Minutes*

Faculty Consultative Committee
Thursday, February 2, 2012
1:00 – 3:00
262 Mondale Hall

Present: Chris Cramer (chair), Linda Bearinger, Avner Ben-Ner, Elizabeth Boyle, Thomas Brothen, Colin Campbell, Carol Chomsky, Nancy Ehlke, Janet Ericksen, Walt Jacobs, Sally Gregory Kohlstedt, Elaine Tyler May, Jan McCulloch, James Pacala, Richard Ziegler

Absent: Peter Bitterman, Caroline Hayes, Russell Luepker, George Sheets, Kathryn VandenBosch

Guests: Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate Education Henning Schroeder; Vice Provost and Dean of Undergraduate Education Robert McMaster

Other: none

[In these minutes: (1) undergraduate-to-graduate programs links with Morris; (2) the Graduate Education Council and governance; (3) committee business; (4) Twin Cities campus curriculum committee]

1. Undergraduate-to-Graduate Program Links with Morris

Professor Cramer convened the meeting at 1:00, welcomed Dean Schroeder, and informed him that a contingent of Committee members visits the Morris campus each fall to learn about issues facing colleagues on that campus. One item they are interested in is articulation agreements as well as the involvement of faculty and graduate students interested in research collaboration.

Dean Schroeder said he did some research on the issue before this meeting and also met with Senior Vice President Jones, to whom the coordinate campuses report; one conclusion was that Dean Schroeder should come to the next System Council meeting to propose items that this Committee has identified.

With respect to graduate students, would it involve TAs and RAs going to Morris, Dean Schroeder inquired? It would only be RAs, Professor Cramer said. Dean Schroeder said there are a number of TAs who teach outside the University, at area colleges and universities, and there is no reason they could not do so at Morris as well. In terms of RAs, there are faculty on the Morris campus who have graduate-faculty appointments in Twin Cities programs, and there is no reason those relationships could not be expanded if there is interest and the program requirements for membership are met Dean Schroeder explained that graduate faculty status is now defined at the local level, and requirements can be more flexible, depending on the discipline. With respect to serving on doctoral committees and as advisor, there is now a University-wide policy requiring that one be a member of tenured/tenure-track faculty (with occasional exceptions allowed), and that policy would apply to Morris faculty, of course. It would be a program prerogative.

* 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 Boyle asked if there is a way to require that only one of the "inside" faculty members on a graduate committee may be an affiliated faculty member. There is an emphasis on interdisciplinarity in many CLA departments and faculty members in other departments are given courtesy appointments; the same could be done for Morris faculty members. But can a department impose restrictions on who may serve on a committee, whether an actual member of the department or someone holding a courtesy appointment? (If they cannot, it may be that a committee would end up composed entirely of those with courtesy appointments and none actually from the department in which the student is obtaining the Ph.D.) Dean Schroeder said that below the umbrella of the University policy there is a great deal of flexibility within the college and that ultimately the college has to review and approve committee membership consistent with that policy. In addition, at least one tenured faculty member must be on the doctoral final oral exam committee (no exception allowed). Professor Cramer observed that there is a mechanism in place to control the problem: The Director of Graduate Studies assigns committee members. Professor Kohlstedt said that they maintain categories within the department and have definitions about when people can serve, which gives the DGS leverage. Dean Schroeder pointed out that the categories of faculty have disappeared only at the central level; programs can create categories as long as they do not contradict University policy. He affirmed that if a Twin Cities program conferred graduate-faculty status on a Morris faculty member, that person could advise graduate students in the program.

Professor Cramer asked Professor Ericksen what the hurdles for Morris faculty members are in advising graduate students. It is mostly a matter of forgetting that the Morris faculty are here, Professor Ericksen commented. She has served on committees, but if departments do not reach out, they tend to forget about the Morris faculty as a resource. There need to be more regularized connections.

Dean Schroeder said that connections come through common research interests of faculty members, not usually the department or college. Should they do more regular communication? They should, Professor Ericksen responded. If there are no personal connections, how will Twin Cities graduate programs know what research is being done at Morris? There are areas where Morris is known for scholarship, such as the environment, Professor Cramer said, asking whether some collaborative work is already ongoing in some areas or whether there is across-the-board lackluster communication? It has been uneven, Professor Ericksen said; there are Morris faculty members who've tried for connections with Twin Cities centers, etc., and been rebuffed. It can depend on the director. Are there ways that Dean Schroeder's office can encourage and recognize the connections? Dean Schroeder said that the third meeting of the Graduate and Professional Assembly is coming up on April 12 and that it is open to all—faculty, staff, and students—and the topic is advising. There are opportunities beyond advising where Morris faculty could participate in graduate education and perhaps they could use the Assembly as a way to look at how best to include coordinate-campus faculty members.

