

Minutes\*

**Senate Committee on Educational Policy  
February 22, 1990**

Present: John Clark (chair), Jean Congdon, Carol Grishen, Robert Jones, Robert Kvavik, Marvin Mattson, J. Kim Munholland, Gary Nelsestuen, Gary Parnes, Julie Peterson, Aron Pilhofer, Jennifer Wesson

Guests: President Nils Hasselmo, Laurie Hayes (Agriculture), Russell Hobbie (I.T.), M. Janice Hogan (Home Economics), Nick LaFontaine (Budget Office), P. T. Magee (Biological Sciences), Elaine May (CLA), David Taylor (General College)

[Note: Most SCEP meetings are 1 hour and 45 minutes; this one was 2 hours and 45 minutes so these minutes are correspondingly longer.]

**1. Report of the Chair**

Professor Clark opened the meeting with brief announcements:

- Professor Mazzone has resigned from the Committee, at least temporarily, because of a terminal illness in his family.
- There may be a need for a special meeting in early April to receive the recommendations for nominees from the subcommittee on the Morse-Alumni Award in order to keep to the schedule.
- The minutes of the meeting for February 8 were approved as written.

**2. Use of the "D" grade to fulfill prerequisites**

Professor Clark welcomed Associate Deans Russ Hobbie from I.T. and Elaine May from CLA to discuss a possible institutional policy on use of the "D" grade in fulfilling prerequisites.

Dean May began by telling the Committee that there had been the previous day a meeting of the CLA Committee on Curriculum, Instruction, and Advising; this issue had been placed before it. There was, she said, wide consensus that the D grade should not count; no one dissented from the proposition that the D did not demonstrate mastery of materials sufficient to progress to advanced materials. By not having it count, the student is forced either to do better with the materials or to reconsider the direction of his or her education.

Dean Hobbie informed the Committee that I.T. has had a policy for at least 15 years which holds that a student who receives a D in sequence courses may not progress to the next course. It was established because of their experiences in calculus and physics, where a student might receive a D in a

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course and then be in profound difficulties the following quarter.

The problem with the policy is that while it has been on the books, and in the I.T. catalogue, for a long time, it has not been enforced in recent years. In earlier years I.T. would review records at the end of each quarter, identifying students who had received D grades, and de-registering them (because by the time they were identified they had already registered for the following quarter). Following retrenchments in their student affairs office, however, that procedure was eliminated so now the policy is not enforced (although its continued presence in the catalogue warns students that they should consider not continuing with the courses).

The policy, Dean Hobbie added, has not explicitly covered prerequisites between sequences (e.g., a requirement that one math sequence be completed before the next one is begun). That is inconsistent, he concluded, and I.T. would welcome action by the Committee if it could find an easy and institution-wide mechanism to accomplish the change.

Asked if they see students in difficulty because the policy is not enforced, Dean Hobbie said there was a smattering who continued after receiving a D and ended up on probation. It is not a large number. Dean May said that CLA does not have that many sequence courses which are actual prerequisites, with the possible exception of the languages. There is, however, movement in the direction of majors which will have prerequisites. Some have had prerequisites for some time but the number is increasing, primarily in over-subscribed fields (although the point would be moot because students receiving Ds would not be eligible anyway).

Dean May was asked how a policy, if rigidly enforced, would specifically affect the languages. She noted that students must pass a proficiency test after their coursework; it is possible--but unlikely--that a student could receive Ds but still pass the test at the end.

Dean Hobbie commented that as the Committee considers the broad picture, policies such as the one being considered should exist to advise the student. He recalled the example of one student who had not taken a prerequisite math course--but had taken a more advanced course and received an A. This was not caught at the time, but the computer caught it at the time the student applied to graduate; the math course carrying the A grade supposedly would not count. Dean Hobbie urged that no rule be so rigid that students such as this one would be penalized. It would be very sound policy in use as an advising tool, however, he observed. Dean May concurred, observing that there will always be exceptions. Both agreed that judgment would be required and that a (low level) petition process would address this problem.

A query was posed about the number of units which actually enforce prerequisites. One response was that it is up to the advisor; another commented that her department does try to enforce them. Dean Hobbie pointed out that in a large number of cases the student is taking the prerequisite in the quarter before the next course--so will register for the next course before the work in the prerequisite is complete. This situation will make it difficult to have a hard and fast rule.

Should prerequisites be dropped, inquired one Committee member. Dean May responded that one reaction might be that departments which have a lot of hoops for students to jump through, including prerequisites, would have to rethink whether the prerequisites were really necessary. If it was concluded that they were necessary, the department would probably accept a policy along these lines.

Asked if there are subjects in which the subject is not considered accumulative, Dean May said her own discipline, history, is certainly one. History has introductory courses but students would not be kept out of a 3-XXX or 5-XXX course because they had not taken the introductory course. One Committee member noted that in his discipline there is not agreement on whether or not the field is accumulative.

