

ACADEMIC HEALTH CENTER FACULTY ASSEMBLY

Thursday, January 28, 1999

Minutes of the Meeting

These minutes reflect discussion and debate at a meeting of a committee of the University of Minnesota Academic Health Center; none of the comments, conclusions, or actions reported in these minutes reflect the views of, nor are they binding on, the Administration or the Board of Regents.

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The Academic Health Center Faculty Assembly is composed of members of the AHC Faculty Consultative Committee and elected faculty and academic professional representatives of the AHC's constituent colleges and schools who are members of the University Senate. At any regular or special meeting of the Assembly, a majority of its members shall constitute a quorum.

Senior Vice President Frank Cerra called the meeting to order at 12:00 noon.

I. The minutes of the November 6, 1998, meeting were approved.

II. Consultative Update within the AHC

AHC FCC Consultative Effectiveness

Dr. Cerra introduced the topic of consultation and decision-making, which has been an area of concern. In an effort to improve communication about the consultative process and its effectiveness, he had prepared a handout listing the consultation given and the outcome on three different issues that were of interest to the Assembly. The first of these was the AHC Research Grant Process. At a recent meeting, the AHC FCC had suggested that the Faculty Assembly recommend the core review team. Dr. Cerra asked the members to think about this proposal. The second item was the comprehensive review of senior administrators, which dealt with the composition and selection process of the review committee, and mechanisms for ensuring clear faculty input. The public report is now available from Dr. Cerra's office. The final item was the University Biennial Request, which involved a review and critique of the health professional education component. Most of the suggestions on this item had been incorporated. Dr. Cerra stated that for each meeting of the this Assembly, he would draw up a full report on AHC FCC consultation following the format of the handout.

Enhancing the Consultative Process

Next, Dr. Cerra referred members to a diagram representing communication within the governance and the administrative structures. He felt that it was working well at the University and AHC levels, but that communication deteriorated between the school, department, and faculty levels. He reported that, on a horizontal spectrum, some schools had a very strong consulting mechanism while others had none at all. He asked the Assembly to confront this problem, and he presented a list of things that could be done to improve bi-directional communication. At the AHC level, this included:

- having the SVPHS create and update a project list that is available to all
- assuring that minutes of the AHC FCC and Assembly are on the web site
- providing a review of the effectiveness of consulting (as discussed previously)
- and assuring that the Deans Council agenda and minutes are on the web site.

At the school and department level, this included

- requiring each school to develop and implement a communication plan that penetrates to the faculty
- requiring each school to develop and implement a mutually agreed upon consultation mechanism
- providing accountability via compact and annual review of administrative performance at the dean and department/division head level
- holding workshops on consultation
- having the Deans attend the Faculty Assembly

AHC FCC Chair's Comments

Muriel Bebeau, Chair of the AHC FCC, received feedback from faculty indicating that they were unaware of consultation that had been provided by the AHC FCC. As Chair, she hoped to enhance the perception of an effective consultative process. She also asked each school's representative to communicate more directly with their unit about concerns within the school that the AHC FCC should be aware of. One member raised the issue of compacts, which had been a concern in many of the schools, and the fact that faculty input always seems to be sought at the last minute. Dr. Bebeau agreed that the AHC FCC should develop a more timely project list. She stressed that the AHC FCC must improve communication with the faculty in order that the AHC FCC be aware of the many perspectives on each issue for which it provides consultation.

Discussion

One member voiced concerns about the lack of communication between governance and clinical departments, and the lack of incentive for faculty engagement in the consultative process. Professor Bebeau responded that one representative may not be able to engage all the faculty in a unit as large as clinical science. This raises the need to examine how effective the consultative process is within the schools, and whether some of the consultation should be happening at the department or deans' level, she said. Dr. Cerra pointed out that the Deans Council has never discussed an issue that originated at the faculty level, which highlights a problem in the communication mechanisms within the school. It was suggested that the Deans may not know how to get that information, or that they may be choosing not to bring such issues to Dr. Cerra. Professor Bebeau felt that part of the AHC FCC's responsibility is to ensure that these faculty concerns reach the Deans. Another member agreed with the position that the Deans may not be aware of the issues, and that part of the problem is that faculty are not adequately represented in consultations with the department heads. She also felt that there should be a means outside of the structure for faculty to give input in a confidential manner. Professor Bebeau mentioned that the use of e-mailed surveys had come up in the AHC FCC, but that they may be ignored given the high volume of e-mail that faculty receive.

Professor Bebeau explained that, as a first step in improving the upward flow of information, AHC FCC representatives will communicate more directly with faculty from their units. Secondly, the minutes of the AHC FCC meetings will be published on the web and emailed to all AHC faculty. Finally, excerpts of the minutes of the AHC FCC meetings will appear in Capsule. She added that when the advice of the AHC FCC is not taken, an explanation should be provided so that effective debate on the issue can continue. Professor Bebeau referred members to a handout on the six elements for improving "The Process of Consultation". She reported that Sara Evans (FCC Chair), Fred Morrison (FCC Vice Chair), Dr. Cerra and she had agreed that the next step would be to design a training workshop on consultation for deans, department heads and faculty representatives from each college/school.

