle the dispute. Once the facts are developed by a neutral third party, and the individuals see what the dispute looks like to a third party, they can often settle it on their own. If that does not work, the ombudsperson may attempt mediation or may refer the dispute to a mediation service. If all of these voluntary steps fail, or one of the parties is not interested in them, the dispute can go directly to the grievance system and handled in accord with its procedures.

A few minor changes would be required to eliminate service overlaps which have developed in an attempt to fill in the gaps.

Is there any plan for letting the constituencies know of the service, Professor Striebel was asked; she said that advertising would be required, once the system were in place. This is always a big problem, she noted.

The staff the report calls for, Professor Striebel clarified, would be drawn from current staff members who have other responsibilities, some from the existing dispute resolution offices who would be expected to redirect their efforts to the new function.

What would the faculty ombuds person do, Professor Striebel was asked--what kind of issue would come to that person rather than go to the grievance procedure? There would be very little difference from what happens at present, she said; faculty matters are usually employment disputes. An ombudsperson, however, would have more options available than she does as University Grievance Officer; rather than sending the dispute directly into a litigation model (as she does as Grievance Officer), the ombudsperson could make a greater effort at the outset to get it resolved. This would permit many disputes to be settled on an informal basis. She explained the steps a faculty member would take if he or she has a dispute.

What additional staff would be required to put the system into effect, Professor Striebel was asked; she estimated that it would require perhaps 2 or 2.5 FTEs. This might be compensated for by a cutback in existing functions. This would be approximately \$100,000, it was said; another Committee inquired where the money might come from. One possibility, she said, would be to do away with the University Grievance Officer, because many of its intake responsibilities would be performed by the ombuds service. It might also be possible to reduce the Faculty Assistance Officer function, for the same reason.

These things may not happen, however, Professor Striebel explained, because the University Attorney's Office is getting involved in every grievance that arises--which means that someone must provide an attorney for the other side as well. One Committee member said he thought the grievance procedure was written to parallel the Judicial Committee procedure: the University Attorney would become involved only if the other side brought in an attorney. Professor Striebel said that provision was written into the grievance policy only as a recommendation; the Attorney's Office is routinely getting involved whether or not the other side has a lawyer. Several Committee members expressed

dismay at this development.

In response to a question, Professor Striebel explained that the Student Legal Service is unaffected by the report because they do not become involved in any internal University disputes.

Professor Striebel told the Committee that she was unable to identify any trends in grievances and disputes because the previous system included no central bookkeeping--there are no records for earlier years.

Asked how the grievance procedure is going generally, she told the Committee that the vast majority of the (about 30) cases settled early; two have gone to hearings. She said she has had excellent cooperation from the University in dealing with grievances; deadlines have been met and Academic Affairs--which has a number of steps to perform in the process--has responded promptly. The disputes themselves are of various kinds.

A final report will be prepared after additional consultation, Professor Striebel told the Committee.

6. Representation in the Senate

The Committee next took up a proposal from the Student Senate Consultative Committee to appoint a task force to consider issues of representation in the University Senate. The Committee agreed to refer the issues to the Committee on Committees with a request that recommendations be prepared before the student elections next Spring. It was agreed that the Committee on Committees should explicitly be charged to ensure adequate representation of constituencies as it considered the issues and that it should provide interim reports to the Consultative Committee as it conducts the review.

7. Report of the Student Senate Consultative Committee

Ms. Tidrick asked that if the Faculty Consultative Committee meets during the summer (which it does only at the call of the chair), that a full Senate Consultative Committee meeting also be held. She also informed the Committee that there will be a retreat in late summer for students so that they are better prepared to join in the work of the Committee in the Fall.

Three of the student members of the Committee for 1991-92 were also introduced.

The Committee adjourned at 3:00.

-- Gary Engstrand