One of the student members of the Committee related that prerequisites are not enforced but that she always looks at them as a guide to what she is expected have by way of preparation when she takes a course. Even though she might have obtained a D in a prerequisite, she nonetheless knows what to expect--the grade from the course is less important than that the materials were absorbed.

Another student member suggested that there are two kinds of prerequisites: those which are legitimately required for study at a higher level in a field and those which seem to be there only for the purpose of keeping certain people out of the higher level courses. These latter courses, "weeder courses," might have purposefully difficult grading standards which are unreflective of the actual work put in. Prerequisites, it was said, are good tools for advising and for building knowledge, but there also needs to be an examination of these "weeder" courses in light of any policy which will require a certain grade prior to advancing. The Committee must be sure it agrees upon what it is talking about. Dean Hobbie pointed out that this is the responsibility of department and college curriculum committees--"to make sure the department doesn't pull a fast one."

It was observed that even in disciplines which are not accumulative there are instances of courses where prior work, perhaps in acquiring techniques, would be needed to take a course. In those instances a prerequisite would be a legitimate requirement; it says to the student that he or she will be lost if they do not have the preparation.

Asked what happens now when a student receives a D in a prerequisite, Dean May said the matter was usually handled at the unit level; there is no college-wide monitoring of which she is aware. There is overall monitoring of academic standing but whether there is an effort in college advising office to see what grades are obtained in prerequisites is doubtful--in part because of the problem of registering prior to completion of the work in the prerequisite. Departments, however, may do their own monitoring.

One way to handle this might be, Dean May suggested, would be to require the consent of the instructor--so the student would have to talk about his or her background with the instructor. There are a number of courses in the class schedule, she pointed out, which call for a prerequisite or the consent of the instructor.

One of the student members of the Committee said it was her experience that advisors are pressing students to obtain higher grades in courses which are prerequisites.

Dean May raised a question about credits obtained, noting that if one receives a D in a course credit is granted. If taken again, credit is not awarded; this may complicate the question.

One Committee member expressed the view that there should be a recommendation from the Committee because a lot of students are not aware that a D signifies unsatisfactory work. His experience with students supported such a policy; those who obtain a D in required work are then distressed when

they do not do well in his course--because they do not understand that D work is unsatisfactory.

Another Committee member echoed the view that there will be exceptions so that legislation must be drawn with care. In something like comparative politics, if a student receives a D at the introductory level, an advanced class may put the earlier materials all together for that student; maybe the basic class didn't do as much for the student as the advanced class. It may not be a true prerequisite but difficulty in the basic class may signal that there will be trouble in the advanced class--but not always. On the other hand, if a student does not pick up the basic learning in a Japanese class, there will be trouble in the next class.

Dean Hobbie reiterated his view that a policy could be an excellent advising tool. If a student, however, did at least OK in an advanced class after receiving a D in a prerequisite, it would be foolish to go back and take away the credit.

It was also suggested that a student in a 1-XXX level course, which covers a broad range of materials, might not do well because the test was multiple choice, for example, but would perform well at the 3-XXX level, with a narrower subject range and when the test might be essay or short answer.

It was noted that in one language department students must take a standardized test after each course; if the student fails either the course or the test the department requires that the student return the following quarter and retake the course--but the student need not register for it or pay for it. This, it was argued, may not be kosher but it is fair; one could get an A in the course but fail the test and then have to take the course over again. This might be in between, not requiring the student to pay again.

Dean May pointed out that adoption of the policy would have an impact not only on students but also on departments; they will have to examine whether or not courses are true prerequisites. In some disciplines it will be debatable; in others it will not. A policy concerning the D grade will do students a favor in those instances where there are true prerequisites.

Asked what SCEP might do, Dean May said adoption of a broad policy guideline would be best; it should then be sent to the deans to implement in each unit because of differences among the colleges.

One of the Committee members asked that data be provided, prior to adoption of a policy, on how students do after receiving Ds in prerequisite courses--rather than acting on the basis of the predilection of the Committee. Professor Clark concurred. Dean Hobbie observed, however, that he hoped the I.T. policy would not have to be dropped in order to prove that students who obtain Ds in calculus will do poorly in advanced courses.

Professor Clark thanked Drs. Hobbie and May for their time.

### **3. Discussion with President Hasselmo**

Professor Clark welcomed the President to the Committee to talk about undergraduate education.

The President began his remarks with the comment that he was glad, after a year in office, that he has finally been able to deal with a substantive educational issue. It has been, he said, a great pleasure to

be able to make two presentations to the Board of Regents on undergraduate education; there are two more coming in March and April as well. It has been gratifying, he said, because the University tends to be driven by other kinds of emergencies and other kinds of business at the Regents' meetings.

