

Minutes\*

**Senate Research Committee  
Monday, February 16, 2009  
2:15 - 4:00  
238A Morrill Hall**

- Present: Dan Dahlberg (chair), Melissa Anderson, Peter Argenta, Linda Bearinger, Paula Chesley, Jerry Cohen, Tricia Conway, James Cotter, Leslie Delserone, Frances Lawrenz, Jennifer Linde, Federico Ponce de Leon, Steven Ruggles, George Trachte, Lynn Zentner
- Absent: Arlene Carney, Robin Dittman, Genevieve Escure, Tom Hayes, Michelle Lamere, Timothy Mulcahy, Mark Paller, Andrew Van de Ven, Karen Williams, Jean Witson
- Guests: Associate Vice President and Dean Meredith McQuaid (Office of International Programs), Associate Vice President Pamela Webb (Sponsored Projects Administration); Aaron Rendahl, Curt Squires, Bruce Center (Statistical and Survey Services Subcommittee)
- Other: none

[In these minutes: (1) research and international travel; (2) statistical and survey services; (3) the Graduate School]

**1. Research and International Travel**

Professor Dahlberg convened the meeting at 2:15 and welcomed Associate Vice President Meredith McQuaid to discuss international travel.

Dr. McQuaid spoke from notes that she provided, edited for these minutes. She began by noting that she has served in her position as the Associate Vice President and Dean of the Office of International Programs (OIP) for almost two years. (Before that, she served in various positions in the administration of the Law School.) Her position is a new one, created in part because of the recommendations made by former Vice President, Provost, and Director of International Programs Eugene Allen, and in part because of the recommendations made by the Systemwide Academic Task Force on Forging an International University. The latter report was the result of a great deal of research and investigation more than three years ago.

The idea of having a senior international officer who does more than manage those offices related to student mobility is becoming increasingly more common, as virtually every four-year institution in the country claims to be global, international, or internationalized. In addition to managing the Learning Abroad Center, the International Student and Scholar Services office, the China Center, the Confucius Institute, an infant India Center, and the Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition, her role, increasingly, is to work with, work for, work on the not necessarily new, but perhaps newly important aspects of what it means to be a global university.

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\* 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.

Dr. McQuaid related that President Bruininks and his executive team have made it clear to her that she, through the work of her very qualified and competent staff, is to do the following three things:

- 1) Integrate and possibly coordinate the vast range of international activities going on at the University;
- 2) Promote the *existing* and *inspire new* and *exciting* international activity by students, faculty and staff in ways which build from better integration and coordination of what we do now -- all over the world;
- 3) Consider what the impact of all of this activity is on the University—positive and negative—and work within the University systems to reduce the possibility of negative consequences which might follow from **ill-considered** or **unconsidered** activity.

While she could discuss all of these things at length, Dr. McQuaid noted that the primary reason that she and Associate Vice President Webb were asked to come to the Committee was to talk about potential risk and liability associated with the international research and travel of our faculty, and what the University is beginning to do about it. She drew the attention of Committee members to two reports they had received. One, "Where in the World Are We Going?" came after the strategic positioning task force and responded to a request to her and to Senior Vice President Robert Jones to consider what steps *could/would or should* be taken to move from the rather lofty ambitions of that report to a more definitive action plan. Specifically, how does the University move from where it is to where it wants to go?

A small group focused on steps that she, the Office of International Programs, and the University must take in order to make progress on the three areas of focus which she had identified. The subcommittee formed to consider risk and liability, led by Professor Peter Hudleston, identified four broad categories of risk and liability associated with University activities outside of the U.S. *primarily* (although issues related to the hosting of international students and faculty were also included), and then evaluated the extent to which the risk or liability was already being addressed. The result is a colorful heat map, the most comprehensive look at the potential for liability associated with international activity ever assembled at the University. The subcommittee also made a series of recommendations, one of which was to form a standing committee to assess and prioritize the issues of risk and liability for purposes of addressing them.

The second report, "Report of the International Risk and Liability Committee," was prepared because she was seeking guidance with how to properly consider, digest, and address the number of issues identified by the first subcommittee and its heat map. A group was charged to identify the greatest risks and liability associated with international activity and to make recommendations on how best to proceed. It is her job now, Dr. McQuaid related, to engage various constituencies across the University in conversations like these about the recommendations.