Professor Cramer said he would guess that it ultimately comes down to money: If there were funds to help defray travel or housing, etc., would that help smooth the road? It could, Professor Ericksen said, but she repeated that it would need to come with encouragement to coordinate-campus faculty to participate, not just left up to who one happens to know. This would probably not involve that much money, Professor Cramer surmised.

Dean Schroeder asked about examples of faculty members from Morris interested in joining a center or being part of graduate education on the Twin Cities campus, or areas that would be sought after the most in terms of Morris faculty working with Twin Cities faculty. Professor Ericksen said she did not

know everyone who might be interested; the humanities and CLA would be one good example. Morris often only has one faculty member in an area and the only connection might be through a center on the Twin Cities campus. She agreed that Education and Human Development would be another likely area for connections.

Part of the discussion is also on the student side, Professor Ericksen said; they have talked about admissions and whether special consideration can be arranged for Morris graduates to do graduate study on the Twin Cities campus. The Carlson School has developed a program for honors students; she said she believed Morris students would be competitive for Twin Cities graduate programs. Do articulation agreements exist, Professor Cramer inquired? They seem to still exist, Dean Schroeder said, but no one knows of any activities around them. After the discussion at the System Council, it might help if there is an effort to advertise them and create more synergy between programs. Professor Ericksen said she knows of three initiatives where discussions are underway (with the Humphrey Institute, CFANS, and the School of Nursing) and would like to identify ways to bring attention to the topic and ways to facilitate such agreements.

It seems that part of the problem is that people on the Twin Cities campus have not thought very much about Morris, Professor Cramer remarked; are there ways to bring the resources of the Morris campus into the consciousness of faculty on the Twin Cities campus? Some interactions have occurred because of faculty one knows, but then those disappear; are there ways to bring more faculty into the conversation? The graduate faculty in a program would need to know who the faculty at Morris are; there must be ways to get faculty to know each other and ways to get the Morris faculty brought more often into the thinking of the Twin Cities faculty. There will always need to be grass-roots advocacy from the coordinate campuses but the academic leadership could send messages in support of interactions and articulation agreements and provide seed money—available only for intercampus collaborations—to help things along.

Dean Schroeder suggested that a web presence might help, reporting on things happening at Morris that could be of interest to faculty and students on the Twin Cities campus. He said his takeaway message from the discussion is that the concerns are mostly about RAs and research.

This is not a one-way street, Professor Kohlstedt commented. The Morris faculty could think about inviting faculty members from the Twin Cities campus to visit. Professor Cramer reported he has done so.

The only times a TA would be useful is to serve as sabbatical replacements, Professor Ericksen said. Morris faces significant difficulty, Professor Cramer commented, because of the small numbers of faculty in the disciplines, if one wants to take a sabbatical or leave, those who are not on leave face an increased workload because it is difficult to identify someone who wants to go to Morris to fill in for the colleague on sabbatical. So Morris faculty either do not take sabbaticals or they have to scramble to find a replacement, which causes problems. It could be useful to marry graduate-student teaching with opportunities at Morris. Dean Schroeder said he would take this issue to the System Council and think about how, independent of faculty-to-faculty interactions, the administration could help create more visibility for opportunities.

Professor Cramer suggested coordination with the Preparing Future Faculty program. Someone could take over at Morris for a period if they have completed the program. The administration could help match people up.

2. The Graduate Education Council and Governance

The discussion with Dean Schroeder turned next to the Graduate Education Council (GEC) and its relationship with the governance system. Dean Schroeder provided a brief history of the GEC and noted that with 15 faculty members and 3 graduate students, not every college will have a seat. The way the elections are done, the goal is to create groups of representatives from disciplines and areas of broad academic interests. The GEC advises the Vice Provost and Dean on all issues related to graduate education, and especially with respect to major changes in existing Ph.D. programs or any new Ph.D. programs. Master's programs are not under the GEC purview but the GEC is free to discuss the Master's programs on the campus.