The President said he welcomed the opportunity to provide background on the Initiative. Having come out of the planning process here in the early 1980s, he said, he has become a passionate advocate of trying to get things done. The University has had excellent planning over the past several years and there were some important decisions made on the basis of that planning. It is urgent, he said, that the University try to implement them and derive the beneficial effects from them.

There are multiple reasons for the Initiative, the President related. The basic one is that he and many others--students and faculty members--at Minnesota and elsewhere, over the past several years, have seen undergraduate education at research universities as a problematic area. The causes are several; one is the stiff competition for faculty attention in research and graduate education and perhaps the tendencies toward increased specialization. These pressures have led to there being less time, if nothing else, to help synthesize knowledge and provide outstanding undergraduate education.

At Minnesota, he observed, Commitment to Focus had as one of its primary purposes the improvement of the quality of undergraduate education--overcoming the ill effects of overcrowding and over-extension. This aspect of Commitment to Focus was almost totally lost in the events which occurred later. He said he is trying to retrieve that element of Commitment to Focus. It is very important to do so, especially since the University is limiting undergraduate enrollment; we have the obligation to indicate what it is the University will try to achieve by having this respite from enrollment-driven funding which has been provided by the legislature from 1987 to 1993.

What is it that the University expects to accomplish in improving undergraduate education? It means curricular review (although there have been fine such reviews already, such as Project Sunrise in Agriculture and at Morris)--taking stock of what has been done and provide an institutional framework for it and give it an institutional priority. And to allocate resources in light of those priorities.

The definition of who the students should be is very important, especially since we are controlling enrollment; it is important to define who we believe will benefit from a University education. The University needs to reach out to those students and try more aggressively to attract them than it has in the past--and must do so in a way that looks at their preparation, at their abilities. But enrollment must not be skewed by virtue of geographical location or by socio-economic factors, let alone racial or ethnic factors. The admissions process must be a more explicit, deliberate, and well-defined process.

There will be difficulties; not all will agree on how to define the students who should come to the University. It is important to address this issue and that it be done through appropriate faculty governance channels and through such groups as the Council of Undergraduate Deans.

The process of admission also needs to be restructured; the President said he has been pleased to see the common entry point proposals come out of the planning process. It seems the University is on track in implementation, even though it may be a common entry point which quickly places students in a collegiate unit. But at least students do not have to apply to 4 or 5 different colleges; they can apply to the University and then, through an intense orientation and advising process, make more informed

choices about which college to enter. And some students who want to delay making that decision should have the opportunity to do so through the first year and into the second. Then when they do make the choice, it must be structured in such a way that a lot of credits are not lost but rather which eases transfer among colleges. It is also necessary that there be no unnecessary barriers in the way of transfer students from the community colleges; there are still problems here.

There needs to be a look at advising and there certainly needs to be more advisors. There will be money for more advisors in the 1990-91 budget, one way or the other. There are, in CLA, 500 students per advisor, which is simply not an acceptable situation.

There is a need to look at the way teaching is part of the evaluation system for salaries, promotion, and tenure. It is a faculty responsibility to look at the issues involved in this matter.

None of this is to diminish the importance of research. The President said he still believes very firmly that the faculty of this University must have a strong commitment to research and scholarship or artistic activity. That does not mean, however, that there cannot be a parallel commitment to quality teaching. Many faculty have that commitment, but many also feel that the reward structure has not given due attention to contributions in teaching.

There is also a need to look at the way instruction is delivered. Academic Affairs, he recalled, has solicited proposals from the deans on ways to improve the 30 or 40 largest classes--where there is clearly overcrowding. Funds have been set aside for those courses.

Also in place is the training program for TAs, which operated this year. The President said he hoped the effort could be intensified next year since the University will continue to be dependent on foreign-born TAs in a number of disciplines for the foreseeable future. While those individuals are an asset to the University in many ways, we must make sure they are effective in the classroom.

The general learning environment is another issue, especially on the Twin Cities campus where there are large numbers of students and so many commuters. He said he wants the Provost and the new Vice President for Student Affairs to devote a lot of attention to how we can create a sense of community. Intellectual and social factors and even things like providing facilities on campus for basketball and hockey enter into community-building. The President related that people have said to him "why don't you spend that \$48 million on education instead of on basketball and hockey?" "I would love to do that," the President told the Committee; "I've just had to tell them that those are non-existent 48 million dollars and that they are [income from] future hockey and basketball tickets which will be sold over the next 30 years to pay the debt service for a replacement facility--if that's the option we go with." That issue, he added, is still not decided. But it is not just for the benefit of intercollegiate athletics or recreational sports for students; it is for the purpose of building a stronger campus environment. There are other ways to build community as well, such as through student government, student participation on committees, perhaps the Greek system--and perhaps the campus religious organizations can also be enlisted in some appropriate ways.

