

Minutes*

Faculty Consultative Committee
Thursday, June 17, 1993
12:30 - 2:00
Room 608 Campus Club

Present: Mario Bognanno (chair), Amos Deinard, Lester Drewes, Paul Holm, Benjamin Liu, Karen Seashore Louis, Geoffrey Maruyama, Harvey Peterson, Irwin Rubenstein, James Tracy, James VanAlstine, Shirley Zimmerman

Regrets: John Adams, Judith Garrard, James Gremmels, Toni McNaron,

Guests: Senior Vice President E. F. Infante

Others: Maureen Smith (Brief)

[In these minutes: (several items in the chair's report), Medical School private practice plans, funds for faculty and staff development, statement by Professor Tracy]

1. Report of the Chair

Prior to the comments of Professor Bognanno, Committee members spent some time discussing the private practice plans of University physicians, a discussion sparked by the article in the Minneapolis Star and Tribune by Joe Rigert. Professor Bognanno then reported on several items:

- The Regents will hold an open forum on the 1993-94 budget on July 7 beginning at 6:30; he urged Committee members to ask for time if they wished it.
- He reported to the Provost's Council that the administration must be prepared for the return, in the fall, of a faculty whose morale will be diminished (after two salary freezes in three years, increases in health care and parking costs, across-the-board reductions). He also said he commented that the administration's argument that the 2.64% cut in combination with Restructuring and Reallocation equal a variable effect is adding together two independent events; they should be argued separately.

Associate Vice President Josie Johnson subsequently suggested to him, Professor Bognanno reported, that the President should spend the latter part of the summer with distinguished faculty and staff to develop ways to deal with morale when fall quarter begins. The idea is a good one--and the senior officers need to take the initiative on it. One faculty leader has warned that unionization is inevitable if morale does not improve and the problems of governance are not resolved.

* These minutes reflect discussion and debate at a meeting of a committee of the University of Minnesota Senate or Twin Cities Campus Assembly; none of the comments, conclusions, or actions reported in these minutes represent the views of, nor are they binding on, the Senate or Assembly, the Administration, or the Board of Regents.

- Work still continues on identifying a faculty legislative liaison.
- The President has made his recommendations to the Board of Regents about supercomputing, and accepted most of the comments of members of the task force on supercomputing and others in developing those recommendations. The President has been presented with a ready-made opportunity to put the Center/Institution relationship on an improved footing, Professor Bognanno observed, and he should make the best of it. With a strong, objective external assessment of the Supercomputer Center management, greater focus on the Center's academic mission, and increased financial and programmatic accountability, it is to be hoped that the issue is now behind the University.
- Since the last discussion of the proposed \$500,000 for faculty and staff development, the President has asked Senior Vice President Infante to identify funds to increase the amount to \$2 million. Dr. Infante will join the Committee later, and can talk about distribution; one suggestion has been that the funds be distributed to departments on a per capita basis and that department chairs then make decisions about their distribution.

There are departments with a great deal of external funding and whose members have never been precluded from professional activities (conferences, subscriptions, books), one Committee member argued; it would make no sense to distribute the funds across the board.
- He also told Dr. Infante, Professor Bognanno said, that the University needs a strategy for compensation; the Committee will wait on the administration for suggestions.

2. Discussion with Senior Vice President Infante

Professor Bognanno next welcomed Dr. Infante to the meeting and outlined the several issues that could profitably be taken up. Dr. Infante directed his first comments to the private practice plans. The article in the paper was not unexpected, he said; he had spoken to former Dean Howard after he had talked with Mr. Rigert.

One Committee member told Dr. Infante that it was his recollection that the administration had made it a major goal to deal with Medical School issues, including the private practice plans. It was the intent of the administration to get its hands on the plans and to monitor them. To the extent the newspaper article is correct, it now appears that the administration has capitulated and that it will be business as usual. And what, inquired another Committee member, motivated the decision for an externally- rather than internally-administered practice plan?

Dr. Infante told the Committee that he told the Board of Regents that the choice was between an external or internal plan; a lot of materials were also provided to Board members. There are two issues behind the recommendation for an external plan. First, in days of uncertainty in the health care field, both nationally and locally, this appeared not to be the time to recommend that the institution assume certain obligations it might not later want (e.g., salaries). Second, there are academic programs in the Medical

School, intimately tied to the Hospital, and the practice plans go with them. It is not clear what the future relationship of the University and the Hospital will be; the Hospital has considerable assets, and debt, and there is a general downsizing of hospitals. The decision to bring the private practice plans in or out is not irreversible, Dr. Infante concluded.

