

Minutes*

Faculty Consultative Committee
Thursday, December 1, 1994
10:00 - 12:00
Room 238 Morrill Hall

Present: John Adams (chair), Carl Adams, Thomas Burk, Sheila Corcoran-Perry, Dan Feeney, Virginia Gray, James Gremmels, Kenneth Heller, Roberta Humphreys, Morris Kleiner, Geoffrey Maruyama, Harvey Peterson, Michael Steffes, Gerhard Weiss

Regrets: Lester Drewes

Absent: Robert Jones

Guests: none

Others: Martha Kvanbeck (University Senate)

[In these minutes: Spousal hiring; size of administration; selection process for Regents and faculty participation therein; problems in faculty-administration relationships; vice presidential responsibilities; other miscellany]

[Correction: Professor Harvey Peterson's name has been inadvertently omitted from the list of those present at FCC meetings for the last several sets of minutes. He attended all of the meetings.]

1. A Number of Items From the Chair

Professor Adams convened the meeting at 10:00 and announced that the President was unable to join the meeting; he is recovering from minor surgery. Professor Adams related that he told the President to stay home and get well. There are a number of items that require discussion by the Committee, however; before proceeding to them, however, he recognized a member of the Committee.

ACADEMIC FREEDOM; SPOUSAL HIRING One Committee member drew attention to two recent events that bear attention. First, academic freedom is an issue right now at North Dakota State University, as it is in at least one unit at the University. Second, the Grand Forks police department has filed a \$350,000 lawsuit against the City Council and administration for eroding departmental morale, which may be among the first suits by one public entity against another because it was unhappy. That kind of litigation may bear watching.

There is also an issue of spousal hiring at the University, commented one Committee member. In one college, if someone is hired for a position and asks that a spouse be considered for a job, the credentials of the spouse are provided to the college promotion and tenure committee. If the individual

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passes muster, and if the department is willing to accept the individual, and the dean is willing to provide the funding, the appointment is made. But this practice sometimes works at cross-purposes with college or department plans; one is aware of instances where unit plans were thwarted because of such hires. There is much that is ad hoc about the process, and when 20 or 30 or more such hires are made, they are a cause for concern.

It was noted that there is a University-wide committee that must approve these exceptional appointments, and it has a considerable volume of business. There are any number of times when a spousal hire is made into a unit or program that is supposed to be reduced; the Committee should ask for a report on these hires.

It was agreed that data would be requested and that the issue would then be raised with Senior Vice President Infante.

SIZE OF ADMINISTRATION Another Committee member suggested that the Committee also request data on the number of administrators associated with the senior officers. Theoretically there were supposed to be the same number of administrators before and after the reorganization; with three new provosts and a number of vice presidents, however, that seems to be an unlikely result. The question should be asked: how much bureaucracy do the President, vice presidents, and provosts need to run the institution?

There are two issues at hand, said one member of the Committee. One, if one is thinking of the future, the President has repeatedly said that there will not be more people in the administration. This Committee, believing him, could ask him how he will ensure that that will be the case. Two, growth in the "administration" might be good or bad; some in a department would rather have three new secretaries than a new faculty position. Professor Carl Adams reported that the Compensation Working Group has requested data about the size of administrations at peer institutions; apparently there are recent data available that will at least give the University an idea of how it compares with others.

Professor Adams said he would talk with the President and with Mr. Berg, the Director of Management Planning and Information Services, about obtaining those data. Because the cost of compliance with regulations is often cited as a reason for the growth in administration, it would be helpful, it was said, if cost increases attributable to federal and other regulations could be partitioned out.

OTHER DATA ISSUES It was noted that MPIS is also gathering data on the number of faculty who provide instruction to undergraduates, both for U2000 purposes as well as for comparison with peer institutions.

It was noted that the Health Sciences Provost has said that the number of tenured faculty will decrease dramatically and the number of part-time positions will increase; this Committee, it was said, should take a stand on that issue, and about the proper balance between the two groups of employees.

Data for all of these issues should be obtained for the coordinate campuses as well as the Twin Cities, it was pointed out.

SALARY AUGMENTATION Also a continuing concern is the salaries that administrators carry with them when they return to faculty positions. It was recalled that Senior Vice President Infante raised this issue with the Committee last Spring, and talked about separating that part of the salary that attaches to tenure from that which attaches to administrative responsibilities, so that if an administrator takes a faculty appointment, the administrative portion of the salary does not follow the individual. This issue will presumably be addressed by the Compensation Working Group, chaired by Professor Carl Adams.