Finally, he said, there must be an assessment process so that we know something is happening--so that there is not just more "input" but also outcomes that can be measured. This should include increased student satisfaction, perhaps improvement of student performance, and improvement in graduation rates--

where those rates have been low because of the unavailability of courses or because of structural obstacles. One recent measure that is important is the degree to which students arrive having fulfilled the preparation requirements that go into effect next year. It was gratifying to see a significant improvement since 1985. For example, 100% of the students entering in 1989 had met the social studies requirement; in mathematics and science there have been significant improvements. Also in foreign languages, although this is still an area where barely half entering the University fulfill the requirement. These changes have obtained in small communities as well as large; minority students have also improved considerably, although in a couple of areas there has been slippage--which the President said concern him a great deal.

The President was asked what he expected to happen, in light of these changes, to the dismal statistic that only 15% of the University's students graduate after four years. Will a majority of the students be pushed to graduation, perhaps in five years? The President responded by saying he had to get public attention and to do so had seized upon graduation rate after five years. He said he knows very well that graduation rate is a complicated measure. There is, he noted, a good and improving transition rate from freshman to sophomore, now about 80%, and that rate could go up. But the President said he recognized the University is serving a lot of non-traditional students and he does not want anything done which would mean we could not serve those students. There will have to be options which make it possible for an extended undergraduate career--while the University continues to try to make it possible for students to go to school full-time and participate in the intellectual environment which full-time attendance makes possible. That objective, he noted, is hard to accomplish when one attends school one-third time.

Financial aid is important in this area; the Foundation now has as one of its top priorities fundraising for scholarship aid for students. The President said he hoped that this would make it possible for the University to provide incentives to attend, and especially in providing the critically important "bridge" in funding that can make the difference between leaving school and obtaining a degree. These are fairly small amounts which, thrown in the breach at the right time, can make a big difference.

The President said he had no magic number on graduation rate but did want to see it go up significantly. Different cohorts will, of course, continue to have different patterns of completion and that will have to be taken into consideration both in planning and assessment.

The President was asked about the proposed diversion of student fee income from Boynton Health Service to the recreational sport facility--in the face of a large increase in the Boynton fee on the grounds that it was needed to deliver better service. It was argued that it would be better to give the fees back to the students in some other form rather than build another sports facility. The President said he could not speak to the increase in the fee but it was his understanding that use of the Boynton reserves was intended to offset further increases in student fees to finance the recreational sport facility.

The President was asked about classroom environments, which--as in hockey--frequently have no or bad sight lines; he was asked if it is possible to get attention paid to classroom remodeling--which is admittedly expensive. There is a real crisis in classroom size; it is demoralizing to teach and to learn in an environment where students have to sit on the floor. This is an issue which has not been addressed but it seems basic because the faculty are here to teach. The President said this was very much a part of the learning environment, although it has perhaps not been highlighted enough--unlike study space. Dr.

Kvavik reported that there had recently been the first meeting of an ad hoc committee, of which he is chair, on the quality of the classroom. They will duplicate the efforts that were made to inventory study space; statistics are now being gathered on use, quality, and distribution along with materials on what a first-class teaching facility ought to look like. He said he hoped to have, within two or three months, a comprehensive plan for classrooms; then the President will have to decide where funds will come from or how it will go into the capital request. But a systematic study has begun.

Concern was expressed by one Committee member about the over-administration of the University and the fact that administrative rather than student perspectives dominate discussion of issues; the President's Initiative was to be welcomed as looking beyond a bureaucratic attitude toward teaching and focussing instead on the student. But it was still time to look at the proliferation of expenditures which are not devoted to research and teaching. The President said he recalled entertaining the same suspicions from his own faculty days; he said it may be the University may be over-administered, in some areas, but in comparative terms it is not. The University has a fairly slender administrative staff in comparison with similar institutions--which does not mean the expenditures should not be examined. There is, the President noted, an "enormous piling on of state and federal requirements" as well as litigation in the past two decades, both of which have significantly increased administrative expense. The President added that he was very pleased that Gus Donhowe, who is good at finding money in non-academic areas and reallocating it into academic areas, has said as much as \$1 million may come out of non-academic areas in this year's budget into academic programs. If the University can be more energy efficient, he said, there is real potential to cut down on utility expenses; it may be possible to save millions of dollars by being responsible energy users.

The President was asked what he meant by the phrase "a single honors program" in his Initiative, what was meant by internationalization, and what his views were on possible reviews of undergraduate programs as a means to emphasize undergraduate education.

On the honors question, the President said, what he wanted was that the opportunities be available to students across the University; he is not, however, wedded to any particular model. Whether it be a single University-wide program or several college-based programs is open to examination, although there could be benefits to a single honors program because it would be possible to get interesting multi-disciplinary combinations of honors students. The President said he was concerned that the University is too compartmentalized for students to be able to "savor the full richness of the institution."