There are—there always have been—significant issues associated with international travel and research by our faculty, students and staff, but it is likely true that if there are not more of them now, they are different than before. Many of the potential risks can be addressed with training or by dissemination of information, some of it general, some of it more specific. But they don't even have the opportunity to provide the training, because their biggest problem in addressing the international risks and liability issues associated with international travel is that they do not know *who is traveling, where they are going or what they are going to do* when they arrive.

For students who plan their education abroad experiences through the Learning Abroad Center, they have excellent resources and processes in place to adequately protect them and the University, to the extent possible, from risks of which her offices are aware and those they can anticipate. But, today, a day like any other day, there are University faculty, students and staff on planes, in cabs, on buses, on ferries; in labs, in hotels, in factories, in skyscrapers all over the world – literally. They are renting property, hiring labor, signing agreements, sharing research, opening attachments to an email message, opening bank accounts, accepting cash payments for honorariums, just to name a few tasks which, although *tangential* to the reason they are abroad, have the potential for a wide range of consequences. But, as she sits at this meeting, she said, she could not tell the Committee—and most of the deans across the system could not tell it—where those faculty and staff are.

Why does that matter? The answer is two-fold. One, the University is unable to assist them in their travel in ways that she is certain could make their travel more successful, valuable and safe. Two, the University is unable to protect them and the University itself from consequences which range from an embarrassing public relations problem to emergency service, and, perhaps, to a high stakes security gamble. Dr. McQuaid provided examples.

First, when Russia and Georgia were engaged in sudden and violent conflict, a University faculty member was stuck in Georgia without the knowledge of anyone here at the University. The University was contacted by the Star-Tribune and was asked whether it had any faculty or students there. After some investigation (which is a lofty term for a rather haphazard set of emails and phone calls) they were only *fairly* confident in telling the reporter there were no University faculty or students in Georgia. That story ran on the front page of the paper the following day next to an article about a woman worried about her sister, stuck in Georgia, who was a University of Minnesota professor.

Even if they could have answered the question, Professor Ruggles asked, so what? The University can tell the world what its faculty are doing, Dr. McQuaid responded—and help if they know when the individual should be home but does not show up. The next example illustrated what can happen.

At the end of last year a faculty member from SUNY – Binghamton was arrested and jailed for attempting to leave the country with \$16,000 in cash, the honorarium he had earned, because it violated the customs limit for departing visitors. This gentleman had emigrated from Kazakhstan 30 years earlier and is the director of the Center for Advanced Information Technologies at Binghamton—both factors which may have played a role in this instance—but perhaps more significantly, as the article which reported the incident pointed out, these days "visiting Western professors are no exception to the increase in subjecting visitors to strict enforcement of little known laws." The money was confiscated, the professor was put in jail, and he became very ill because he had a medical condition which required medication that he had run out of. He was fined for smuggling currency, and while he was in jail, his visa expired; because the customs officials had confiscated his cash, he had no money to pay the fine. What could the University have done for this gentleman? If the faculty member were from the University of Minnesota, and her office had known where he was planning to travel, OIP could have been in touch with him about the extent of his insurance coverage, rules of travel specifically related to Kazakhstan, and reminders about currency restrictions, for example. And when he did not return on the date he said that he would return, and if OIP had not heard from him, it could have worked with his family to being making inquiries and, ideally, assisting with his return.

Third, which has to do with laptops being confiscated at home and abroad. Nothing on a laptop computer is considered private while traveling and, in fact, traveling with encrypted data on a computer is illegal in most countries in the world, leaving all faculty subject to loss of computers while traveling internationally.

Tracking is the issue, Dr. McQuaid said. The what and the how are the stumbling blocks. She told the Committee about what other institutions (and actually several departments at Minnesota) have done. They require report of travel in advance of the travel; others Michigan State and Ohio State, deny reimbursement if the travel information was not provided in advance. She said it is key to distinguish between "permission to travel" and reporting one's travel plans in advance of travel. In her opinion, any procedure must (1) be simple, clear and mandatory, and (2) should be the minimum necessary for the risks and liabilities to be addressed.

With respect to the laptop issue, several universities have begun to publicize the issue more broadly while others have a pool of laptops which are basically nothing more than a sanitized word processor, with internet capabilities. Faculty check out the laptops when traveling, and of course, must provide information about where they are going with the laptop. Here is an example of University policy—that of having all non-public, electronic information encrypted—conflicting with international and even national regulations and one that could seriously impair the ability of Minnesota faculty to do what work they were supposed to do while abroad.

