

Minutes*

Faculty Consultative Committee
Thursday, February 23, 2006
1:15 – 3:00
238A Morrill Hall

Present: Jean Bauer (chair), Nancy Carpenter, Carol Chomsky, Barbara Elliott, Dan Feeney, Megan Gunnar, Kathleen Krichbaum (Lois Heller) Morris Kleiner, Scott Lanyon, Judith Martin, Fred Morrison, Terry Roe, Steven Ruggles, Martin Sampson, John Sullivan, Jennifer Windsor

Absent: Gary Balas, Richard McCormick Marvin Marshak

Guests: Kirt Wilson, Kathryn Brown, Ann Cieslak

Other: Kate Stuckert

[In these minutes: (1) Faculty Culture Task Force; (2) Regental Policy Review]

Professor Bauer convened the meeting at 1:15 pm.

1. Faculty Culture Task Force

Professor Bauer welcomed Professor Kirt Wilson from the Faculty Culture Task Force. Professor Wilson introduced himself and said that he'd been asked by Provost Sullivan to co-chair the Faculty Culture Task Force, and he distributed information regarding the task force's work. Professor Wilson cited the its mission, which reads, "To study and define the requirements for a faculty culture that will support the strategic goal of transforming the University of Minnesota into a top three public research university," and he noted that the deliverables were daunting. Professor Wilson described their work plan, saying that the first stage involved a broad range of consultations among faculty across campuses. They also conducted a web survey, did a variety of analyses of practices and policies at the University, and did a comparative analysis with other institutions as well. The task force then drafted recommendations that were still under consideration, and Professor Wilson reiterated that it was still a work in progress, and noted that the final document will be submitted in May. Professor Wilson asked for the insight of the committee as to any recommendations that needed attending, and he stressed that he wanted the committee's involvement in the process. Professor Martin asked if it was possible to see the results of the faculty survey, and Professor Wilson said that some of the survey results will be reflected in the final report. He referred to a selected list of faculty concerns as noted in the handout. Professor Kleiner said that perhaps the task force could recommend specific outcomes for the initiatives noted on the report. For instance, recommending a series of lunches on a regular basis for acknowledgement of outstanding contributions, as was instituted when Nils Hasselmo was president. Professor Kleiner said that he felt that these dinners and lunches at Eastcliff were particularly valuable for recognition, and recipients also received a plaque. These gestures really set a tone for acknowledgement of scholarship.

* 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.

Professor Wilson explicated two perspectives taken by the task force. One was that faculty create culture through their daily behaviors; the second was to recognize that although one's stated beliefs and values are an important part of culture, the trick is to align what one says with what one does. The task force was trying to balance those two notions, and Professor Wilson noted that the task force was trying to create a narrative in the report that contains the values expressed in the process, including issues like academic freedom. He said that the task force hoped that the narrative would be adopted by faculty and administration as an expression of value and beliefs, thereby orienting further growth. Professor Morrison speculated about the potential consequences to #3 on the deliverables, reading "Recommendations regarding how we create a faculty culture that provides incentives, appropriate recognition and rewards for intra- and inter-disciplinary collaboration", noting that if they are too severe the aim may be just for "good enough", or will another way be found to address it. Professor Sampson said that more precision in the wording affects the idea of faculty culture as a dependent variable. Professor Wilson said that often when they met with faculty, they are concerned about expressing policy to create a new faculty culture and deans want to hear what faculty will take on to espouse values. Professor Roe asked how Human Resources was being used regarding deliverable #8, which stated, "Recommendations regarding the high number of associate professors who do not achieve full professor status." He said promoting from associate to full to deplete the associate ranks alone devalues the full professor and that instead they needed to try and diagnose the productivity – performance problem, and suggested there was also the risk of "bureaucraticizing" this process. Professor Wilson referred to #8 and said that the tenure code is not specific about what it means to go from associate to full professor and there was not a lot of language on what that meant. The task force wanted to take the opportunity to look at that. He also noted the issue that once faculty attain tenure, there are the issue of what the administration duties are, and what about opportunities there may be for mentorship. Professor Windsor asked Professor Wilson to speak to the fifth bullet point which concerned current administrative systems and cultural norms which actively resist faculty attempts to perform innovative research, teaching and outreach. She asked if it had been discussed how to adjust work load and credit load, and she expressed her concern that the only thing noted under teaching was how to evaluate it. Professor Wilson said that was a good point, and that they had met with P&A who teach, and that there is a disparity across campus as to what is appropriate load. He didn't know that a good answer had been arrived at. Professor Kleiner said that part of the issue was that learning should be evaluated, not just teaching; objective is to see how much students learn.