In terms of connection to governance and Senate committees, Dean Schroeder said, until the end of this year Professor Krevans' policy committee was established by the Senate Committee on Educational Policy and it is reviewing and creating the appropriate graduate-education policies. The policies go through the GEC as well as SCEP and this Committee and to the Faculty Senate. That is one link. When it has completed its work, there are various ways a connection could continue. One is that a GEC member or the Vice Provost and Dean or an associate dean could report to this Committee or other Senate committees on what they are doing (e.g., program reviews, metrics, etc.). He said he was open to suggestions.

Professor Jacobs asked about the GEC election and the fact that there was a "recommended" slate plus "other" candidates. . What was the rationale for that approach? Dean Schroeder explained that the Provisional GEC members spent a great deal of time trying to develop an election mechanism that would meet all the demands (in particular, the need for balance in the membership). In the end they decided on a slate-based election; nominations were collected (58 were received), reviewed by the nominating committee, and then put together a list of 15 names based on GEC bylaws (requiring representation from across disciplines and academic interests on campus). The recommendations were not based on qualifications—they tried to make that clear—but on representativeness. All nominees were free to leave their names on the ballot; two did so, and it looked odd. At the time when decisions on the slate were made no member of the nominating committee was a nominee. Members of the nominating committee recused themselves from discussion of individual nominees if there was a real or perceived conflict of interest (for more procedural details see Grad School website at
http://www.grad.umn.edu/transition/council/doc/GEC-Election-Criteria-and-Procedures.pdf
http://www.grad.umn.edu/Transition/council/doc/GEC-Election-Announcement.pdf
http://www.grad.umn.edu/Transition/council/

Professor Cramer said that the sense he's gotten is that the slate methodology may have communicated the wrong message when there was need for a sense of openness. He suggested that in the future the GEC use a variation on the approach taken for FCC elections: Two or more candidates for each position, binned according to the constituency that they would represent. This could be important because people are still concerned about the reorganization of the Graduate School and the GEC is a significant body. Committee members and Dean Schroeder discussed the election process, with

Committee members urging that the GEC use a process similar to that used for FCC, with more than one candidate per position.

Professor Cramer next observed, apropos of coordination between GEC and governance, that any time an administrator wants to appoint a faculty committee to advise him or her, that's fine. Any time an administrator wants to propose or change policy, that must go through the Senate. One gray area is the metrics. They will have a direct effect on the ground, and irrespective of the election process, the GEC is outside the governance system, a situation that creates worry.

The metrics are not decided by the GEC, Dean Schroeder said. They were developed by a number of groups that have been convened over the last several months. The metrics for FY13 (time to degree, retention/completion, etc.) are not directly related to student performance or scholarly/research productivity, (something he would like to explore), but they are indicators that, if going in the wrong direction, might indicate that bad advising is occurring or there is inadequate funding, etc. They are not direct measures but are measures of program efficiency and quality and they are discipline-independent (but the time to degree is not the same in every discipline). He explained how the data had been reviewed, by a review committee of associate deans and faculty members, and that colleges had an opportunity to respond with a narrative. This was a first attempt at using quality metrics and they included a 15% maximum reduction for any college. Because they are aware that the indicators are not the entire story, only $2.6 million of the $4.5 million (in what used to be block grants) was allocated on the basis of the quality metrics; the remainder was used to buffer harm. Going forward, when it comes to defining outcomes that are discipline-specific, programs must play an active role in defining the metrics. One question is what graduates should look like and where should they go for jobs? Are all the courses supporting that goal? What evidence is there that changes in courses will support students?

Professor McCulloch asked about the program categories (1, 2, 3) and asked what happens in a college with (for example) 15 departments where one-third fall in each of the three categories, and then the following year two-thirds are rated 1 and one-third are rated 2. What difference does that make to the college? Will the programs in category 1 receive less allocation credit because there are more of them than there were before?

Dean Schroeder said that a 1 or 2 rating means a program is in pretty good shape and there are no major concerns. In some colleges, a 2 rating is seen as failing, and that is a communications issue (because seeing a 2 as failing is incorrect). Only eleven programs had a 3 rating, and in three of those cases the programs were too new for assessment and eight had either too few data or major concerns. He encouraged everyone to stay away from using the 1-2-3 ratings as equivalent to an NRC ranking. The money generated from programs rated 1 or 2 goes to the dean for distribution in the college and does not necessarily have to go back to the programs that generated the credit in the algorithm. The deans will be held accountable for what they do with the funds.

