

Minutes*

**Senate Consultative Committee
Thursday, November 15, 2007
3:00 – 4:30
Room 238A Morrill Hall**

Present: Gary Balas (chair), Nancy Carpenter, Carol Chomsky, William Durfee, Barbara Elliott, James Faghous, Marti Hope Gonzales, Emily Hoover, Jeffrey Kahn, Cathy Marquardt, Judith Martin, Ronald Miller, Nelson Rhodus, Pamela Stenhjem, Becky Yust

Absent: Shawn Curley, Mary Jo Kane, Jennifer Windsor

Guests: Mr. Mark Sanders (Chair, Senate Committee on Information Technologies), Professor Doug Hartmann (Chair, Advisory Committee on Athletics)

Others: none

[In these minutes: (1) report from the Senate Committee on Information Technologies; (2) report from the Advisory Committee on Athletics; (3) University Senate docket; (4) subcommittee proposal]

1. Report from the Senate Committee on Information Technologies

Professor Balas convened the meeting at 3:00 and welcomed Mark Sanders, Chair of the Senate Committee on Information Technologies (SCIT), and asked him to describe the issues before SCIT.

Mr. Sanders thanked the Committee for the invitation, the first time he has had the opportunity to interact with the Senate Consultative Committee to keep in touch. He distributed a handout and reviewed the charge to SCIT, the membership, and its duties and responsibilities. The focus of the committee is on "the development, implementation, and distribution of information technologies at the University."

Agenda items for this year include the use of technology in emergency preparedness, digital video services, update on terabyte secure space for faculty, email retention policy, GopherMail update, impact of technology on student performance, discuss teaching with technology rather than just imposing technology on the curriculum, supporting students in Vista WebCT courses, how best to empower faculty with technology resources, etc. Recently they have looked at emergency preparedness and on advances in teaching and technology and ways to measure outcomes. They have had a lot of conversations with the Office of Information Technology, its compact, and the six-year plan for distributed services at the University and the role that SCIT can play.

They took a position on student technology fees, an important topic on which they have had interesting discussions. Technology is a moving target but the technology fees are the one fee most students are behind, and those fees are closely watched. There was a proposal to eliminate them, so SCIT went to the Senate with information and asked that any changes come to SCIT first. SCIT has also suggested that the colleges should play a key role and students should be the beneficiary of any changes.

* 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.

There were strong indications that technology fees were not eligible for financial aid, but if they are required, then they could be; SCIT is looking into the issue. They are not pro-fee in general, and believe the fee system is complicated and dysfunctional, but the technology fees are successful.

Professor Martin asked if the pressure to get rid of the fees came from Vice President Pfitzenreuter and his staff. Mr. Sanders said there had been a decision last summer to eliminate the fees, a decision that was made without any consultation. Professor Yust said she was glad to hear that SCIT is dealing with the issue.

Historically, her department had a different relationship with Academic and Distributed Computing Services (ADCS) than does her new college (Design); in the past, her department used ADCS facilities, but her new college has its own lab. They have a good working relationship, but if ADCS decides to update its facilities and the college decides not to, faculty have different computers and programs than ADCS. She said she would not favor a move to a corporate mentality, where the corporation controls everything, but there is confusion about who is supposed to do what. Do they work on that issue? They deal with it at the 30,000-foot level, Mr. Sanders said, and the Office of Information Technology is aware of the issue. 86% of students have laptops, something ADCS must consider, because students will have new software and broad but not deep knowledge. They must design labs so they are friendly for student users (wireless, etc.), and will encourage common use.

Professor Carpenter (from the Morris campus) said she is bothered by the need to drive down to the Twin Cities for meetings when she has a lot to do, but there is no comparison between attending a meeting in person and by telephone. Will SCIT look at bringing the University into the 21st Century by advocating useful and high-quality video conferencing for all Senate committees? That is on their agenda, Mr. Sanders said, and they are discussing video communication between all campuses. Senate meetings would be a good place to start.

One issue in the Academic Health Center is the ability to access University networks from off campus, Professor Kahn said; it is nearly impossible. It would be very helpful to remedy that problem. Mr. Sanders agreed and said he has heard about it; this is primarily an AHC problem and is related to HIPPA. SCIT is discussing it, he promised.

Professor Yust said that her eyes glaze over when trying to follow the web-based directions for changing from a modem connection. If the University is going to wean people off modems, it should make it easy. Mr. Sanders agreed that it does seem the process has been made as confusing as possible.

Professor Durfee asked if SCIT is looking at the front face of organizations that deal with the University on information technology. How to deal with technology is confusing for faculty and it would help if there were a one-stop shop. Mr. Sanders agreed and said there are changes being made. The plan is to have a much better interface in place by next fall.

Professor Balas thanked Mr. Sanders for joining the meeting and said he expected that this Committee would be receiving more information on technology fees and emergency preparedness.

2. Report from the Advisory Committee on Athletics

Professor Balas next welcomed Professor Doug Hartmann, Chair of the Advisory Committee on Athletics, to report on the work of his committee.

Professor Hartmann explained that the University of Minnesota has two athletic committees, which is apparently unique in all of the NCAA. He chairs the Advisory Committee on Athletics (ACA); the other committee is the Faculty Academic Oversight Committee on Intercollegiate Athletics (FAOCIA), which deals with student-athlete academic issues. The chairs of ACA and FAOCIA each serve on the other committee so keep abreast of what each is doing. ACA is advisory to the President, the Provost, and the Athletic Director on policy issues related to the NCAA and Big Ten. There are three major items this year.