Professor Morrison said there was a sense that there are already too many rules and not enough people helping one accomplish what one wanted to accomplish. He added that it was especially difficult to do some things in some rooms, noting the varying quality of teaching facilities, and the need to address that. Professor Wilson asked the committee for its opinion, and said that it had been suggested to acknowledge the diversity of purpose, i.e., to recognize teaching vs. research. Some people regard it as a caste system, and faculty will not be properly acknowledged accordingly. Professor Roe said some specialization and use of comparative advantage should be permitted; an appropriate reward would be letting a teacher who loves to teach teach, and a researcher research. Professor Wilson asked what appropriate incentives would be. Professor Sampson suggested that #3 under Task Force Deliverables be restated, saying that he didn't see faculty culture as a residue of the components noted. Professor Martin said that the reality was that there was a culture that allows some people to do what they want to but doing what is needed is not rewarded. She noted that, in terms of #7 in the deliverables, one problem of the University is that the state does not recognize all that the University does, and that it is necessary to address the external perception of the University. Professor Gunnar said that the University would not achieve the number 3 rank among public research institutions by encouraging people to be excellent

teachers and, not at the same time, excellent researchers. She expressed concern about the often false dichotomy: good teachers aren't good researchers and good researchers aren't good teachers. A top tier university is filled with excellent researchers who are good teachers and is a place where you come to learn from the best, cutting edge people in their disciplines. Professor Sampson pointed out that research is not rewarded, that it is publication that is rewarded. The committee discussed research and teaching. Professor Chomsky referred to #3, saying that to her it was about what was valued. It was a complicated issue, as there was a problem with some of the questions about differential tasks, which can be viewed as punishment or reward. In her view, what was absent was the notion of mentoring for teaching: a great researcher could get support to do well in the classroom and vice-versa, but that both components had to be there. Professor Gunnar added that these were not negatively correlated. Professor Wilson said that the language was being worked on and that it was on the radar screen to address. Professor Heller said that in the Academic Health Center, contract faculty were making tremendous contributions and yet she didn't see how contract faculty fit into the task force recommendations. Professor Wilson said there was inclusionary language that acknowledged P&A appointments, yet at the same time the task force is struggling with the issue, noting that the majority of work was being done by P&A to free up faculty. Professor Martin referred to deliverable #5, which noted recommendations regarding how to create a faculty culture that promotes active public engagement. She asked the reason for it, noting that there are parts of the University which just do this, and that she was skeptical that many faculty not already engaged ought to be. Professor Sullivan added that he didn't see it as a way to improve the institution, and Professor Kleiner added that some units had a comparative advantage in either teaching, research or service and that overall University performance should be assessed. Professor Morrison asked if the deliverables addressed the questions asked in the survey. Professor Sullivan said that his understanding was that there was a culture of "just good enough": tenure was given too easily, and hiring should be done more carefully and tenure given more carefully. If that was the case, then those issues needed to be dealt with, and other issues are marginal. Professor Carpenter noted that "one size does not fit all", an issue that the Morris campus is struggling with.

The committee discussed rewarding teachers versus researchers. It was noted that an outstanding institution looks at its strengths, and lets people do what they do best. Professor Wilson said that it had been a particular difficulty for the task force, and for any research university. He wanted to acknowledge the constraints put on their work, yet still move forward and establish their own objectives. Professor Lanyon asked about some of the committee recommendations, saying that one issue was what could be done to minimize non-teaching and non-research activities that faculty are being increasingly called on to perform. He also said that retention should be listed under Faculty Concerns, saying that not everyone should be retained but that the steps of retention should be clear. Professor Wilson said that in regards to outstanding, "superstar" faculty, they'd heard both sides of the issue: bring in superstars or grow one's own superstars. He said the end result was likely to be a combination of the two. Professor Lanyon pointed out that currently deans ask "why should we want to retain a faculty member who has an offer from a lower-ranked institution." Since the University is trying to be a top three research institution, we are going to have to stop using the rank of the "raiding" institution as a factor in determining whether or not to retain a faculty member. Professor Wilson said there had been much conversation that faculty duties are being consumed by administrative duties and that deans discourage better training to staff to support faculty. Professor Morrison discussed the hiring and training of staff, and Professor Gunnar said that maybe the issue could be forced by identifying certain components and identifying secretarial support accordingly. Professor Chomsky, speaking to the sense that tenure is given too easily, asked how that was evaluated, noting that it should not be done just to get the numbers up. She asked how to institute vigor in the process given the diversity of the units, and how to create a meaningful statement to effect

