

Minutes*

Faculty Consultative Committee
Thursday, January 20, 2011
1:00 – 3:00
238A Morrill Hall

Present: Kate VandenBosch (chair), Peter Bitterman, Thomas Brothen, Nancy Carpenter, Carol Chomsky, Chris Cramer, Shawn Curley, Nancy Ehlke, Janet Fitzakerley, Marti Hope Gonzales, Michael Hancher, Caroline Hayes, Russell Luepker, Jan McCulloch, George Sheets

Absent: Melissa Anderson, Elizabeth Boyle, Colin Campbell, Jeff Kahn, Michael Oakes

Guests: Jeremy Todd (Office of Classroom Management)

Other: Jill Christenson (Office of the President); Sarah Kussow (Office of Classroom Management)

[In these minutes: (1) February senate dockets and tenure-code changes; (2) election of 2011-12 chair; (3) class scheduling policy changes; (4) committee business; (5) high-school preparation standards in mathematics; (6) intellectual future discussion in April; (7) committee business]

1. February Dockets & Tenure Code Changes

Professor VandenBosch convened the meeting at 1:00 and asked Committee members to review the draft dockets for Senate meetings on February 3, February 24, and March 3. She explained that two items scheduled for February 3 had to be postponed because the committee chair presenting them will be out of town; that left a very thin docket for that meeting. Because there will be proposed housekeeping changes to the tenure code, however, the Committee had planned to use the February 3 Faculty Senate meeting to present them for information and discussion. In lieu of an official Senate meeting, it would be useful to have an information/question-and-answer/comment session on February 3 on the tenure-code amendments and invite all faculty to participate; she said she assumed the meeting could be webcast and questions accepted by email. There would then be a Faculty Senate meeting on February 24 to take up a number of items, including action on the tenure-code amendments.

Professor Chomsky, one of the drafters of the amendments, said that the package of amendments is mostly to clarify provisions that have sometimes led to confusion in departmental procedures and among faculty. The amendments will go to the Academic Freedom and Tenure Committee (AF&T) on January 21 and, if necessary, on January 28. They hope to finish the discussions in three hours and forward them as amendments approved by AF&T. They would come to this Committee on February 3 for discussion, but they would also like to provide an opportunity for faculty discussion before they are brought to a vote at the Faculty Senate meeting on February 24. The plan is to distribute the proposed amendments to all faculty after this Committee reviews them and to hold an information and discussion meeting on February 3. This schedule will allow bringing them to the Board of Regents for information

* 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.

in March and action in May. Professor Chomsky said that those involved in the drafting and AF&T members should be available on February 3 to answer questions.

What happens if faculty members have a lot of questions at the February 3 session, Professor McCulloch asked? Will there not be a vote? Professor Chomsky said she assumed that if issues, concerns, or questions come up, AF&T will respond and still try to meet the February 24 deadline. If AF&T cannot agree on changes, or if the faculty cannot agree, the amendments will not be brought for a vote. The purpose of these amendments, she said, is simply to fix some problems that have arisen over the years with the language of the code. If the proposed changes are not seen as helpful, they won't be pursued.

It was agreed that Professors VandenBosch and Cramer would prepare a message and distribute the proposed changes once they have been approved by AF&T and this Committee.

2. Election of 2011-12 Chair

The Committee elected Professor Cramer chair for 2011-12; Committee members gave him a round of applause and thanked him for accepting the responsibility.

3. Class Scheduling Policy Changes

Professor VandenBosch welcomed Jeremy Todd, Director of the Office of Classroom Management, to the meeting to discuss proposed changes to the policy on Class Scheduling for Undergraduate and Graduate Classes.

Mr. Todd distributed copies of a handout summarizing the consultation process used to develop the changes and the rationale behind them. The problems with the current policy are hundreds of unplaced courses at the start of fall and spring semesters, a decrease in the quality of classroom assignments in terms of location and room (e.g., small seminars in large lecture rooms), decreased student access because of too many classes meeting during heavily-used class periods and days, and increasing the classroom inventory to accommodate spikes in demand, which leads to an inefficient use of resources because the additional classrooms are only needed for a few peak hours each week.

The proposed changes include requiring colleges to distribute classes evenly throughout the day (non-compliant classes must change their class-meeting times), allowing colleges to schedule a maximum of 50% of course sections on a Tuesday-Thursday pattern, and requiring colleges to distribute enrollment (as well as classes) throughout the day and throughout the week. The changes also propose eliminating the 60/40 guideline (which states that no more than 60% of the classes may be scheduled at peak hours). The changes also add two new meeting patterns to the standard class times: (1) 75-minute meeting times for 3-credit classes on Monday/Wednesday, Wednesday/Friday, and Monday/Friday; and (2) 150-minute classes may be scheduled, but only on Fridays (which is when the classroom-use pattern permits them). In the case of the latter, up to now they have been considered "non-standard," but would not be any longer (if they are scheduled on Fridays).