The plans should be controllable and observable, he continued, and a University administrative officer should have considerable control over how money is spent and how salaries are set. One cannot say the administration has backed down, he explained, and there may be some in the medical community who will be upset at the arrangements the University is proposing, although it was thought that an understanding had been reached.

Mr. Rigert will not be satisfied until the University has an internally managed private practice plan. At present, Dr. Infante told the Committee, he does not want one; the University, at this point, does not need additional problems with funds. One Committee member agreed that the reasoning appeared sound, but suggested that more money should be turned over to the University. More important, the administration must be able to give the University and the public the assurance that it will get its hands on the plans--or everyone will believe the Medical School will do as it wishes. Whether the management of the plans is internal or external is not important, if the control is accomplished.

Dr. Infante agreed that more money should accrue to the University, and it will under the policies proposed to the Board of Regents. The amounts to be paid to the University should not be part of the policy, what WILL be in the policy is an openness and "observability" that has not before existed, with the University acting as monitor. There is a natural tension, in private practice plans, between the sense that funds raised by this faculty activity should be used to benefit the department versus the feeling that the funds should be spread around, especially between the basic and clinical sciences or between the clinics and specialists; the policy will try to balance the interests. The policies will also make it clear who sets salaries.

This proposal will not satisfy those who want a system run by the University, and it will not satisfy those who believe doctors are paid too much. They are, he pointed out, in a profession where their peers outside the University are paid a great deal more than they are. To those who would seek to change doctors salaries, Dr. Infante said, the University sometimes believes it is strong enough to control the world--which it is not. He said he is convinced that the practice plan can benefit the University if it has appropriate observability and controls.

One Committee member told Dr. Infante that there is a perception, outside the University, that something is rotten--and that perception may be more important to what happens to the University than what is done inside. He can explain to the Committee, it was said, but more important is what people outside think, people who talk to their legislators, who are responsible for what happens to the University. The administration is not doing a good job; people are finding so much that is unacceptable at the University, and with an article like this one, one can begin to take the same view. The President has said his administration will be accountable; people need to see it--it must be perceived by outsiders. Even if that means throwing out the private practice plans.

Where, inquired another Committee member, is University Relations? There is much that could have been done, and the University is not without arguments or a position to take. And it cannot always

be President Hasselmo and Senior Vice President Infante in the public eye; they are seen as defending themselves. In earlier years public relations consisted of Vice President Kegler and Mr. Robb; since then, a lot of people have been added to the President's staff, to External Relations, and to Legislative Relations--and the University should be doing a better job.

Dr. Infante agreed that the University could be doing a lot better job in this area. He also noted that there are some things in the University that are not right because the oversight system may have been too soft. Nor has the University, he added, been limber enough in meting out disciplinary action.

There is also the issue of INTERNAL relations, said one Committee, especially with younger faculty. One Committee member related that he had talked with younger colleagues about such things as the theft of intellectual property and the commitment of the administration to shaping up the situation in the Medical School; one wonders how strong that commitment will be.

Dr. Infante said he shared the chagrin of the Committee. He assured it that he and the President are committed to moving in certain directions, and there is no doubt there will be more problems. This has not been a disciplined community, a lot of people have rights but few have obligations. One cure is a maximum level of openness.

Discussion then turned to the funds for faculty and staff development. The President has recommended increasing the amount to \$2 million. There are several ideas guiding his thinking about this money, Dr. Infante told the Committee. First, there should be no bureaucracy to disperse it. Second, there should not be a competitive grant system.

Dr. Infante said he has not made up his mind how to distribute the money and would welcome the advice of the Committee. There are a number of possibilities:

- request proposals from departments and colleges
- distribute to colleges and departments in a reasoned manner, perhaps with an upper salary cut-off for individuals
- differentiate among colleges in distributing the money
- favor younger faculty

In terms of what the money might be used for, Dr. Infante explained in response to a question, for faculty members it would be to help pay expenses they incur as part of their professional responsibility--meetings, books, software, etc. The money, when there are no salary increases, is intended to prevent faculty from being cut off from activities integral to faculty life. The only concern is that it NOT go in the pockets of faculty members.

Dr. Infante said he has faith in his colleagues and another possibility would be to simply give each department chair \$X thousand and ask them to decide, with their colleagues, what to do. He might ask them not to give any money to individuals making over \$65,000, but it would be up to them.

The idea is attractive, said one Committee member, but there are huge inequities among departments quite apart from salaries. Those who have access to external funds have funds for professional development; there are departments where no one pays to go to meetings. Allocating dollars

to departments skips over this inequity. In a time of low morale, one must reach those at the end of their ropes--those with no secretaries, no travel money.