that at a central point. Professor Wilson said that not only will 7.11s have to be rewritten, they will have to address that. They were asking each department to revisit their 7.12 documents in light of where they were now in terms of rigorous peer review that emphasis quality over quantity. Professor Wilson expressed his surprise at the disparity across campus in the rigor of peer review, and he thought that the point of instituting rigor is accountability. One possibility is a faculty committee that reviews tenure cases that come through the provost's offices. Professor Wilson cited the methods of other institutions, and said the idea was to give the review significant meaning. He thanked the committee for their time and offered his contact information for further comments, and suggested that they submit comments on the task force website as well.

2. Regental Policy Review

Professor Bauer welcomed Executive Director Ann Cieslak, Office of the Board of Regents, and Vice President Kathryn Brown to discuss Regental Policy Review. Ms. Cieslak discussed the policy review process of the Board of Regents and distributed a flow chart which documented the progress of the reviews. She noted they had a very inclusive process that involved administration and faculty groups, and said that some policies were not be addressed at this point, such as faculty tenure. Ms. Cieslak said that in the past many of the board's policies were very specific and that while some responsibilities were delegated to the president, others were delegated throughout the organization, including directors. Ms. Cieslak said the original purpose of the review was to make sure that board policies were in alignment with the new Board of regents Policy: Reservation and Delegation of Authority, and it was decided to see if they included procedures as well as policies. Thus it is a broad look at the regental policies: for instance, there has never been a policy on health benefits. Vice President Brown said that with each policy, they met with the appropriate people, reviewed the policy and took appropriate considerations into account. She cited that they'd been very successful in consulting with appropriate groups and that the gauge to their success was that they'd had no complaints. Ms. Cieslak said that they would consult with experts in certain areas, for instance, Vice President Tim Mulcahy from the Office of the Vice President for Research. Vice President Brown said that the next group of reviews will be in Human Resources, and that Vice President Carol Carrier had been consulting with various groups, and that those recommendations would be coming forward in the late spring. Professor Morrison asked where the review of medical policy was, and Vice President Brown said that that was a new policy and therefore not noted on the flow chart. Vice President Brown added that they had had a balance of consultation and forward progress.

Ms. Cieslak added that it is intentional on the part of the Regents to acknowledge that the president is responsible for day to day management. Professor Heller asked if Regents could introduce new policies, and Ms. Cieslak confirmed that they could. Professor Heller said that that was not indicated in the document, and Ms. Cieslak said that typically the Board of Regents would ask the president if an issue needed to be addressed. Professor Morrison, speaking to Ms. Heller's concern, said that the language was intentionally broad and sweeping. Professor Heller asked if the policies could be found on the website. The committee discussed the policies and where to find previous policies on the website. Professor Martin said that under the financial policy, she noted historic preservation and asked if it was the intent to state that University will preserve and protect its assets. Ms. Cieslak said she believed that was the intention. Professor Morrison said that this was an important undertaking: the Board of Regents policies consisted of 140 years of meeting minutes, and sometimes the policies were articulated in those minutes, if someone had an inclination to review the volume of records to discern them. The review of the policies by the Regents was an attempt to create easily accessible, codified policies that were simple

to find all in one place. Vice President Brown said that they'd try to ensure that the policies stand the test of time, and to embody certain principles but still be flexible. Professor Martin asked about the policy regarding eminent domain, considering its timeliness and high profile at the present. Ms. Cieslak said that the Regents policy is stated broadly and follows state law. Professor Sullivan asked about family leave policies. Vice President Brown and Ms. Cieslak said that they were putting all leave policies in one place, and Ms. Brown said she did not expect substantial changes to it. Professor Sullivan raised the issue of adoption policies being significantly different than those of birth, and he said he'd like to see them aligned. Vice President Brown agreed, and discussed the reasoning behind the differences, citing that physical recovery is necessary after a birth. Professor Morrison said he felt that could be addressed in medical policy. Professor Martin noted that in the corporate world, it would be considered family leave. Vice President Brown said that there is indeed FMLA and that the policy language was being tweaked. Professor Morrison noted that in the area of disabilities, he cited varying issues of disability policies, and said that they were going to be simplifying it.

Vice President Brown and Ms. Cieslak thanked the committee for their time, and Professor Bauer thanked them for the informative discussion.

The meeting adjourned at 3 pm.

--Mary Jo Pehl

University of Minnesota