SEMESTERS One Committee member noted that some of the State Universities are moving to the semester system; that isn't an issue the President needs right at the moment, but it is a perennial question. Is it time to take it up again? It will not be on the table during the transition, it was said; this is not the time to revisit it. Perhaps, said another Committee member, the faculty should consider the issue apart from any administrative interest in it. The only problem is that there is no new information; the only thing new is that it is becoming somewhat more difficult for the University to deal with the rest of the world because of the quarter system.

REGENTS SELECTION PROCESS Professor Adams then related that he had been asked several times whether or not the faculty should become involved in the Regents selection process; he distributed to the Committee a series of questions that have been raised about possible faculty participation. This summarizes the issues, he said, that have been tossed in his lap. He recalled that the Committee had discussed the possibility and wisdom of faculty representation to the Board, but not participation in Regent selection.

What is the problem that needs to be fixed, inquired one member of the Committee? There is a feeling, he reported, on the part of outsiders friendly to the University, that the Board could be improved so that it deals more with long-term academic policies important to a research university and less with day-to-day issues and micromanagement. It is the view of those outsiders that regents should be people of substantial public stature, who do not represent interest groups, and who will look out for the long-term interests of the University. It is likely that such people would not even know they would be good regents. He is carrying the message, he concluded, but said he believes it appropriate for the faculty to consider the issue. The Regents, he pointed out, are legally the University, and its long-term quality will be determined by the quality of the Board membership.

The creation of the Regent Candidate Advisory Council came at the behest of influential public figures who believed, after long observation, that the University was not being led by a Board that was up to meeting the long-term challenges to an institution trying to position itself among the best in the country. This problem of identifying and recruiting high quality people for boards of directors, it was observed, is not confined to the University.

One Committee member inquired about the conclusion from the discussion about faculty representation. One recalled that technically, the President is the faculty's representative to the Board; were there a faculty regent, the President's role could be undermined. The issue, it was said, is that there is a student regent as well as student representatives to each of the Regents' committees, but no corresponding voice for the faculty. Given that students seem to argue for current student interests, rather than the long-term welfare of the University, and given that they persuaded the Board recently to change tuition levels, upsetting a carefully developed budget proposal, it seems that someone should speak for the faculty.

The problem, said another Committee member, is that students are seen as a special interest group. The faculty should NOT be thought of as a special interest group; the faculty ARE the University. Do they want to be treated like the students, with their own regent? The idea of faculty representatives on the committees, said another Committee member, was an interesting one; it would permit presentation of faculty views in the deliberations without undermining the President.

The primary sentiment, recalled another Committee member, was that students should be OFF the Board and committees; if that were not to occur, however, then faculty should perhaps request representation. There are times when the Board operates in a vacuum.

The conclusion of the Committee, at the earlier discussion with former FCC chairs, it was said, was that the Committee would revisit the nature of its interactions with the Board--lunches and dinners and reports--and consider whether or not changes should be sought.

One Committee member expressed dismay at learning that one member of the Board is a lobbyist for an organization whose members are employees of the University. The Committee believes that should not occur; what is it to do, asked another Committee member? The way to address it, said another Committee member, is to ask the Board to adopt a strong conflict of interest policy; do they have one? If not, they should be encouraged to develop one. It is not the legislature's fault, it was said, that the individual changed jobs after being elected to the Board.

There is a statement, reported one member of the Committee; it is apparently up to the individual to decide if there is a conflict. In this case, the individual didn't see a conflict. One Committee member recalled being asked to serve on a board of directors and having to answer several dozen questions about possible conflicts; why is a clear conflict of interest permitted at the University?

If the faculty are successful in arguing for the University's interests at the legislature, it was pointed out, even if the University receives increases, they could be allocated away from faculty concerns if the faculty do not have a voice with the Regents. One can maintain that there should be direct faculty say on the Board--the faculty could seek a seat, or a say in who is selected for the Board.

Faculty arguing for salary increases makes them an interest group, which is different from worrying about the quality of the University in the future. Faculty can do both, it was rejoined, and they are not mutually exclusive. Faculty can bring a special voice to the table and at the same time try to make the pie bigger.