What about use of the existing Graduate School mechanisms, inquired Dr. Infante--are they too bureaucratic? That would require a lot of faculty time for reading proposals, objected one Committee member. Some of the funds, however, could go to the Graduate School research funds--there are projects not funded that are nonetheless worthy. Those funds, Dr. Infante mentioned, have been protected and augmented, not reduced in the current budget. He said that part of the funds could go through human resources for self-development and part to the Graduate School.

Committee members spoke on various points:

- People must be accountable for how they spend the money.
- All departments have a mechanism for reimbursing individuals for expenditures; relying on that mechanism would be less bureaucratic.
- Differential distribution of the funds would be acceptable, but what measure or criterion will the administration use? How will one know which are the faculty in departments with no support?
- To the extent departments made bad decisions in the past, they should not qualify for the funds. The easiest solution might be the best one, which is to divide the funds evenly across employees.
- The funds should not be used as a disciplinary device. The distribution should be uniform to faculty on a pro-rata basis. The idea is to do something for faculty and staff at the department level; to deliver the funds to the colleges means they will get commingled and the effect will be lost. If a department has a faculty with an average salary of \$250,000 per year, Dr. Infante should add whatever other variables he wishes to control the distribution--it is mostly a matter of his time.
- One could take the average salary on the O+M budget.

Dr. Infante expressed reservations about an across-the-board distribution of the funds. There are a number of choices, he recapitulated: divide the funds into pools (some for human resources, some for the Graduate school some for colleges and departments); if the last, there should be some bias in the distribution. The money, he emphasized, is for COMMUNITY development, not just faculty development.

One Committee member noted that he is from a department that has made funds available for professional development. He said he would prefer to give up all of his portion of the money so that it can be directed to units where such funds are not available and where consulting is not a possibility. The limited funds of the administration should not be used in such places as Law, Medicine, and IT.

The consensus of the discussion may have been contained in the comment of one Committee member that Dr. Infante would not make everyone happy so he should do what he thinks is right. This discussion, it was pointed out by another Committee member, could be replicated in every college, producing no satisfactory answer but consuming a lot of time, and leading to no better a decision than one the administration can make.

Professor Bognanno thanked Dr. Infante for joining the Committee; he then adjourned the meeting to convene FCC plus other faculty members to develop comments on the President's performance for the Board of Regents.

3. Statement by Professor Tracy

[The following statement was prepared by Professor Tracy and distributed to Committee members in advance of the meeting. There were no comments on it at the meeting.]

June 14, 1993

TO: FCC

FROM: Jim Tracy

RE: Response to Prof. McNaron's remarks in minutes of June 3 FCC meeting (for minutes of June 17 meeting)

Since I came late to the June 3 meeting, it was only from the minutes that I learned that Prof. McNaron had attacked comments I made at the meeting (May 6) when we discussed the report of the Task Force on Gay, Lesbian, and Bi-Sexual Concerns. My recollection of what I said then is that one must distinguish between the issue of civil rights for individuals, and the issue of social approbation for homosexuality as an expression of human sexuality. Apropos of the Task Force recommendation on sensitivity training, I suggested that some gay rights activists are now blurring this distinction, so that (for instance) someone who says publicly that homosexuality is in some sense disordered or abnormal would be seen as violating the civil rights of homosexuals.

Most people in our society believe that heterosexuality is the proper and healthy expression of human sexuality, and should be encouraged in various symbolic ways (e.g. marriage laws); the implication, often stated explicitly, is that homosexuality should be discouraged, insofar as there may be an element of choice involved. I fail to see why Prof. McNaron should be shocked by the expression in a University setting of what is in fact the common opinion of the larger society.

To express this common opinion is surely not a violation of anyone's civil rights-except perhaps from the perspective of a radical cultural revisionism, in terms of which our whole culture (along with the many cultures that are its historical predecessors) is guilty of monstrous oppression. One can perfectly well be a cultural revisionist, especially at a university, but revisionists cannot reasonably expect the larger society meekly to submit to their condemnations. Yet among gay rights activists on our campus, there are some who seem to want to ban from the University any public disapproval of homosexuality. At the May 20 Senate meeting, Professor N. speaking in favor of the resolution on

spousal benefits, cited among other truly despicable acts against homosexual members of the University community the fact that "homosexuality has been called abnormal by a faculty member, at a Senate meeting."* I hope other members of the FCC will join me in recognizing the spirit that lies behind such remarks as inimical to free speech, and to the honest debate that is part of our raison d'etre as a university.

*This may have been a slightly garbled reference to what I said at the SCC meeting, or at an earlier SCEP meeting.

-- Gary Engstrand

University of Minnesota