This is not about interfering with the research, work, or privacy of individual faculty, Dr. McQuaid summarized for the Committee, it is about protection for them, their safety, and their and University's the resources,

Professor Dahlberg asked how the University would make a policy mandatory. One way used at some institutions, Dr. McQuaid reiterated, is that reimbursement is denied if advance notice of travel was not provided. In his case, most of the trips are paid for by the sponsor, Professor Dahlberg pointed out. In that case the policy would not be enforceable by withholding reimbursement, Dr. McQuaid agreed.

Professor Dahlberg said he travels out of the United States quite a bit. Does the medical coverage work? Everyone has Medex, Dr. McQuaid said, information about which can be found here: <http://www1.umn.edu/ohr/benefits/medical/medex/>. Medex is a broker; if a situation is an emergency, it is fully covered; if not, it is 80% covered. One can purchase additional health insurance from the Learning Abroad Center, through CISI, which can be found here: <http://www.international.umn.edu/travel/insurance/index.php>. CISI is not required if one has Medex unless traveling with one or more students. CISI provides 100% coverage anywhere in the world for about \$1 per day. [Professor Dahlberg later clarified that as best he can determine employees' health insurance covers them at out-of-network rates while they are traveling.]

Professor Bearinger said she had never heard of Medex, which reflects the fact that practices are not uniform across the University. Her college enforces filing travel forms before traveling, and it was lore that one is not covered by insurance if one does not file the form. Professor Ruggles said it is his understanding that one must tell the dean or chair, but is that policy, he asked Dr. McQuaid? If it is, it is not uniformly enforced. Dr. McQuaid said it is policy but that some colleges enforce it while others do

not. Professor Dahlberg reported that he never tells anyone when he's traveling, except to take care of any classes he might miss.

Associate Vice President Webb reported that they are adding an item to the PRF form, if it includes request for travel, if any research will be conducted abroad. They (Sponsored Projects Administration) do not know where people are but do not want to burden people with questions that are not useful. The information is not in PeopleSoft so they will use EGMS and get it integrated into the new financial system (EFS). They do not want detail, and do not want to require that faculty keep making changes as projects change, but they can start with identifying projects that have an international component. Ms. Webb agreed with Professor Cohen that researchers may not know if a project will require international travel or work when they apply for the grant and said that anything they do is likely to be incomplete.

Professor Linde reported that in her department, one must have a travel authorization number in advance if he or she is to receive reimbursement. Her assumption is that this requirement was linked to EFS, but apparently it is only a departmental rule. All they are required to provide is information on where they will be.

Professor Bearinger asked where one obtains information about computers. Dr. McQuaid said she dreams of being able to capture the names of all University faculty and staff who will be traveling anywhere from 1 to 12 months in advance so that her office can provide them with key links about information, including that laptops with encrypted information may be confiscated. For the short term, the best source of information is Mark Bohnhorst in the General Counsel's office, Ms. Webb added. Professor Bearinger suggested that Dr. McQuaid set up a listserv on international travel that anyone can join. Professor Linde added that providing visa and passport information would also be helpful.

Professor Ruggles said he has a colleague who travels a lot for the University and who must frequently decide suddenly on where he needs to go next. It would be good to track this kind of travel but it is important to keep the system flexible, perhaps a website, and not onerous, that one can amend from abroad.

Professor Dahlberg asked how other universities deal with these problems and if any are successful. Dr. McQuaid said she would not favor a reimbursement penalty. A number do use it and are fairly confident it is successful, but no one has a complete answer. Professor Cohen agreed that a punitive system is less desirable than a reward system. A data-rich system that notifies people of information if they are going to a particular country to be a big help to faculty. Dr. McQuaid said OIP has a lot of information it would like to share, if people feel there would be value-added by creating a listserv or other service. What is key is making it a service, Professor Dahlberg said, and emphasis on making things better for people.

Professor Anderson asked if there is a network of international officers at the college level (there is). Could they enforce initiatives? Dean McQuaid said there is a network of international officers, called the International Programs Council, and that she could ask for their help with informing and persuading, but that enforcement by these individuals would not be possible. Professors Ruggles and Bearinger suggested that OIP reward filing travel documents, such as giving people \$100 every time they do so. Dr. McQuaid said she's thought about that. The University does a lot of recruiting of international students and they could ask people to attend either a prospective student event or an alumni event in a country

where they are otherwise traveling, and they would pay for the extra day needed. That may be another way to obtain travel information.

