

Minutes\*

**Senate Consultative Committee  
Thursday, January 21, 2010  
3:00 – 4:30  
Room 238A Morrill Hall**

Present: Marti Hope Gonzales, (chair), Jeffrey Anderson, Nancy Carpenter, Christopher Cramer, Carol Chomsky, Will Craig, Shawn Curley, Andrew Heairet, Walt Jacobs, Karen Lovro, Russell Luepker, Jan McCulloch, Andrew Smith, Francis Strahan, Greg Summers, Kathryn VandenBosch, Sarah Waldemar, Becky Yust

Absent: Janet Fitzakerley, Manjari Govada, Emily Hoover, Kathy Julik-Heine, Jeffrey Kahn, Jonathan Lundberg, Michael Oakes, Cathrine Wambach

Guests: none

Others: none

[In these minutes: (1) statement on space use and cost; (2) flow charts; (3) University Senate docket; (4) student seat allocation in the University Senate]

**1. Statement from the Committee on Finance and Planning**

Professor Gonzales convened the meeting at 3:05 and turned to Professor Luepker to lead a discussion of a statement on space use and cost from the Committee on Finance and Planning (SCFP).

Professor Luepker related that SCFP has been talking regularly about the physical plant of the University and related issues with University Services Vice President O'Brien and her colleagues. The University has 28-29 million square feet of space—some would say that is more than it needs—and it is costly to run and maintain. SCFP has been made aware of both the environmental issues as well as the cost, and they are not trivial issues, so it asked University Services (Facilities Management in particular) for suggestions about what it would like advice on. SCFP was provided five questions and developed comments on them.

1. On the issue of energy costs, SCFP believes that some buildings can be closed and locked outside of normal business hours, and "turned down" (i.e., the lights turned off and the heat turned down); they recognize that some need to be lit and heated all the time (e.g., those with animals, lab experiments, etc.) and that there is a need for faculty and student work places during some non-business hours. SCFP has asked University Services to draft a memo setting standards and criteria for making judgments about "turning down" buildings. SCFP would not propose to deny access to buildings at times they are "turned down," but do not believe that the lights and heat should be on for an entire building because one or a few people want to work during non-business hours.

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\* 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.

2. In terms of building buildings, SCFP learned the University has a lot of square footage because it rarely tears anything down. SCFP was asked to think about purposeful building (e.g., for classrooms). It agreed that buildings devoted to lecture classrooms would be desirable but that other buildings that include labs, faculty offices, and seminar rooms should continue to be built.
3. Another question raised issues related to class schedules. Many like to have classes between 10:00 and 3:00 Monday to Thursday, the most intensive period of classroom use. Outside those times, it is less difficult to find an empty classroom. One point of discussion was whether units should be penalized or taxed if they seek to schedule too many classes during the 10:00 – 3:00 period. SCFP has asked for data about classroom use before it reaches any conclusions or makes any recommendations.
4. SCFP was also asked about flexible office space. Professor Luepker related the story of a colleague who left the University and went to a corporation as a vice president; he only had a basket that he wheeled into empty offices. As the University thinks about new buildings, there will be traditional offices for faculty and for certain staff, but it does need to consider more conformable office space.
5. The University needs to look harder at what it has and use it better—and not just classrooms, but all facilities.

The intent is that the statement would be brought to the University Senate for action. SCFP felt that Facilities Management needed support in its efforts to use space more efficiently and to protect the environment by using fewer resources.

Professor McCulloch said that if there is to be centralized scheduling of classrooms, there needs to be software that is flexible enough to give advance notification; her department lost \$70-80,000 in tuition revenue because it was told it had lost use of a big classroom two days before classes began. There is need for feedback on the ground from departments, and the schedule must be flexible enough to allow departments to make decisions. Professor Luepker agreed.

Ms. Waldemar agreed that the University needs to develop better scheduling ability, because units may not learn whether they can use a facility until 5-6 days before an event. There also needs to be better description of space available; the descriptions sometimes do not match reality. Finally, she said, there needs to be more consideration of space-sharing, given the ability of many people to work from home. Many people do so, although it is not clear that their offices always formally endorse it.

Another problem, Dr. Craig said, is that if one wants to schedule a room, it is difficult to find out who controls it. That problem must be solved. Rooms can be listed by location with an indication of who to contact to schedule it. Professor Luepker agreed there is need for a catalogue of spaces.