One member expressed a strong belief in the role of departments as a locus for filtering and emphasizing certain points of view. Dr. Cerra then raised the question of how an individual can best express his or her opinion in a confidential manner. One member felt that the current practice of e-mailing Dr. Cerra directly was working well. One member added that communication of faculty concerns should occur on three levels: through the department heads, the FCC representatives, and e-mail to Dr. Cerra. Another returned to the idea of having an annual survey to help identify important issues among the faculty. It was recognized that surveys require a great deal of work. Professor Bebeau noted that the Faculty Affairs Committee will continue to explore effective ways to get faculty insight. It was said that faculty have been asked to provide consultation on issues (such as retirement) that are never acted on, though another pointed out that in the case of retirement, the debate was faculty driven. Dr. Cerra reiterated that the AHC FCC effectiveness report, showing the recommendations and outcome for each issue, will help bring accountability to the consultation process. Determining whether an issue requires consultation can happen at several levels: department, school, FCC, Assembly, etc.

One member suggested that an annual survey be conducted within each department in conjunction with a performance evaluation of the department chair. Another member pointed out that in discussing the process of communication, there must be some consideration of what the actual issues are that need to be communicated. Another member added that consultation

is not only about communication between the different levels but also negotiation, which is often lacking. Another believed that the problem was not in the process but in the lack of faculty input in administrative decisions, particularly with regard to strategic planning. Dr. Cerra commented that in the compact process, bottom-up input had in fact played a role. This year, to further improve the process, he hopes to have the deans write compacts with each department. One member felt that faculty were not given enough time for adequate consultation on the legislative request. Dr. Cerra concurred that the process needs to be improved in this respect, but that the timeline is externally imposed. The legislature will respond to the request in late May, and the University's budget for 2000 is due in late June.

One member agreed with the previous comment on the central role of department heads in bringing faculty issues to the deans. To assure that faculty opinion gets communicated, surveys could be administered at the department level and tabulated by the AHC FCC representatives. Another member asked for clarification on how the compact is reviewed and what happens if a Dean does not fulfill the compact. She also suggested that compacts be written between department heads and individual faculty. Dr. Cerra responded that the deans' compensation is affected by the school's performance in three areas: the compact, finance, and research. He added that the AHC FCC plans to discuss ways to get effective faculty input in that evaluation process. The next step will be to define a portion of prospective compensation at risk.

Professor Bebeau concluded that the University was becoming more open to collaborative governance, and she encouraged members to share this information with faculty in their units.

III. Biennial Request to the Legislature on Health Professional Education

Dr. Cerra provided an update on the legislative request. He reported that all of the groups to whom it had been presented were supportive of the proposal. Likewise, the Governor's budget is generous in providing for the needs of the University. He also plans to create a \$350 million endowment from the tobacco money to support medical education while putting the remainder of tobacco money toward a community development program, public health, and the Medical Education and Research Fund. Roger Moe's bill is similar, with the tobacco money being put into long term instruments to support health.

IV. AHC Faculty Grants Update

Dr. Cerra announced that a group would be going to NIH on February 5 to follow up on the compliance plan. He commended Professor David Hamilton for his work on this project. The group will also finalize the model being implemented, and begin to discuss the criteria by which the NIH will evaluate the University to get off designation. The target for the site visit is Fall 1999.

Dr. Cerra referred to a list of changes made in the granting process. He clarified that the funding for the grant came from money contributed by each school (formerly called the SIPS Pool), and from half of the recurring \$2 million/year for new research and education projects. The other half of those funds went toward the development of interdisciplinary education in areas like geriatrics, primary care, and managed care.

He returned to the question of whether the Assembly would like to recommend the core review committee for research grants. If yes, he suggested that one member take responsibility for sending him a list of names. Professor Bebeau agreed to do this.

V. Question and Answer Session

The floor was opened for questions:

Q: Is the money for educational grants likely to go toward already existing initiatives?

A:

Dr. Cerra explained that there is a difference between the educational and research grant processes. The latter follows a traditional NIH-type model, whereas the educational grants are more focused on finding new, innovative ways to develop interdisciplinary education in certain areas and would not be used only for existing initiatives.

Q: Who is eligible for research grants?

A: Regular faculty only, not P&A.

Dr. Cerra announced that the small grants program continues this year. As a result of feedback from the last granting process, a new recruitment/retention/emergency fund was started with \$0.5 million, which would be matched by the deans if their school had a particular need. The deans responded favorably to this fund.

One member asked about the AHC's plans for strengthening its departments. Dr. Cerra said he was open to suggestions from the Assembly on that issue.

Dr. Cerra adjourned the meeting at 1:30 p.m.

- Anya Schwender -