Ms. Chesley asked if it would be possible to have a program for checking out a computer for travel. Dr. McQuaid said she has also thought about that, something Virginia Tech started. Ms. Chesley also wondered if it would be possible for people to back up their data before they travel.

Professor Dahlberg noted the Committee had made a number of suggestions about how to get ideas out. How can they be brought to the faculty's attention? Dean McQuaid said she will be meeting with a number of different groups, including the College Research Associate Deans, over the next several months in order to get additional input on what policies and procedures might be useful and efficient, short of a mandatory policy with teeth. What is clear is that this is an issue important to the University, and that OIP is serious about trying to address it in a way that benefits the entire community.

Professor Dahlberg thanked Dean McQuaid for joining the meeting.

## **2. Statistical and Survey Services**

Professor Dahlberg now welcomed Messrs. Aaron Rendahl, Bruce Center, and Curt Squires to present a report this Committee commissioned last year.

Dr. Rendahl began by recalling that the Committee had directed one of its members, Professor Sanford Weisberg, to develop a committee to examine statistical and survey services on the Twin Cities campus. The group was established, with representatives from all groups on campus that provide such services, and sent a survey to faculty asking about the services they use, they need, and where they go.

The survey results confirmed that the services are needed, and more statistical services than survey, but in the latter case people often need more help than they do with statistics.

The group has three primary recommendations.

1. Collaborate. Have representatives from internal statistical and survey groups and other relevant groups meet together regularly to discuss ways to better meet the needs of University researchers and understand the services that the other groups offer. Make internal contacts between staff members so that they can not only refer clients to the appropriate group, but when appropriate, they can work directly with staff from other groups to better serve researchers.
2. Publicize. Create a central web site describing each group and the services they offer, who they serve, and how services are paid for. Also describe University best practices and how these groups help researchers meet these goals. In particular, describe the potential disadvantages and risks of external third-party survey services and encourage researchers to discuss their needs with internal survey professionals so that they can make informed decisions about which services are appropriate for their needs. Additionally, work with OIT to increase the effectiveness of web search results so that researchers can more easily find the groups that provide these services.

Many do not know that services are available to them, Dr. Rendahl said. Legal and policy issues arise when using off-campus services for surveys, and people or units could pay more than if they used an on-campus service.

3. Increase availability. Certain researchers have need of statistical and survey services but have limited funding available. Work with their departments and colleges to provide the funding necessary to provide them with the services necessary to support their research in a cost-effective manner. Additionally, advise researchers that do have funding but have traditionally not paid for services that this funding can and should be used for these type of services.

The committee should continue to work with the Office of the Vice President for Research to be sure that services are available at some level throughout the University, Dr. Rendahl concluded.

Professor Ruggles said he found this a useful report and said he was glad the various units that provide the services are talking to one another. But has it gone far enough? The report essentially calls for creating website and occasional meetings. It could be the case that more centralization is desirable. It is not clear why there should be multiple survey-research centers in the colleges; one central service under the Vice President for Research could be stronger and have a steadier flow of business. If there are a number of groups that offer services, it may also make sense that they specialize. If the units are to coordinate, would a better structure help?

That question came up, Dr. Rendahl said. Right now they believe the centers should continue serving the clients they have. The Academic Health Center has a group, the School of Statistics has one (primarily for the St. Paul campus), and the College of Education and Human Development has one. They serve three different types of needs and use different software and each is providing unique services. And they probably have different funding streams, Professor Ruggles observed. And different policy issues, Dr. Rendahl agreed. Professor Cohen said the services have been helpful with statistics that do not fit a model and said the system works well now.

Professor Dahlberg also said he thought the report was excellent and expressed surprise that there is apparently no redundancy in the system. With different funding streams for the units, that is presumably why some have to pay for services while others receive them free. The dean can pay for the service or a grant can, and if researchers can get the dean to pay, they don't have to ask for grant funding to do so. How level is the playing field?

They did not address the question of grants, Dr. Rendahl said. Different colleges have different solutions that are best for that department and college. His group is paid for centrally but they are pushing harder for grant dollars to pay for services, just as grants pay for other research support. But they believe there should be a certain level of support available to every researcher (e.g., two free hours of consultation). Dr. Center said that if someone has a large grant, he or she can afford to pay for statistical services--and does. What about faculty who do not have a grant, or who are trying to get one, or who have only small grants? What about students writing dissertations who need support? The needs differ across colleges and the committee did not have solutions to offer.