On internationalization of the curriculum the President said he believed it was absolutely necessary. It can enrich the personal development component of education; it is also essential to the professional component because graduates will operate in a world which will be much more international than it has been in the past. It should, he said, permeate everything, rather than be a separate item thrown into undergraduate education as a chunk by itself. So also with an awareness of gender and multi-cultural issues.

So, the President was asked, should a look at undergraduate programs in the future contain as a criterion for evaluation evidence of internationalization? The President said he would see it has one of several which should be looked at.

On the need for review of undergraduate programs, the President said he believed there was a need



because even though they were looked at in the regular program review process they do not receive full attention. They have not been reviewed systematically; the Committee was urged to consider ways this might be done without tying the University up in continuous reviews.

The President told the Committee that he had initially been somewhat hesitant to go ahead with the Initiative because he feels the education provided should be guided by the faculty. Since there were so many excellent plans and proposals at hand, however, the document was drafted to highlight them, to give institutional support to them, and to get them systematically into the budgeting process--and to alert the Board of Regents to what was happening in this area. He has been pleased by the responses he has received; he is also beginning to look into other areas, such as the recruitment of women and minorities into engineering. He is, he said, impressed by the number of programs that the University already has in place; they could perhaps be given additional momentum by providing an institutional context. The President reported he has identified an additional \$100,000 to support these programs. The nature of the initiatives, he concluded, is not to try to dictate educational policy from Morrill Hall but rather to highlight and give a budgetary context to efforts in place. He said he wanted to have committees such as SCEP involved in their implementation.

One problem, the President observed, is that higher expectations have been created; if they cannot be lived up to there will be profound embarrassment--but he is determined to avoid that embarrassment.

Professor Clark thanked the President for his comments.

#### **4. Review of Undergraduate Programs**

Professor Clark next welcomed to the meeting the representatives from the undergraduate colleges to discuss the advisability of undergraduate program reviews. Graduate programs, Professor Clark pointed out, are reviewed every three years but the undergraduate programs do not receive the same attention; should they be the topic of an explicit review?

Each of the college representatives reviewed briefly the procedures used in their units.

- In Home Economics there are regular comprehensive reviews of the units, with self-reports; graduate, undergraduate, and research programs are examined. Given the scholars who serve on the panels, however, the reviews are more heavily weighted toward graduate education and research. One done more recently, however, had a team which carefully looked at undergraduate education and made recommendations which are causing the department to make substantial changes. It is doubtful the faculty would have paid much attention to such things as advising without that sort of external review.

What there may be a need for, with the reviews that are already in place, is a better checklist and better materials provided to the reviewers so that they have more guidance on what to look at.

Professor Clark, noting that the Committee is responsible for both undergraduate and graduate education, inquired if review teams tend to deal with them as separate topics? Dean Hogan said they look at the balance; some departments have had more of a commitment to research and graduate programs--which was called to the attention of one in the review mentioned. It will vary by department, she said;

some emphasize undergraduate teaching and have smaller graduate research and teaching programs.

The Committee was also cautioned that programs reviews are not without cost; the recent one in Home Economics, for example, cost \$6,000. It may be that the Committee will wish to explore other mechanisms for these reviews.

- Dean Magee said he was uncomfortable with the notion of reviewing undergraduate programs apart from a review of the unit as a whole. Focus must be maintained, recognizing that Minnesota is a research university--which means that a significant part of the undergraduate education is based on the research that the faculty do. To isolate undergraduate education will lead its being under-valued or over-valued and the focus of the department could be altered. Reviewing undergraduate programs, however, is an excellent idea if it could be integrated into the periodic Graduate School reviews. Undergraduate education should be made an explicit part of the materials given to the reviewers. The aim could thus be accomplished without building some cumbersome additional apparatus; it also avoids the philosophically dangerous point of view that undergraduate education is somehow separate from other parts of the mission of the University.

Professor Clark alluded to the proposal from Dean Holt that graduate and undergraduate students be separated from each other by using 6-XXX, etc. level courses; he thought Dean Holt's view was that undergraduate education is oriented more to the general and reaches across the disciplines whereas graduate training has more of a research focus. Does this view have implications for the review process?

Dean Magee said he disagreed with Dean Holt's view; there is an interface where graduate and undergraduate education can mingle effectively and the distinction between them is not that rigid. He also said that most external reviewers are in educational institutions and usually have something to say about undergraduate education, and while one can get a committee skewed in one direction, one can also avoid getting such a committee as well. Further, he said, he did not think the distinction between undergraduates and graduates should be correct at a place such as Minnesota, because the University argues it is a research institution which therefore provides an undergraduate education which is unique in the state.