Professor McCulloch asked how the narrative affected the objective numbers that came out of the quality metrics. Dean Schroeder reported that CLA provided 100 pages of narrative and CSE provided 10; both were excellent and reflect the different cultures of the two colleges. In the future, it may help to provide guidelines on narratives. One way a narrative might help, for example, is if a program lost five graduate students because a faculty member left Minnesota to go elsewhere and took the students along.

Professor Bearinger asked about the number of programs rated and the number in each category. Dean Schroeder reported that there were 93 Ph.D. programs rated: 27 were rated 1, 55 were rated 2, and 11 were rated 3see above). They compared these ratings with the NRC rankings and were reassured when the ratings aligned reasonably well with the NRC rankings (considering that the situation has changed for some programs since the e NRC data were collected in 2005).

Professor Bearinger commented that she is part of a Ph.D. program that is 95% women, while the undergraduate program is about evenly divided between men and women. If one obtained a Master's degree at Minnesota, worked for a period (as they recommend), and then return for the Ph.D., students could take nine or ten or more years to graduate if it is necessary to count time elapsed from entry to the Master's program to completion of the Ph.D. She said she assumed that they make corrections for such programs but she is still concerned about the gender effects: If there are more women in the school, they could be taking longer to obtain a degree. She said she would also like to see training grants have a home at the University where they are understood, supported, and nurtured. They tend to be lost in the total research grants awarded to the University but they can have a dramatic effect on the institution. They should be housed in the Graduate School. Dean Schroeder said the Graduate School has a budget line item to provide matching funds for training grants that will further increase starting FY13; he agreed it is an important topic and that he will continue to strongly advocate for institutional support of training grants.

Professor Cramer thanked Dean Schroeder for joining the meeting.

3. Committee Business

Professor Cramer brought several items of business to the table.

-- The Committee voted to nominate Professor Russell Luepker to serve as vice chair of the Faculty and University Senates. Professor Chomsky had indicated she did not wish to continue in that role.

-- Vice President O'Brien asked for suggestions of faculty members to serve on a space-utilization initiative; the Committee agreed on the names of several faculty members to be forwarded.

-- The Senate Research Committee has drafted a statement on the value of research, whether externally funded or not. Committee members suggested a few modest editorial changes and agreed that the statement should be put to appropriate use by the administration and faculty leaders. Professor McCulloch observed that the statement highlights the larger picture: One often hears that faculty members at research universities only teach one or two courses per semester; what is needed is the larger picture of faculty work that includes research—funded or not—and public engagement and how different units carry out those activities in different ways. Professor Ben-Ner noted that in the arena of research, government funding is declining. Research is often a public good in that it produces knowledge that cannot be captured by a single company (because not every useful idea is patentable or copyrightable). Consequently, research that may benefit private sector companies will not benefit from private funding.

-- Professor Chomsky reported briefly on the meeting of the Twin Cities chapter of the AAUP.

4. Twin Cities Campus Curriculum Committee

Professor Cramer now welcomed Vice Provost and Dean McMaster to present a proposal for a Twin Cities campus curriculum committee, a proposal that has already been endorsed by the Senate Committee on Educational Policy.

Dean McMaster said he is proposing creation of the curriculum committee to deal with a growing number of concerns from the colleges. He said he is seeking the endorsement of the Committee for the proposal but is not asking it that it be a Senate committee; it is to be appointed by and advisory to the provost. The committee is long overdue and his office has seen an increasing number of conflicts between colleges on curricular matters. He and the provost need the body to avoid harm and to provide a useful level of review of the curriculum at the campus level.

Dean McMaster distributed copies of a memorandum to the Committee about the curriculum committee and reviewed its contents. He noted that virtually all of the University's peers have such a committee; the responsibilities of the groups vary slightly with the campus. In the case of Minnesota, for example, it would not have to deal with liberal-education requirements because those are already being handed by the Council on Liberal Education. The proposed curriculum committee would, as he said earlier, be advisory to the provost, would have 12-15 faculty members, and would initially be focused on undergraduate education. He, Dean Schroeder, and a representative from Academic Support Resources would serve as ex officio members.

