Minutes

Senate Consultative Committee
November 2, 1989

Present: Warren Ibele (chair), Karin Alexander, W. Andrew Collins, Steve Ebel, Lance Flores, Gunnar Johnson, Bryan Kelling, Norman Kerr, Matthew Kirkwood, Lynnette Mullins, J. Bruce Overmier, Ronald Phillips, M. Kathleen Price, Burton Shapiro, Michael Steffes, Charlotte Striebel, James VanAlstine, Tim Wolf

Guests: Ken Jansen (Regents' Office), President Nils Hasselmo, Senior Vice President Leonard Kuhi, June Nobbe (SODC), Steve Prince (Council of Graduate Students), University Librarian Thomas Shaughnessy, Maureen Smith (Brief), Rabun Taylor (Footnote)

1. Reports of the Chairs

Senate Committee on Finance and Planning Professor Shapiro reported on the agenda items which SCFP had taken up at its last meeting as well as those scheduled for the meeting the following Tuesday. Among them was decentralized budgeting; several faculty members on the Committee stressed that this was extremely important and that information should be obtained from other institutions which have made a change to that kind of system and the impact it had on departmental decisions. It was suggested that if need be, a guest be brought in from an institution which had done it to discuss the change. Professor Shapiro took note of the comments and promised that it is "not close to being a closed issue."

Student Senate Consultative Committee Mr. Conroy and Mr. Johnson reported on discussions they had held with students at Crookston the previous week as well as issues that SSCC had taken up. One of those issues was the appointment of students to search committees and granting SSCC a central role in the appointments, which elicited comments about the role of SSCC, the authority of students to make the actual appointments (rather than recommendations), and representativeness as against a need for diversity. A report will be brought to the Committee at some time in the near future.

Mr. Wolf announced that Mr. Steve Prince, a graduate student, had been asked the join the meeting to represent the Council of Graduate Students; the problem between MSA and COGS will be going to mediation.

2. The Senate Docket

Professor Ibele announced that the deadline for docket materials for the November 16 meeting of the Senate is today. He called attention in particular to the resolution from the Senate Committee on Educational Policy on the 1:1 ratio between credits and instruction hours. It was suggested that this might increase the educational costs for students, because some faculty would simply reduce the credits for their course from 4 to 3. Another Committee member argued that the proposed policy was an attempt to correct the action taken in the early 1970s, when the primary credit module was changed from 3 to 4--with no concomitant change in academic requirements in many classes. This "outrageous deflation" would be addressed by the SCEP resolution without imposing lock-step procedures on the University; if, moreover, there is to be an emphasis on quality undergraduate education, this resolution is one step toward providing it. It was also suggested that a 70-minute class hour would help to address the problem--a 3-credit course could continue to meet three times per week while meeting the intent of the policy.

3. Discussion with President Hasselmo

MSPAN President Hasselmo distributed copies of a resolution he will bring to the Board of Regents which outlines the University's response to the MSPAN (1) report. He explained that the legislature had asked the University to submit proposals addressing upper division undergraduate education and practitioner-oriented master's degrees. The resolution for the Regents calls for endorsement of the HEAC[1] position that the primary goal should be funding of existing programs at adequate levels, that HEAC efforts to develop an inter-system response to unmet needs should be supported, that the President be authorized to present to HECB and the legislature a proposal for a limited "2 + 2" proposal (with instruction to take place on the campuses of community colleges), and that the President also be authorized to submit a proposal to expand master's level programs in engineering and computer science.

These steps would lead to a coordinated approach among the systems, would enhance access to upper division education in the Twin Cities through cooperation with the community colleges, and would take advantage of the University's special responsibilities in the sciences at the graduate level. These programs would go beyond what it is expected would be done within the current enrollment targets, but funding for the programs would have to be above what the University needs to improve the quality of education in existing programs.

The University has also asked the legislature to wait for fully detailed proposals until MSPAN (2) is completed--the report which will deal with higher education needs outside the metropolitan area.

The President, in response to comments and questions, observed:

-- That the on-community-campus upper division instruction alternative, in limited fields, provided both increased access as well as increased flexibility in responding to needs for upper division education.

-- That a 1 + 3 option had not been considered, although it was expected students would start at the community college and stay as long as feasible (presumably that period could vary by discipline), that the current 2 + 2 option had not been used by as many students as it had been hoped and that it should be expanded because there is more capacity at the University in upper division education than there is at the freshman level.

-- There is no intent to phase out freshman and sophomore education at the University, but if money must be found to improve quality, it makes most sense to shrink lower division education.

-- Inertia governs much human activity, and students who start at a community college might, given the option, stay there rather than transfer to the University; the community colleges might well decide they could hire the faculty themselves rather than having

[1]Higher Education Advisory Council: The four system heads plus the head of the Minnesota Private College Council and the Commissioner of Education.