The Committee should say something about the Regent selection process, urged another Committee member. But there is an advantage in NOT being on the Board, it was said, if the faculty wish to emphatically state their opinions. That was evident, for example, with Win Wallin's service to the University. As a volunteer, he could say whatever he wanted to, and he lectured the Board. If the Committee has a problem with the Regents, it should have an agenda and lay those problems on the line. The Board lives in a political world of often conflicting interests; the faculty could be more effective if they stay outside the process and be aggressive in making their views known.

This issue revolves around what the Board is. It is seen by some as sliding toward

micromanagement, and it meets too often; the people on it are managers. If that is what it is to be, there must be a faculty presence when the Board makes management decisions. If, however, it were to function as a policy board should, the faculty would not need to be present.

That is one view, said one Committee member. Another is that the job of the senior executive is to manage the board--to organize the agenda and to use the board to help think about long-term issues, and to not put on the agenda what should not be there. If the board insists on dealing with items it should not, then there is a problem.

The Board appointed a "Citizen's Committee for the Assessment of the Board of Regents" to evaluate its recent performance. That Committee will report to the Board. Recently, several faculty members testified before it, and several of the issues raised at this meeting would more appropriately be in front of the Citizen's Committee.

One discussion the Committee had with the Board seemed to be effective and had what some judge to be good results; the recent lunch with the Board was followed that afternoon by regental increase in the legislative request by \$10 million. One can't tell if the lunch contacts had an effect or not, but such interaction is needed.

Another construction one can put on what happened, it was rejoined, was that the Board overturned a well thought out budget that had been properly developed over five months--they changed the plans in a matter of moments. What occurred was troubling--there may be a good result this time, but the effect on the process, intended to be rational and thoughtful, could have been different, and the result could have been one the faculty would NOT be happy with. One can complain that the Board intervened objectionably in the process.

It appeared that at lunch Board members listened, and that impassionate talks had an effect. There is no doubt the Regents' action had a salutary effect on faculty morale, it was said, irrespective of the impact on the budget procedures.

The more significant question at hand is the selection of Regents, one Committee member observed. What is the problem to be addressed? It is whether or not the quality of the Board is what is needed. One can talk about the mix of Board members, or how often they meet, or whether they micromanage--those are good issues--but the Committee needs to focus on whether or not faculty should seek to have an impact on the PROCESS, if it is believed that the current process is not providing good results. If the faculty can make a case they have an appropriate role to play, they can advise on the process. But the Committee should not go further than that.

One must defend the current system, said one Committee member; it is much better than it was in the past. It is bothersome, said another, that the legislature has chosen to depart from the nominees submitted by the Regent Candidate Advisory Committee. Perhaps the faculty could help play a role in keeping politics out of the selection process.

Professor Adams said he would inquire about what a faculty role in the selection process might be and would report back to the Committee at its next meeting.

2. Issues From the Committee on Faculty Affairs

Professor Adams turned next to Professor Feeney for a report on a continuing discussion that has been held by the Committee on Faculty Affairs over the last year or so.

Professor Feeney told the Committee that SCFA has been concerned about how the administration is dealing with faculty; the concern was at least partially provoked by the treatment of the mandatory retirement issue last year and the manner of proceeding against Regents' Professor Najarian. Another issue is about where promotion and tenure decisions will be made under the new provostal system; the tenure subcommittee believes there was no consultation about the decision to place near-final authority with the provosts, and it is nervous about the implications of that decision. There is a sense that faculty have no advocates in central administration; the administration is trying to do what is right, no doubt, but is what they are doing in the best interests of the faculty? Faculty often seem to be at the bottom of the list in terms of importance.

At one point SCFA contemplated requesting a meeting with the President to discuss its concerns, and then concluded it should come first to this Committee, an elected group that has the closest relationship with the administration. Are SCFA's concerns, he asked, not as large as they believe?

Professor Carl Adams, the chair of SCFA last year, recalled that one letter had been sent to the President to sensitize him to the concern. SCFA is concerned about the attitude, style, and shared values of the central officers--they don't seem to be where one would expect. The problem is not structural, but it is very difficult to deal with; it is with how faculty matters get addressed. The question is "how can we help?" If all agree that there is cause for concern, then is there anything constructive that can be done to improve attitude, style, and shared values so that all are more comfortable?