The curriculum committee, in brief, would: work with colleges in mediating conflicts that arise over curriculum issues (e.g., course duplication, expansion of liberal-education courses, creation of new degree programs), maintain communication with the Council on Liberal Education (not overturn or review its decisions, simply maintain a connection); review all newly-established courses for duplication, overlap, and appropriate disciplinary connections (after they have been approved by college curriculum committees); help determine the impact of eliminating courses (that is, impact on degree programs in other colleges); and take up other issues identified by the Senate Committee on Educational Policy, the vice provosts, or the provost. With respect to the charge to review every new course, Dr. McMaster said he believes it entirely possible to do so; there are not that many new courses proposed each year (CLA proposes about 50, CEHD about 12) and most of them will receive very quick approval, so this additional review will not slow down the process. With respect to the Council on Liberal Education, it will determine whether courses meet the liberal-education requirements; the curriculum committee will consider whether they are duplicative. The process and interactions will have to be fine-tuned over the first few years the curriculum committee is in place, Dr. McMaster said, but he is not concerned about duplication or cross-over in responsibilities between it and the Council on Liberal Education. In addition, the curriculum committee will only look backwards in terms of existing conflicts, but not with all courses in the curriculum (only newly-established courses). It would only review existing courses if a complaint is brought by a college. In response to a query, Dr. McMaster said he did not envision the curriculum committee suggesting courses.

Professor May maintained that the liberal-education process is "utterly dysfunctional" and said that it needed to be reviewed. Vice Provost McMaster did not agree.

Asked where he had vetted the proposal, Dean McMaster said with the senior officers, the Graduate School, and the Senate Committee on Educational Policy. The deans and the associate deans for undergraduate education in the colleges have also endorsed it.

Professor May asked if the committee would look at problems in terms of warfare over student credit hours and money. Dean McMaster said he hoped the committee would look only at the intellectual merits of course proposals and conflicts between colleges. How will they separate the two issues, Professor May asked? The decisions will follow review of the intellectual matters, Dr. McMaster said. Professor May expressed uncertainty about where the committee would intervene in the process of uncoupling tuition and money from the decisions. Dean McMaster suggested that is a separate discussion that this Committee might have with higher authorities in the University.

Professor Jacobs said he supported the proposal and agreed with Professor May that the new committee could have tough discussions that no one else wants to have. Liberal-education courses drive tuition, he maintained; Dr. McMaster did not agree. Departments (who have good people in them) find a way to have courses certified as meeting liberal-education requirements, Professor Jacobs said, because those are the courses that have the highest enrollment. College administrators want departments to offer liberal-education courses. One question is whether there should be a limit on the number of liberal-education courses offered per semester; that could curtail the effort by everyone to obtain liberal-education designation.

Professor Cramer said he saw two issues: mission creep and liberal-education creep. The curriculum committee can deal with the first one; the second one perhaps requires more engagement on the part of this Committee. His perspective is that when things are on fire, one should put out the fire, so he suggested the Committee endorse Dean McMaster's proposal. In the longer term, it will be best to obtain the imprimatur of the governance system for the curriculum committee, but there is no reason to delay its creation and appointment now. Dr. McMaster repeated that he did not envision this as a Senate committee. Professor McCulloch asked if the committee would put out the fire—or create another explosion (e.g., just as the Council on Liberal Education process has become "explosive" in the view of some). Dr. McMaster said he did not envision the new committee micromanaging decisions by the Council.

Professor Cramer suggested including in the charge asking the committee to advise about what can be learned from the process, e.g., suggesting memoranda of understanding between colleges where the creation of truly interdisciplinary courses would be facilitated by an agreement to share tuition revenue in some negotiated way. It should advise on broader issues of concern that it sees as a result of cases brought to it.

Professor Cramer also offered the idea of a "summit," after the committee has been appointed, involving the Council on Liberal Education and the curriculum committee and the provost's office, in order better to appreciate the two components of the course creep problem.

Professor Boyle suggested that there should also be a step back and a consideration of whether there is a proliferation of new committees, with the GEC, the Council on Liberal Education, now this new committee, and possibly others. But that, she added, is a discussion for another day.

The Committee voted 7-0 (of the 10 voting members) to endorse Dean McMaster's proposal; there was one abstention and two absences). Professor Ben-Ner cautioned that one must remember that curricular affairs should be a faculty matter and that an administrative committee (as opposed to a faculty committee) in this area would be a problem. Professor Cramer observed that the final authority rests with the Board of Regents, but they delegate the authority to the faculty subject to their approval. A campus-wide curriculum committee is not set forth in the policy but it is envisioned as a possibility.

Professor Cramer thanked Dean McMaster for joining the meeting and adjourned it at 3:15.

-- Gary Engstrand