

Year 2002-03

**UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
BOARD OF REGENTS**

Faculty, Staff and Student Affairs Committee

March 13, 2003

A meeting of the Faculty, Staff and Student Affairs Committee of the Board of Regents was held on Thursday, March 13, 2003 at 3:00 p.m. in the West Committee Room, 600 McNamara Alumni Center.

Regents present: David Metzen, presiding; Clyde Allen, Dallas Bohnsack, Richard McNamara, and Maureen Reed.

Staff present: President Robert Bruininks; Chancellor Samuel Schuman; Executive Vice President and Provost Christine Maziar; Vice Presidents Kathryn Brown, Carol Carrier, Sandra Gardebring, Charles Muscoplat, and Kathleen O'Brien; Interim Vice President David Hamilton; Executive Director Ann Cieslak; General Counsel Mark Rotenberg; and Associate Vice Presidents Terry Bock and Gail Klatt.

Student Representatives present: Gretta Hanson and Allison Rhody.

Regent Metzen welcomed Regent Allen to the Faculty, Staff and Student Affairs Committee.

CONSENT REPORT

A motion was made and seconded, and the committee voted unanimously to recommend approval of the Consent Report, as presented in the docket, which included the following:

1. Appointment of Dr. Thomas A. Sellers to the Hormel Institute Board of Directors
2. Amendments to Article III, (3d), Article III, Section 6a, Article VIII, and Article IX of the University Senate Constitution; and
3. Amendments to Article II, Section 4, Article VI, and Article VII of the Twin Cities Campus Assembly Constitution.

HUMAN RESOURCES POLICIES & STRATEGIES

RELATED TO BUDGET ISSUES

Vice President Carrier and General Counsel Rotenberg updated the committee on the various human resources strategies and principles that will guide decisions made in response to the University's current budget challenges. A copy of the presentation is on file in the Board Office.

Carrier highlighted efforts to support employees, managers, and units facing reductions, transition, and change. These efforts include additional resources for employees who may face job loss, as well as workshops for managers to help them deal effectively with transition. Carrier emphasized that the University is committed to maintaining a diverse workforce, as well as an environment where employees can balance work/life issues.

Carrier described several employee benefits and indicated that all employee benefits and human resources policies, including health and retirement plans and length of notice requirements are under review for possible changes. This review includes comparing the benefits and policies to relevant benchmarks for the Big Ten, MnSCU, the State of Minnesota, and other relevant groups. The University will attempt to minimize the impact of benefit changes on lower-paid employees and will continue consultation with employee groups regarding possible changes. Carrier indicated that any potential benefit changes for union-represented employees will be negotiated through collective bargaining processes.

Rotenberg summarized the legal services provided regarding potential benefit and policy changes. He also discussed the content of workshops for managers, which discuss best practices for workforce decisions and applicable University policies. The goal of this assistance is to ensure that the actions taken in response to the current budget challenge respect employee rights and are in concert with University contracts, Board policies, and Federal and state law.

Regent Reed expressed her support for the University's approach and suggested that since University employees have choices as to where they work, University benefits and policies be benchmarked against the private sector, in addition to public sector entities. She added that such benchmarking might provide ideas that could be implemented at the University.

SERVICE AND PRODUCTIVITY ENHANCEMENTS

Vice Presidents Carrier and Muscoplat provided the committee with information regarding the President's Enhancing Service and Productivity Initiative. They discussed the goals, outcomes, and challenges of the initiative, and provided examples of productivity improvements and service enhancements that have been implemented or are being considered. A copy of the presentation is on file in the Board Office.

Muscoplat noted that President Bruininks launched this initiative in Fall 2002 in order to improve service and productivity at the University. The initiative is a response, in part, to demands for increased accountability and declining state resources for higher education. The initiative seeks to achieve at least \$5 million in annual savings through revenue enhancements and cost reductions, and to provide for regular assessment of service and support units across the University. Muscoplat presented two examples of possible policy recommendations resulting from the initiative, including standardizing computer hardware and software purchases.

Carrier highlighted the initiative's leadership and foci of its various taskforces and noted the active involvement of students, staff, and faculty. Examples of future service enhancements include web-based grading, improved transfer credit evaluation, and online versions of the student/staff directory, course bulletin, and class schedule. Carrier acknowledged that the initiative faces several challenges, including budget constraints and the University's culture.

Several Regents suggested that the University publicize the results of this initiative to counter some false perceptions about the University.

FIRST-YEAR EXPERIENCE, TWIN CITIES

Vice President Carrier introduced Laura Coffin Koch, Associate Vice Provost for First-Year Programs, and June Nobbe, Interim Associate Vice Provost for Student Affairs who led the discussion. Nobbe and Koch discussed the genesis of the University's commitment to the first-year experience, highlighted first-year experience program initiatives and goals, and presented data regarding the impact of these initiatives. A copy of the presentation is on file in the Board Office.

Nobbe presented demographic information for first-year students and stated the goals of the University's first-year experience program. These goals include improving retention and graduation rates, enhancing the overall quality of the undergraduate experience, and enhancing communication between faculty and students.

Koch highlighted some of the first-year experience initiatives, and stated that the goal is a four-year graduation rate of 50 percent. An evaluation of the freshman seminars found that students who enrolled in these seminars had higher retention rates and GPAs than those who did not enroll. Data from recent surveys show that students are increasingly more satisfied with their academic experience and have higher levels of interaction with faculty.

Koch raised the following policy questions:

1. How can the University sustain the momentum with first-year programs and begin to develop comparable programs for second-, third-, or fourth- year students?
2. Does the University have the right mix of programs for all first-year students?
3. In difficult budget times, where will the University find resources to support and maintain what has been accomplished.

In response to a question, Koch clarified that while freshman seminars and the Residential College seem effective in increasing retention rates for first-year students, it is not clear which first-year programs would have similar benefits for students in the second-year and beyond.

INFORMATION ITEMS

Vice President Carrier referred committee members to the docket materials, and recognized individuals in the audience chosen to represent the University in the Academic Leadership Program of the Committee on Institutional Cooperation.

The meeting adjourned at 4:45 p.m.

ANN D. CIESLAK

Executive Director and

Corporate Secretary

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