Professor Hancher asked if there had been consultation with the colleges. Mr. Todd said there was a working group of college representatives; they also worked with those responsible for scheduling in the colleges, and presented the proposed changes to the associate deans, who support them. Professor

Hancher inquired what fraction of any college concerns was met. All of the colleges support the proposals, Mr. Todd said. All of the colleges support the proposals, Mr. Todd said. The Academic Health Center is exempt because they are clinically based and the Carlson School is also exempt because standing non-standard times agreement. How will the "must" language of the policy be monitored and enforced, Professor Hancher asked? They will be monitored through the Classroom Budget Calculator, a tool that the colleges and his office can use to analyze the distribution of courses and enrollments. His office is there to help, he emphasized. As for enforcement, they will always schedule classes that meet the standard scheduling requirements before non-standard classes are placed in classrooms. The policy does create imperatives, he said, but if there is a problem, they work with the colleges to resolve them.

Professor Chomsky asked if the policy covers schools such as the Law School. It does if courses are being placed in general-purpose classrooms under the aegis of his office, Mr. Todd said. But the policy also provides that "classes designed exclusively for graduate and/or post-baccalaureate professional students are exempt from the requirements in this policy if held in a room under the control of the department." The Law School, like some other units, controls a number of its own classrooms so can schedule them as they see fit.

Professor Bitterman asked how they track courses that are offered jointly by two colleges. It depends on the parent department, Mr. Todd said; if the parent is an AHC department, it is exempt, but if not, it would be covered by the policy. How do faculty members tell what the parent department is, Professor Bitterman asked? The college scheduler or his office can provide that information, Mr. Todd told him.

Professor Hancher asked if the 60/40 rule is being eliminated because it was not strict enough. Mr. Todd said he had a different view: It did not allow scheduled classes across the day, in prime hours. There is the potential to increase class offerings in the 9:00 – 2:00 period, because colleges were good at respecting the 60% rule, they also then scheduled heavily in the next period, creating a peak demand at that point. This proposal will increase scheduling across the day.

Professor Chomsky suggested that part of the policy is system-wide, requiring a University Senate vote, and part is Twin Cities only, requiring a Twin Cities Delegation vote. Professor Carpenter observed that nothing has changed for the coordinate campuses. Professor Chomsky also suggested deleting a provision that says units must adhere to other policies related to courses, which seems unnecessary and unusual. This policy relates only to classroom scheduling. Including a cross-reference pointing to the other policies seems sufficient and more in accordance with other policies. Mr. Todd agreed.

The point of the policy, Professor Bitterman observed, is to allocate classrooms rationally, not to police departments. Mr. Todd concurred.

The Committee voted unanimously in favor of the changes (with a few editorial changes that Mr. Todd said he would incorporate). Professor VandenBosch said the proposed amendments would be on the February 24 Faculty Senate docket and thanked Mr. Todd for joining the meeting.

4. Committee Business

The Committee discussed questions it wished to raise at its upcoming meeting with Dr. Friedman, Vice President for the Health Sciences and Dean of the Medical School.

5. High-School Preparation Standards in Mathematics

Professor Brothen provided copies of a proposed change in the high-school preparation standards that would increase the math requirement from three years to four. On the face of it, this is a simple change, he said; Vice Provost McMaster asked the Committee on Educational Policy (SCEP) to approve it, which it did after it was reassured that students across the state would have the opportunity take four years of math in high school. Completion of four years of math is definitely related to success in college, and most students coming to the University (over 90%) already have four years of math. Once approved here, the change would go to the Faculty Senate for action.

Professor Cramer said he had read the minutes of the SCEP meeting when this matter was discussed and suggested that the Committee should not rely too much on the "if students can get the classes," because if the University changes its requirement, that can influence what the high schools do. Professor Brothen agreed.

Professor Curley asked when the requirement would take effect. The proposed policy amendment does not say, but presumably in 2014, Professor Brothen said.

Professor Chomsky inquired if there are any implications for diversity. Did SCEP talk about that? They did not, Professor Brothen said, but that is an issue around the country, not just in Minnesota, but does not appear to be an issue with incoming students. It is a concern, Professor Chomsky said; if the few percentage of students who do not have four years of math is predominantly students of color, there could be significant implications.