Professor Yust said that the Office of Classroom Management (OCM) has centrally-scheduled classrooms, departmentally-scheduled rooms, and hidden rooms. To find a room in McNeal Hall, one must go to three different sources of data. She reported that she had written to Professor Luepker about charging units if they schedule during peak hours and cited an example from her department illustrating that there is no recognition of departmental experience. It seems mutually exclusive to recommend "turning down" buildings at night and also insisting departments schedule outside the 10:00 – 3:00 period. There is also a problem with the rule that classes cannot be scheduled in a room more than 10% larger than the room it was scheduled in the previous term; classes can increase in size dramatically for a

number of reasons. If one uses a room scheduled by OCM, 16% of the usage must be on a Friday—so OCM is deciding how to teach content, which seems backward. Professor Luepker reported that SCFP had talked about control and concluded that not all space should be centrally controlled, but that there should be discussions about developing flexibility.

Professor McCulloch asked what "turn down" a building means. Professor Luepker said it means turning the heat/AC down to a standard temperature and the lights off—which is different from locking up a building. Professor McCulloch observed she is in an old building with a cold office; if she must go in on the weekend, she will just need to get a space heater. If everyone uses a space heater, the circuit breakers will break. People will not work in a building set at 50 degrees with gloves on. Professor Luepker said there is a need for general rules but accommodations must be made. They want to support facilities and want a voice in the decisions.

Professor Curley asked about the process and the role of this Committee. Is the Senate to be expected to act on it? This is only a first step, Professor Luepker said. There is a problem; SCFP wants to help fix it and wants information and consultation as part of the process. This commits the Senate and committee to the principle of looking into solutions. Professor Curley said that if this Committee is to endorse the statement, he would like to see a set of principles or recommendations; right now it is not clear what the Committee or the vice presidents desire.

Professor VandenBosch commented, apropos of classrooms, that the way of teaching is changing. There are more hybrid courses and more interactive classrooms, and it is necessary to bring changes in pedagogy into line with changes in space utilization. There needs to be a discussion on how space is used, and not just with the people responsible for space management. Professor Luepker said that SCFP did not discuss educational changes and agreed they need to be considered in weighing what is required in a building.

Professor Yust said that buildings need a designated room for new mothers to express milk. A lack of one creates a lot of stress for new mothers.

One of the larger inefficiencies in universities is summer, Professor Cramer observed. In Florida, universities are required to use their buildings as much in the summer as at other times. It would be possible to shut down buildings in the summer; he added that he is not advocating a summer semester.

Professor Chomsky agreed with Professor Curley in encouraging the development of a set of principles to bring to the Senate, sharpened so that Senators can sign on. There needs to be a balance between efficiency and accommodating needs. To have faculty, staff, and students see and own a problem, the Committee should come with a resolution that puts people on the spot.

Professor Yust said that historically departments/colleges were sole users of buildings; the University is moving away from that situation. It would be a good idea to establish the principles by which buildings are utilized.

Professor Luepker agreed to return to SCC with a set of principles to be brought to a meeting of the University Senate this spring.

## **2. Flow Charts**

Professor Gonzales asked Committee members to review the flow chart for non-educational policies. The idea, she said, is to help move policy changes more efficiently through the system.

### **3. University Senate Docket**

Professor Gonzales reviewed the items on the draft University Senate docket and reported that the Faculty Consultative Committee had cancelled the Faculty Senate meetings because of a lack of business.

The Committee voted unanimously to cancel the University Senate meeting because of a lack of business.

### **4. Student Seat Allocation in the University Senate**

Mr. Heairet reported that the students are considering adjusting the allocation of student seats in the University Senate to accommodate representation from the Rochester campus. They would consider expanding the number of Student Senate Consultative Committee members to 11. He asked if there would be objection to increasing the number of students in the Senate by one, increasing the total number of Senate members from 278 to 279.

Mr. Strahan said that seems reasonable; other Committee members did not disagree. Professor Chomsky said that another possibility would be that a student from Rochester could be an ex officio member of the Student Senate Consultative Committee, rather than voting (as is the case with the faculty member from the Duluth Medical School on the Faculty Consultative Committee).

Mr. Heairet said he would develop a proposal.

Professor Gonzales adjourned the meeting at 4:00.

-- Gary Engstrand