University faculty teach on site, especially if the community college is paying the salaries. The President assured the Committee that this option would be strictly a supplement to the dominant expectation of transfer.

-- Regardless of how this "outreach 2 + 2" would be funded, in no event can the University permit its efforts to improve the quality of education on the Twin Cities campus be diverted.

The President suggested, and the Vice President concurred, that since Dr. Kuhi was a University representative on MSPAN 2, periodic reports should be made to the Committee. Vice President Kuhi also argued that the University should establish its own position on the entire higher education system, not just the University's role, and it must know what it wants to see as an outcome of the MSPAN 2 deliberations.

MSPAN 2 will include an examination of the future of the Duluth campus. The President said he saw a major role for UMD; this will be an opportunity to sharpen its profile in undergraduate plus selected graduate programs. The MSPAN 2 report could shape policies which will guide the development of UMD, which is one reason he wants to hold enrollment steady for the time being, shore up what is being done now, and let MSPAN 2 help address the longer term.

It was suggested that while there is a group dividing up undergraduate education in the state, Academic Affairs does not have the staff to define the proper role of the University. President Hasselmo responded that the new Vice Provost for the Arts, Sciences, and Engineering will play a major role in undergraduate education, general education, the single point of entry, and quality in education. The Vice Provost will certainly have other responsibilities but this will be a big part of the portfolio. Vice President Kuhi will have to look at the position, and the staffing that it might require. The Vice Provost will sit on the President's Cabinet and, analogous to Dean Holt, will represent the undergraduate education perspective.

Enrollment targets President Hasselmo distributed copies of a letter and resolution on enrollment which will also be presented for action to the Regents. The President explained that the University must confirm that it is adhering to the 1987 targets only as a strategy to improve the delivery of education. The MSPAN report raises questions which will eventually lead to other strategies, in the later 1990s, but at present there is a "window of opportunity" during which the University can get its house in order. The enrollment limits, however, are not a long-term strategy; growth will come in the 1990s.

The targets will have a major effect on tuition, and the legislature will be so told. An integrated budget, incorporating enrollment, program improvements, and tuition will be presented, along with a statement of what is an acceptable tuition increase. The legislature will have to be told that the University either needs a tuition subsidy or it cannot request a budget which exceeds that reasonable level of tuition increase. The University cannot continue to make budget requests without regard for their impact on tuition, and then let tuition rates fall where they may. Asked what he expected rate increases to be, the President said he could not predict; inflation would drive a part of any increase but beyond that it would depend on what students received in return. He speculated that students would accept more of an increase if it would lead to substantial increases in the quality of their education.

The increase in quality should be reflected in smaller class sizes, better access to classes when

students need them, better teacher training, better access to labs and computers. The results should be reflected in increased student satisfaction with the education they receive and improved graduation and retention rates.

Change in faculty/staff health coverage The President was informed that many faculty and staff are very unhappy about the change in the health care coverage from Aware Gold to the State Health Plan. Professor Shapiro told the Committee that he, Professor Ibele, and Professor Dittman (chair of Faculty Affairs) met the previous Friday for three hours, including over an hour with Vice President Donhowe and Roger Forrester, to discuss what might be done. Mr. Donhowe is aware of the issues and of the upset; he also concurred that there had been too little consulting. At this point there is little that can be done about next year, but a task force will be appointed to examine alternative possibilities.

It was suggested that a more fundamental examination of the allocation of fringe benefit dollars is what is needed, rather than scrutiny of health coverage as if it stands alone.

It was also argued that the issue is directly relevant to students, particularly graduate students--who are leaving programs because of the inadequate health coverage. The Council of Graduate Students had been told by the President two years ago that health coverage for graduate students would be reconsidered; it was, accordingly, disappointing to now learn that a task force is being appointed. President Hasselmo said that graduate student health care has been discussed in the President's Cabinet and that he is trying to address it.

4. Discussion with University Librarian Thomas Shaughnessy

Professor Ibele welcomed Dr. Shaughnessy to the meeting and to the University.

Dr. Shaughnessy began his comments by reciting the observation of an unnamed source that he actually manages three libraries: The library we inherited (books and paper), the library that is becoming (print plus new technology) and the library that will become (the technological marvel envisioned by Marshall McLuhan).

The work of the first library entails preservation of the collections, which are rotting from the acids used in paper production. The libraries will do a study of the quality of paper in the system and develop a strategy to preserve at least the content of the collection if not the paper itself (through the use of microfilm, duplication, etc.). Since acid is still being used in paper production, there is also a need to find a way to deacidify current purchases; the Big Ten is taking a leading role in this effort.

Another goal is to increase use of LUMINA; one way to do so is to add citations to journal articles (which is very expensive, but is beginning) and to government documents.