One of the members of the Committee, however, argued that experience as a graduate student makes one realize that courses are always "taught down" to the undergraduates in 5-XXX courses. Graduate students are thus forced to spend extra hours to learn the skills needed for 8-XXX courses. Another problem with 5-XXX courses is that where there is limited enrollment and undergraduates take up a large number of spaces in the course, graduate students end up having to spend extra time at the University in order to complete their work.

- Dean May said she agreed with her colleagues. The Council of Undergraduate Deans had discussed this topic the previous day as well as the nature of an undergraduate education at a research institution--the latter of which should have undergraduate and graduate education "mutually engaged." With few exceptions there should be no problem in having reviews look at the undergraduate as well as the graduate programs. It may be historical that the reviews come out of the Graduate School rather than the collegiate units, and thus

focus on the graduate programs. Her experience as a review team member has been that she has been required to look as closely at the undergraduate programs as at the graduate and appropriate materials have been provided. It should take very little to change the situation at Minnesota--and change should not require whole new structures. The only place in CLA where there might be a need for special steps would be in those programs which have no tenured faculty and which might not be covered in the normal cycle of reviews.

What would it take to get from the current practice to where we might want to be? Dean May said the radical view would be to turn the reviews over to the collegiate unit, which would then evaluate graduate programs, research, undergraduate programs, interdisciplinary programs, etc. There would, Dean Magee pointed out, still be a need for review of interdisciplinary graduate programs; Dean May said they would have to be cooperative. Dean Hobbie suggested that the change could come in the charge to the review team; the Provost, the Dean of the Graduate School, and the dean of the college would have to work together to make sure the review is of both graduate and undergraduate programs. Then it would happen.

- Dean Taylor said he did not have a great deal more to add but maintained that this issue goes to institutional vitality; the way to ensure it is to be sure that programs are doing what they are supposed to do. Every program review with which he had been affiliated looked at all elements of the unit. He agreed that the reviews should not be divorced from the graduate activities. The reviews are not only expensive, he said, but they are also traumatic for the unit being reviewed; it would not make sense to have two separate reviews.
- Dean Hobbie concurred with those who spoke before; a concurrent review makes most sense. I.T. has had experience with undergraduate program reviews in engineering by accrediting agencies; they are a lot of work but do not address the issues of interest. The concern is more with minimum standards than whether or not it is a good program and the things they learn from them are things they already know.

On an unrelated subject, Dean Hobbie was asked his view of the future of discipline-based education; it was suggested that it may be a thing of the past. Dean Hobbie disagreed. After service on a national panel for baccalaureate-degree granting institutions looking into the role of the major in the B.A. degree, he has learned that there are some majors (physics, chemistry, mathematics, economics) which are very sequential, which build layer upon layer. One cannot come into these majors without completing certain prerequisites. There are other majors which are non-sequential (or have developed that way over the past decade or two)--the "major" may consist of taking any seven courses, for instance, and there is no organization to it. If a major becomes non-sequential, then there is reason for arguing that discipline-based education can be eliminated; if the major has not lost its focus, however, then Dean Hobbie did not think it could.

Dean Hobbie also said he "disagreed profoundly" with the proposal to differentiate between graduate and undergraduate courses (creating the 5-XXX and 6-XXX levels) based on some classroom aura. I.T. has opposed this proposal in the past and still does. When courses are sequential, as they are in most I.T. disciplines, it does not make sense not to let a student in where he or she is able. A graduate

student in Mechanical Engineering, who graduated from another institution with a degree in physics, will have to take engineering courses in order to pursue the graduate degree. If they are 5-XXX courses they can count as part of the program; if there is a sharp distinction between undergraduate and graduate courses, that will no longer be possible.

- Dean Hayes from Agriculture endorsed the views expressed. She noted that 50% of their majors are interdepartmental. They have had non-Graduate School reviews in the past, because of their outside funding sources, and those reviews have included undergraduate programs. Now Agriculture will encourage the reviews to look at contributions to undergraduate education because in many instances it will not be possible to identify the associated Graduate School review with a specific undergraduate major. They would welcome a central call for undergraduate reviews but prefer that it be centered in the colleges. The external reviews can inquire how a department is contributing to the interdepartmental majors but there will also be a need for horizontal reviews because of the involvement of several units.

Asked what recommendation SCEP might make about undergraduate program reviews, there appeared to be a consensus that they ought not be "tacked on" to the Graduate School reviews. Rather, a statement might say that every unit should be reviewed periodically and that such reviews should include undergraduate and graduate education as well as research. The problems of interdisciplinary majors could be addressed within that framework.

Discussion about whether or not the reviews should be removed from the Graduate School and placed in the colleges led to no conclusion. The agendas of the reviews as they are now structured are set by the Graduate School, but that would not preclude the units exercising more control over how they are conducted vis-a-vis the undergraduate programs.