The issue extends beyond statistical services, Professor Dahlberg commented. He receives research services at a reduced cost, but not for free. Statistical services are not unique but are only one of many services on campus so why should they get special status?

Professor Anderson said she was surprised there are so many faculty who seem not to know that services are available. She suggested a contest among the units to identify the best way to reach constituents.

Dr. Rendahl reported, in response to a question, that only individuals in the Agricultural Experiment Stations and CLA can get free help from the statistics lab offered by the School of Statistics. Funding from the Experiment Stations, however, will end in 2009 so they will need to find a different source of funding in the future. He said he hopes the colleges will step up. Professor Ruggles said he did not believe that hope is realistic, that there will be inequitable funding, and asking grants to pay is not a good idea. One big issue is that graduate students need help and should have services available—or they will write crappy dissertations. For services that everyone needs there should be a central function provided by the Vice President for Research. Dr. Rendahl said they have a similar recommendation to Associate Vice President Lawrenz, who indicated they do not have funding to pay for such a service; he agreed, however, that some level of support should be available. Dr. Lawrenz commented that there are a lot of research services across the University that are critical but for which the Vice President for Research does not pay unless the colleges want the service put in the cost pool. It makes more sense that colleges pay for what they need and it is not clear that there is a need for services across the University.

In her graduate program, and in others that she sees, Ms. Chesley said, faculty are looking at larger amounts of empirical data than in the past, but faculty and students in the humanities often do not know why statistical support is necessary. That comes back to research support, Professor Cohen said, and what people must have. Statistics is basic and he said he cannot understand why the Agricultural Experiment Stations do not support the service. That is the kind of thing the AES is supposed to do and it does not make sense to backtrack in providing the support. It will be appalling if it does not provide it.

What about electron microscopy, Professor Dahlberg asked? That is not free. Should there be a charge for the libraries, Professor Ruggles asked? Charge the colleges, not faculty and students. Statistics is more basic than electron microscopy, he added. Professor Cohen said that mass spectrometry has University support but there is also a charge for users. Professor Ruggles said that for a big grant, one can put a statistician on the grant; what is needed are services for people who do not have a lot of funding. Or who have more money but none for statistical support, Professor Cohen suggested.

Professor Bearinger said she would rather pay for one-quarter of a statistician in a University program than post a position for one-quarter time on soft money. It wastes a lot of money to engage in piecemeal hiring. She added, however, that it is not appropriate for those who have money to pay more to support those who do not.

Ms. Webb said that statistical centers as internal service organizations is fine. Some need more help in preparing a grant, and for those with no sponsored funding there is a need that should be met.

There are advantages both to an advanced central system and to systems that are closer to the units and more nimble. The question is how to deal with that balance, recognizing that there are economies of scale to be achieved. The groundwork has been laid with this report and the connections between the units need to remain in place.



Professor Dahlberg suggested that the Committee commend the report to Vice President Mulcahy; the Committee agreed unanimously.

### **3. Closing the Graduate School**

Professor Dahlberg noted the decision to close the Graduate School and said it is a decision that has a lot of impact on research at the University. He asked if the Committee is interested in having a discussion of the impact of the decision on research. The Committee could help identify how the Graduate School affects research and play a role in affecting what is decided later. The Committee agreed it wished to have the discussion.

The Committee identified several people with whom it wished to have a conversation, ending up with the Provost. A number of issues that require attention came up:

- What functions of the Graduate School should be preserved (that affect research)
- The future functioning of interdisciplinary graduate programs
- Mechanisms to put the voice of this and other committees on the table
- How the School of Public Health solved problems it had with the Graduate School
- An inventory of Graduate School activities that affect research
- Quality control is urgent

It was noted that Michigan State eliminated its graduate school, and then re-created it a few years later. Professor Dahlberg pointed out that all the examples used in the decision are private universities. Professor Ruggles said the basic function of the Graduate School has been to set minimum standards for admission, graduation, and quality. The problem with decentralizing those decisions is that some colleges are not as rigorous as others.

Professor Dahlberg said he would contact individuals to join the Committee at a meeting in the near future, and adjourned the meeting at 3:55.

-- Gary Engstrand