The motivation for the policy is to ensure the success of students, Professor Bitterman observed. Professor Hancher said that Professor Chomsky's point is an important one; can the Committee receive data? Professor Cramer said that the question is again an access question: Not are students arriving with four years, but do they have access to four years of high-school math. Professor Chomsky said that access (that is, having the courses in the curriculum) does not necessarily equal adequate preparation (some students, perhaps disproportionately in some demographic groups, may not be taking those courses, for a variety of reasons). Professors Bitterman and Cramer noted that such a concern would be better addressed by putting into place bridge programs that might serve to raise such students' abilities, as opposed to leaving the bar lower and thereby setting students up to suffer from lack of math preparation upon arrival. Professor Cramer noted that his experience in teaching incoming undergraduates in quantitative Chemistry courses suggests that improving high-school math preparation would contribute enormously to student success in such courses.

Professor Brothen said that students who are otherwise great applicants would not be denied admission because they are missing the fourth year of math—this is not a hard and fast rule. But if 90% of those who don't have the fourth year are under-served students, there still is a problem, Professor Bitterman said. The remedy might still be a requirement for four years of math but offering a summer program for students who need it.

Professor VandenBosch noted that the high-school preparation standards had been adopted jointly with MnSCU; have they been consulted? [After the meeting, Vice Provost McMaster reported that they had been; MnSCU does not intend to adopt the requirement but has no objection to the University doing so.]

What if advanced students have accomplished the four years before the end of high school, Professor VandenBosch asked? They would be admitted and considered to have met the requirement, Professor Brothen said.

Professor Luepker suggested that the implementation date should be 2015 in order to provide notice to students that they need to complete the four years of math. He also said he worries about the impact on students of color, but most of those students come from the Twin Cities, not small school districts that may not have the capacity to offer a fourth year of math (with the possible exception of the reservations, which he said he did not know about). In any event, the University cannot control what the high schools do.

Professor Hancher suggested that any comment accompanying the proposal note explicitly that waivers can be granted. Professor Carpenter pointed out that "available" does not necessarily mean just the student's own high school; the discussion at SCEP referred to online courses that are being offered by the Morris campus.

Professor VandenBosch summarized by noting that more word-smithing is required and that the Committee would like to hear from Vice Provost McMaster about the implications of the change for diversity.

6. Intellectual Future Discussion in April

Professor VandenBosch recalled that a recent article in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, "Scientists Fault Universities as Favoring Research Over Teaching," and a related article in *Science*, provoked considerable discussion among Committee members. She suggested that the two articles form the basis of the intellectual future discussion the Committee has scheduled in April; she offered several questions for the Committee to consider:

1. How does shifting funding (e.g., more tuition, less state support, uncertain federal research support, greater reliance on clinical income) impact the mission of an RO1, Land-Grant University and the University of Minnesota system more generally?
2. What is the relationship between excellence in research and excellence in teaching today? What ought it to be?
3. What is the relationship between excellence in undergraduate education and institutional reputation? What is the impact of graduate education? Professional education?

Some of the exchanges among Committee members mentioned faculty workload, sources of salary, and so on, but Professor VandenBosch said she did not believe those were appropriate for FCC discussion because there are such wide variations in college practices and funding sources and most of those decisions are made inside the colleges. Professor Bitterman said he believes faculty do not have a broad understanding across units about how salaries are determined but agreed that those issues should be taken up in discussion of salaries, should there be a faculty-wide discussion about pay cuts and related

matters. Professor VandenBosch said she would like to see the discussion framed around the declining state funds and the need to shift salaries to other sources and the implications those changes have for faculty work. Professor Bitterman said it is important that faculty understand compensation questions and that it is necessary to talk about values so faculty can have a general level of understanding of why faculty salaries are what they are.

Professor Hancher said there also needs to be a discussion of financial transparency, especially with respect to compensation. He suggested, however, that if the April intellectual-future discussion is the last one with President Bruininks, the Committee should invite retrospection and reflections from him, and ask for his advice on how to conduct such discussions in the future. The Committee, in other words, should invite him to look both backward and forward.

Professor Chomsky said that how faculty are paid is an important issue but that discussion of it across the university might not be productive. There are different models for faculty salaries in different units, and faculty may have issues about how the allocation is done within their units, but comparison across units may not be helpful. She also agreed with Professor Hancher that we should use our last meeting with the President to talk about his own views looking forward. She suggested that the Committee ask the President a more specific question, such as "what three things do you wish you had accomplished?" or "what were your greatest frustrations in the job?" Frank talk from him could help the Committee going forward.

Professor McCulloch said that the Committee is likely not aware of all the options in front of the institution. Perhaps some institutions have figured out what to do; is it possible to identify what has been written and try to adapt it to the University? Can Committee members, as faculty leaders, make suggestions about what the University can do?

Professor VandenBosch said that she and Professor Cramer would talk about the shape of the April discussion and bring back a set of questions.

7. Committee Business

Committee members discussed with Professor Hayes the candidates for the Board of Regents.

Professor VandenBosch adjourned the meeting at 3:00.

-- Gary Engstrand