## **5. Discussion of the Report of the Tuition Study Group**

Professor Clark welcomed Nick LaFontaine to the meeting to discuss the Tuition Study Group proposals. A copy of a letter from Professor Burton Shapiro, chair of the Senate Committee on Finance and Planning, was distributed; that letter explained two motions adopted by the Finance and Planning Committee.

[Readers who receive minutes of the Senate Committee on Finance and Planning are referred to the minutes of its 2/20/90 meeting for a summary of the major points of the report and the rationales behind them; for those who do not receive those minutes, an excerpt is included. These SCEP minutes will include only a brief outline of the report and Committee discussion of the issues.]

The reconvened study group looked at four pricing issues plus some ideas about helping students meet the cost of higher education. The pricing issues were health science professional school rates, the Department Masters' rates, tuition banding, and undergraduate tuition.

Asked why "third place" was chosen for the health science professional school rates, Mr. LaFontaine explained that the University has typically sought to be third in Ranked Funding Adjustment dollars, so on the theory that if costs are to be no higher than third, income from tuition should also be no

higher than third. (Most health science professional school tuition rates are between fourth and seventh, in comparison with peers, so that this "third place" recommendation will have no immediate effect on rates.)

Professor Clark noted a future issue for SCEP might be the status of the post-baccalaureate programs which are not under the aegis of the Graduate School--the Department Masters' programs addressed in the tuition report.

On the issue of tuition banding (i.e., charging the same rate for the 15th through 18th credit as for the 14th credit), Mr. LaFontaine pointed out that one argument against it is that because a subsidy is extended to those who enroll in the extra course basically permitted by banding, the per-credit rates above 18 credits and below 14 must therefore be higher. Eliminating banding would conceivably lead to a lower per-credit rate across the board, and thus make it cheaper for those who take fewer credits per quarter. The argument in favor of banding is to encourage students to take full loads.

It was noted that this tuition proposal was revenue-neutral as far as the University is concerned, although, Mr. LaFontaine commented, that is not the case as far as any individual student is concerned; every student will be affected by the change. Those who come intending to go into CLA will pay more; those who go into Agriculture or I.T. will pay less. But across 1000 students who choose to come to the University, those 1000 students together will pay the same tuition.

Asked how long cost-related tuition policies had been in place, Mr. LaFontaine said he thought since about the early 1970s.

One reason advanced for the uniform undergraduate tuition rate is that students are enrolling in the less costly colleges even though their true academic interests may lie elsewhere. It is possible, Mr. LaFontaine said, that students may begin to enroll in higher numbers in other units, rather than CLA, because there is no longer the economic incentive to stay in the lower-priced colleges. One result could be that the cost per student could change (if enrollments in the higher-units begins to rise).

Mr. LaFontaine said he did not have any idea what the numbers of students changing their college of enrollment might be as a result of uniform tuition; all the evidence available is anecdotal.

Mr. LaFontaine reported that the students on the Tuition Study Group had insisted that the only way they could support the uniform undergraduate tuition rate was if there would be increased access to courses for all admitted students irrespective of college of enrollment (so, for example, it would be easier for CLA students to take a beginning course in Finance in the School of Management). The Study Group agreed, as did the administration, recognizing that more opportunities will have to be made available. There will still, of course, be closed courses, but access to take high-demand courses will be increased. The same general understanding is intended to be true about the provision of advising services.

The purpose of the guaranteed tuition plan would be to permit precise financial planning for incoming students and to serve to encourage full time attendance and timely degree completion.

The report right now is a set of recommendations to the Board of Regents; it is supported fully by the administration. Action by the Board will be adoption of the recommendations, thus establishing them

as institutional policy. There will, if the recommendations are adopted, need to be an implementation phase; the students who have enrolled as freshmen this year would be looking at a very large tuition increase if the changes were made immediately. So the changes are likely to be phased in over two to three years in order to mitigate the impact of the increase, although the first change would occur next Fall.

Asked what the current mid-point of tuition is (i.e., what would the uniform undergraduate tuition rate be right now), Mr. LaFontaine said it is \$52.75--about \$5.00 higher than the current lower division rate, about \$3.00 higher than CLA upper division, and about \$1.50 higher than the General College rate; all other units are above that figure.

Asked if the University was addressing the one-third of income the State requires be collected to pay the cost of instruction, Mr. LaFontaine responded that all of higher education in Minnesota, except for the technical institutes, operate under that formula. They have made recommendations concerning professional school tuition rates; the proposal does not mean that the University will no longer pursue the professional school tuition offset.

Asked about the possibility of reducing tuition, Mr. LaFontaine expressed caution about it. He emphasized that the Study Group had emphasized looking at cost of attendance, not just tuition, in examining the potential for increased financial aid.

One of the Committee members inquired what role SCEP was to play in discussing the report; Professor Clark said SCEP could make recommendations about changing the proposals.