This is a little confusing, responded one Committee member. There were incidents that were handled badly, but is that the end of the list? Or are they but a sample from a longer list that reveal attitudes, styles, and shared values are a problem? Is this generalizing from a small number of incidents or tapping into a general discontent about the way faculty are dealt with?

SCFA thought the latter, it was said, although the question is a very good one. What it is that will be adduced to persuade the administration there is a problem? In addition, said another Committee member, one can develop a list, but then the items on the list are addressed, there are arguments over details, and the forest gets missed for the trees. And it may be that this is a problem of perception, Professor Feeney added, which is why SCFA is bringing its concerns to FCC.

There are variations among the colleges in this respect, observed one Committee member. One can understand why faculty in the Medical School have felt bad in recent months, but that does not speak to what is happening at Duluth or in Law or Technology. One must listen with care to general statements; is there an undercurrent of concern and tension that should be taken up at the joint meeting of this Committee and SCFA in two weeks?

If one looks at the management structure of the University, the insensitivity to faculty is obvious: how many of the administrators have been active faculty members at this university? Most are from outside, and often display little sense of the faculty culture here. The President has pointed out that the

significant majority of senior central administrators hold faculty rank, it was said; but they are not people who grew up through the faculty ranks, it was responded.

The President has made changes to modify the orientation of the administration, it was noted. The appointment of Professor Bognanno as Associate to the President was not an accident. The point remains, however: of the key people in the administration, how many have the attitude, style, and shared values the faculty are comfortable with?

This is an issue, Professor Weiss told the Committee, that is on the minds of members of the search committee seeking candidates for the Provost for Arts, Sciences, and Engineering.

The Committee must be precise about its concern, it was said. It is that senior administrators be in tune with faculty culture and values, but that their actions suggest they are not. That is a widespread concern among faculty, maintained one Committee member; the senior administrators are seen to have taken a management/employee approach that many faculty wish to be solved. The faculty want to see the administrators as their representatives, not their bosses. This problem has been growing for a decade.

How much of this sense of frustration, asked one member of the Committee, is linked to something missing at the college and departmental level? And should be directed at the deans? In one college faculty body, the deans seem to throw up their hands rather than firmly stepping forward and acting as representatives of their faculty to the senior officers. Either they do not feel a part of the conversation or perhaps they opt out of it, because they think it is convenient to have the faculty mad at the central administration.

In one college, the department heads are angry at the dean, who is self-described as only a messenger. Perhaps that is part of the problem; the central administration may be co-opting the role of the deans, with the result that the deans see themselves as managers, not as representing their colleges.

There needs to be more conversation about the role of the dean and department head, said one Committee member. Local government affects people more than the national government, but people ignore the local government and target their discontent on the national. Perhaps it is easier to point fingers at remote figures than to assert responsibility for actions at the local level.

It may be that the faculty have high expectations about consultation because the University has such an active governance structure. It may also be that the problems started with the budget crunches. The problems are nationwide; administrators can't solve them because they don't have the money. Consultation also means, in the eyes of some, that their views will prevail, and they get frustrated when that doesn't occur. The budgets are not the issue, responded one Committee member; faculty can accept the hard realities. There is a more serious underlying lack of sensitivity to faculty.

Another Committee member expressed agreement that the faculty mood is that the administration does not appear to have academic or faculty values. But what is to be done is not clear. One cannot tell people to change their values. Would more contact with faculty help to educate? One hears administrators say how hard they work, and one believes them. What they do not say is how hard the faculty work. Administrators should shadow a faculty member for a day; they do not understand how bad classrooms are, what it is to have a continued stream of people knocking on your door, what the

research pressures are. This may be a matter of ignorance. (And if it is not, the problem is much bigger.)

The top-down management style is a problem, said one Committee member. This is NOT a business, it is a research and educational endeavor. But consistently over the past ten years decisions have been top-down, with major decisions often made in the summer. The faculty must say this is unacceptable; that they must not just react, but must participate in the decisions.

SCFA wanted to be sure that this was not a problem of communication within the governance system, Professor Feeney reported. Their question is "what are administrative values?" What do administrators do to build their vitae? Are those activities and accomplishments different from what faculty do? Are their GOALS the same? And who appoints deans and chairs? Administrators are like pearls on a chain; they answer to those above them. Where do the faculty fit in? Another concern of SCFA is that faculty salaries are linked to tuition increases; that is NOT a good way to begin a discussion.