The libraries are also trying to pick up on points made by the President in his inaugural address, especially undergraduate access. Anecdotal evidence suggests they are not doing as well as they should (e.g., students cannot find the book or the library doesn't own the ones they need). There has been a tendency to focus on the research collection rather than the survey materials which undergraduates need. Dr. Shaughnessy also noted the faculty-selected list of 50,000 books which should be available for undergraduates; whichever the University does not own he would like to purchase. He would also like to replace missing books.

Asked about a trend toward centralization and elimination of departmental libraries, Dr. Shaughnessy said he had not reached the point of examining the issue. This library, he commented, has one of the strangest administrative structures he had seen; he is working with Academic Affairs, Pat Mullen, and Carol Carrier to devise a more efficient system.

Dr. Shaughnessy told the Committee that theft is a problem--probably no worse here than elsewhere--and it cannot really be stopped. The libraries are putting bar codes on all materials so that they will at least know what is missing.

Ties with coordinate campus libraries are not as good as they should be, he said. He expressed a wish that LUMINA include coordinate campus holdings (which, he said, doubtless contain much that the Twin Cities does not have). Coordinate campuses have access to Twin Cities holdings through Minitex (which, Dr. Shaughnessy was told, is too slow); they, however, use PALS rather than LUMINA (which gives them access to several institutional libraries close to them). Dr. Shaughnessy was informed that there were ways for coordinate campus faculty to obtain access to LUMINA.

Asked if the LUMINA software could be modified, especially for searches, Dr. Shaughnessy said it could not but pointed out that additional functions have been added. It is now possible to use a two-term identifier in searches for books. It was commented by a Committee member that LUMINA was nearly outmoded (and that was understood by the University) when it was purchased; most important was to get the collection records into machine-readable form so that they could be transferred to a more sophisticated system later. Dr. Shaughnessy also reflected that the special features of LUMINA could be emphasized more than they are.

Asked how the Committee might be of help, Dr. Shaughnessy expressed the hope that the need for $5 million, identified in Academic Priorities after a long planning process, not be lost (much of the credit for which goes to his predecessor, John Howe, he added). The papers have said the libraries have received $2.6 million--but have actually only received $1.3 million in recurring funds, or $2.6 million for the biennium. We are only about one-quarter of the way towards the $5 million needed, not half way, he told the Committee.

The Committee thanked Dr. Shaughnessy for his comments.

5. Status of the Grievance Procedure

Professor Striebel reported on a meeting that Professor Ibele and the ad hoc committee (the three drafters of the procedures--she along with Professors Deinard and Morrison) had held with Acting General Counsel William Donohue. There are three types of problems, she said, which had been identified.

One is trivial, a series of word changes and clarifications which would possibly improve the system and to which no one objected.

The second puts the procedures on the critical list; Mr. Donohue proposed to require that all grievance findings be forwarded to central administration for review before action is taken. This is not now the practice, Professor Striebel noted, but it is a decision that the administration could argue for, if it wanted the paper flow. If such a change is presented to the Senate, the ad hoc committee would probably oppose it but would not withdraw the policy if it were adopted. There is, she added, now a

clear understanding that the President or his designee is the final decision-maker.

The third change being sought is, Professor Striebel said, fatal, and if it is insisted upon by the administration the ad hoc committee will go to the Senate and ask it to rescind the procedures. Mr. Donohue appears to be adamant that the scope of the procedures be limited to grievances related to the employment contract. She agreed to the observation that this reduction in scope would cut students out. It is being argued that other disputes should be left in more appropriate fora, although it is not clear where they would go (some, she said, would go to downtown lawyers, others would remain in the current system, and some issues which are currently grievable Mr. Donohue would rather not see be grievable at all). Part of the problem is that it is not clear what the employment contract is; another is that the whole point of the new procedures is to eliminate the confusion about where a dispute should be grieved. To retain other systems renders moot the point of writing the new ones.

Professor Ibele professed disappointment at the reactions to the procedures, observing that they reflected a failure to understand how the institution operates and what the faculty hoped to achieve by adopting them. He suggested that the Committee adopt a resolution which would re-authorize the ad hoc committee--if they would be so good as to do so--to negotiate with the administration in an attempt, if possible, to bring forward to the Senate, at its Winter Quarter meeting, a set of changes which are acceptable to the authors. He suggested that the procedures, once repaired to whatever extent seen as necessary, should be used for a period and then evaluated; if changes are needed, they can be presented to the Senate.

After Professor Striebel cautioned that they would only be willing to engage in revising the procedures within narrow limits, the Committee adopted unanimously a resolution calling on the ad hoc committee to continue its work and noting the strong objections of the Consultative Committee to any reduction in the scope of the procedures. Professor Ibele suggested too that any misunderstandings could perhaps be bridged by a memorandum of understanding--but concurred with the observation than such a memorandum could only explain the language, not amend it.

The Committee adjourned at 12:20.

-- Gary Engstrand

University of Minnesota