There are extreme problems with the report, said one of the Committee members, and he wanted SCEP to take them up. The time available at this meeting was nearly expired and a fuller discussion is needed without pressure. Dismay was also impressed at the speed with which the report was making its way through the University. Mr. LaFontaine referred Committee members to the article in the Daily the same date of this meeting, although the statements made there were also problematic in the eyes of some Committee members. Mr. LaFontaine noted that the student members of the Study Group had made "noble efforts" to consult as widely as possible about the recommendations and that the Study Group had tried as much as it could to lay the issues in front of the University before acting on them in its report.

Where, Mr. LaFontaine was asked, does CLA tuition rank in relation to other Big Ten schools; he said that Minnesota is about 2% below the mean. He speculated that this change would put Minnesota slightly but not significantly above the mean.

If tuition were to be at \$52.75, and there were a migration from lower-cost units to those which have higher costs, Mr. LaFontaine was asked, would not the average cost of education rise? He said they would not; there is no evidence that more money would have to be put in the College of Agriculture, for instance, because more students might enroll in it. Other Committee members expressed doubt, although Mr. LaFontaine said that some of the current retrenchments are partly enrollment-related and the reallocation issue will continue to be examined. Demand has, in the past, played a very small role in the allocation process; it might play a larger role in the future and funds may be moved around. At present, however, it appears that there is capacity in the higher-cost units to absorb some additional students.

Professor Clark thanked Mr. LaFontaine for his presentation.

[At this point most Committee members departed but a small group remained to discuss issues related to the report. That discussion is summarized below. It was agreed at the end of the conversation that a special meeting of the Committee would be required to complete the discussion; that meeting was set for Friday, March 2, at 3:00 in Room 300 Morrill Hall.]

The concerns held by several Committee members, it was made clear, would require action by the Committee if it shared them. The concern, echoed by a number of students, is that the undergraduate professional schools are very expensive, and there has always been a subsidy by CLA students. If the numbers provided at the meeting are correct, every CLA student--during their career of 5.26 years to graduation--provides roughly \$3200 to subsidize other programs. That is not necessarily all bad because this is a university and there is need for a community. But to say that this will benefit CLA students is not correct; the trade-off is not demonstrated. There is no documentation or data on a need by CLA students for services and courses in other colleges which they cannot now obtain; the lack of supporting evidence is alarming. The increased subsidies from CLA to every other program "just simply isn't fair. It just isn't fair." The University appears to have given up trying to make professional schools cheaper by making CLA more expensive. While that might be a convenient way to do so without having to deal with the legislature, it is nonetheless an unfair burden on CLA students.

The removal of price as a factor in choosing programs, it was also argued, instead substitutes price as a factor which will affect whether or not students will even come to the University. A \$4.00 increase per credit in tuition may not appear large but there are a lot of students who are teetering on the edge of being able to afford the University. Despite the recommendations about financial aid, moreover, there are large numbers of part-time students who do not qualify for financial aid because of the constraint of "demonstrated need." There is a "circular insanity" which catches students who work; their income renders them ineligible for aid (in the form of grants) but the only way they can attend the University is by working. Now those students will be asked to increase by \$600 the loan burden many must bear in order to help pay for the costs of other programs; there is no way that increased burden can be rationalized--and the report of the Tuition Study Group does not rationalize it.

The concept of students being able to experiment was also criticized; 1-XXX level courses are in general cheaper to offer, as compared to a 5-XXX level course in engineering. Students at the 1-XXX level are not going to be experimenting with 5-XXX level courses in engineering. There simply will not be this kind of student demand.

The simplification argument is also distressing; one could make the same argument about the federal deficit: It would be a simple matter to eliminate the deficit by charging every citizen \$3 million in taxes across the board--but that does not make it fair or a better system. Simplicity does not necessarily mean improvement.

The concern, it was emphasized, is not with subsidies per se; it is more with the degree of speed with which the report is being rushed through and the lack of time to discuss it and with the increase in subsidization that is being proposed. Also puzzling is the assertion that tuition will not go up even if students migrate to higher-cost programs; that seems illogical. It would be reassuring to know that the University will not actually move backwards in tuition policy because of this migration. SCEP, it was argued, should make a statement on these issues.

Another Committee member noted that one problem has been that instructional costs in CLA have not been high enough for many years and now it--CLA--is reaping the "benefits" of large classes and low instructional costs. The CLA style of providing instruction has been traditionally based on poverty so its instructional costs have not kept up.

It was noted that the Council of Undergraduate Deans had endorsed the report unanimously and that if there were grave concerns the CLA deans should have raised them. One Committee member pointed out, however, that it was not the CLA deans who would have to bear the extra costs.

The Committee adjourned at 6:00.

-- Gary Engstrand

University of Minnesota