One Committee member expressed unease at the direction of the remarks; this seems vague, it was said. There is no specificity with respect to persistent problems with central administration or within colleges or campuses; a broad swath is being drawn in saying that 3000 faculty are being treated badly and that values are not shared. There may be problems, but the joint meeting of the two committees should focused on where improvement is needed and how to obtain better outcomes.

What the faculty must do is keep the attention of administrators focused on issues of concern to faculty; one way to do so might be through more frequent meetings with the administration.

Another Committee member observed that this discussion consists of faculty looking at administrators--but faculty often do not understand what administrators do. It's a two-way street. Some believe that in the corporate culture, one can change chief executives no matter the substance, and that the same can happen in higher education--or even across the two enterprises. It is unfortunate that usually there is no easy way for faculty to rotate into administrative positions--it can destroy an academic career. What are needed is short-term administrative positions that do not require an individual to stop doing research. With faculty flowing through administrative positions, it would be "we-we" rather than "us-them."

Professor Feeney then inquired about the amount of consultation that occurred about the decision to locate virtually final authority for promotion and tenure decisions with the provosts and chancellors. Was the decision discussed by this Committee, and accepted or endorsed? If not, will it be discussed before a final decision is made?

When the President proposed the reorganization, Professor Adams reported, the was talk about the provosts having final responsibility for promotion and tenure. What was NOT said was that up until recently, decisions have been forwarded to the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs, who asked the Dean of the Graduate School to review them for both substance--quality--and procedure. But there has been little discussion of whether or not the move away from that review process is a good idea; the issue was noted but never taken up. The committees have been diverted from the fundamental question of the long-term quality of the faculty. As faculty have been listening and thinking about the issue, it is entirely appropriate for the Committee to take it up.

One Committee member noted that the chancellors up to now have never had the authority to make promotion and tenure decisions, and their recommendations have been turned down. It is a matter of concern that there may be no quality check made centrally. A degree is from the University of Minnesota, signed by the President, and it is the obligation of the whole University to review these appointments.

One cannot say that the faculty were not informed, pointed out another Committee member; the issue should have taken up last Spring. But there were so many issues that some fell between the cracks. The administration, however, did not try to sneak anything by.

It is unlikely the President has any doubts about his responsibility for recommendations to the Board of Regents for promotion and tenure; the question is how that decision will be executed. There are several models that could be used; he has recommended delegation of authority to the provosts, with a central overview role that is not yet clear. Is this oversight something the Committee has confidence in? Or is there something unacceptable in the process that requires a more centralized model? One would prefer the first alternative--confidence in some central review--but there must be confidence in the mechanism because the issue is vitally important.

It was agreed that the Committee on Faculty Affairs would take up this issue and report back to FCC.

3. Other Issues From the Chair

CANDIDATE INTERVIEWS It was agreed that Committee members would, in accord with the protocol adopted by the Senate, interview the five candidates for the Duluth chancellorship.

ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF OTHER VICE PRESIDENTS Professor Adams recalled that the Committee has discussed at length the role and responsibility of the Vice President for Research and Dean of the Graduate School; what about the definitions of the other roles, the Vice President for Outreach and the Vice President for Student Affairs? Should the Committee wait for a job description to react, or does it have a priori views about what the positions should include?

Given the problems about understanding of U2000, if there is one appointment critical to U2000 and the perception people have of it, it will be the Vice President for Outreach, said one Committee member. That individual could affect in significant ways the faculty's activity, another agreed; but it is easier to specify research and teaching goals than how one hopes to achieve them, and that vice president may have a role in their achievement when it comes to such topics. There is a set of issues in outreach, it was said, that are of key concern to faculty.

Student Affairs--the other central officer--is concerned with student life and includes such areas as enrollment management and admissions, which will affect the kind of student who is at the University. Faculty ought to have something to say about that. The private schools, for example, have done a good job of using state and federal student aid to get the kinds of students they want, and the University is largely left with middle class students, often on their own financially, who are not at the top of their class and who cannot afford the private schools. One can't say the quality of students has declined, but 35

years ago SLA was a prestige college in Minnesota, one most high quality, highly motivated students would have been proud to attend. That's now ancient history; what do the faculty want to say about the student profile in 2010? They have not been asked, thus far.

It was agreed that the Committee would return to the position descriptions later.

Professor Adams then adjourned the meeting at noon.

-- Gary Engstrand

University of Minnesota