-- Implementation of recommendation #5 of the Kane-Leo report, which deals with the relationship between athletics and academics, and in particular faculty and coaches. After the scandals of the 1990s, the University constructed strict walls between faculty and coaches, which has led coaches to feel that they are not trusted to talk with faculty without pressuring them to do favors for athletes. Nationally, the recent Knight Foundation faculty poll and its hearings on faculty perceptions of athletics suggest faculty are distant from athletics and that there is a lack of understanding between the two cultures. ACA has prepared recommendations, including such things as faculty-staff appreciation day and lunches with faculty and coaches to help coaches understand why faculty don't jump at a request for help, and vice-versa, and communication with the campus about athletics.

-- The Native-American mascot policy continues to receive attention. ACA has not changed the policy in eight years. North Dakota has a quasi-settlement so is being aggressive about pushing the University to change its policy. It is a tough situation but ACA is not considering any change in its policy. He has received a lot of hate mail and emails about the decision to hold the line: some say the University should be more stringent, and not play North Dakota at all, while others say the University should be more open about playing schools with Native-American mascots. ACA is not involved with the issue a great deal; it talked about it last year and then saw a lot of contradictory opinions expressed in the media.

-- Third, this is the year for the decennial NCAA accreditation review, for which there is a steering committee. A report is being prepared; there are issues associated with graduation rates and admissions and so on. The accreditation report may position ACA to press on issues of concern to faculty.

Professor Wambach asked what has happened with Chief Illiniwek (University of Illinois); Professor Hartmann reported that he has been retired and that Illinois made a huge change at a lot of cost, but it is a success story for the NCAA. The University of Minnesota has responded to NCAA positions on Native American mascots in two conferences (Big Ten and WCHA). It has an exception for hockey with North Dakota because North Dakota is a member of the WCHA.

Professor Martin asked if ACA is likely to recommend rearranging the structure or the policy on contact between faculty and coaches. Professor Hartmann said the Faculty Athletics Representatives believe our system, though unique, is effective and he believes the NCAA could hold the University up as a model because of the separate committees to deal with academic integrity and with policy issues.

Professor Yust said she had attended one of the lunches with the coaches and found it useful and informative and an opportunity to ask questions. Professor Hartmann said he was glad but the problem is generalizability: there were 24 faculty at the last one, which is great, but the question is how to get the message out to the other 3000 faculty. They would like a wider reach. They would like to use the media to get stories out and improve cultural understanding, and a sense that the athletic department should prepare the materials, but their media people are focused on sports, so it is not clear who should be responsible. Professor Yust said it should not be solely the athletic department's responsibility; the University permits and supports the athletic department, and it involves students, so this should be a responsibility of University Relations. This is not just about student-athletes, Professor Hartmann said, it is also about athletics on campus.

Sports pervades the university experience, Professor Chomsky said, something to which she can attest because she just returned from a trip with her daughter to visit campuses.

Professor Hartmann said that the Knight Commission findings show a disconnect between faculty and athletics, but a lot of faculty understand the financial and public-relations benefits of athletics. Professor Martin reported that three or four decades of research demonstrates there is no relationship between athletic success and institutional fund-raising, and that very few athletic programs make money for their institution. She asked Vice President Pfutzenreuter years ago how much it would be worth to the University if the football team were to go to the Rose Bowl; he estimated between \$5 and 10 million, which is a drop in the bucket in the University's budget.

Athletics is not just football, Professor Kahn observed; there are a lot of students on other teams. He said he is on the academic subcommittee of the certification effort and has been provided with interesting data. Except for two sports, student-athletes graduate at a higher rate than the rest of the student body. The athletic department also brings other things to the table that are more aligned with the rest of the University's mission.

Professor Kahn noted that there are many more student-athletes than those in the higher profile "revenue sports", and that from what they've heard in the NCAA recertification process is that some faculty don't know that they have student-athletes in their classes until late in the semester, and sometimes not at all. The important and necessary firewalls between the Athletics Department and faculty with student-athletes in their classrooms sometimes make it difficult for important information to be communicated to faculty. This seems to be a problem with processes.

Professor Martin said it would be helpful to know if the systems in place to ask for information about student-athletes work. Professor Hartmann said that the response rates are below 50% for faculty, which is frustrating for counselors, who want to know how the athletes are doing. But from the faculty side, the timing of the requests is bad and they often seek more information than faculty have. The University does not do a good job of evaluating student services, Professor Wambach said, and when it does evaluate them, the faculty do not find out. Units such as the student unions and student services for athletes are not evaluated to the same extent, for example, as is the curriculum. Professor Yust said she thought the emails to instructors to provide information about the student-athletes' performance in their classes were easy to respond to and the phrasing was fine. In one case, she wrote a long response—and never heard back. When she asked, she was told the person she wrote about was "a good student" so no response was required; she said they need to hear about the good students as well as those who are not. Professor Hartmann said he would mention the point to FAOCIA.

Professor Balas thanked Professor Hartmann for joining the meeting and making a report.

3. University Senate Docket

Professor Balas next reviewed the University Senate docket for the November 29 meeting.

Ms. Stenhjem reported that CAPA will support the item concerning retiree benefits and suggested keeping the dialogue open because there are other retired employees besides faculty who can contribute to the University.

The Committee approved the docket unanimously.

4. Proposal for a Subcommittee

Professor Balas reported that the Senate Committee on Student Affairs has received a proposal to create a standing subcommittee to deal with adult learners and students with children. Usually subcommittees are appointed by a Senate committee, he said, but there are limited resources in terms of senate staff support. Committees are not prohibited from creating subcommittees but those staff-support limits must be recognized. He distributed a copy of the membership of the group proposed for subcommittee status and said the question is whether this is the right fit. The group is composed of administrators and two students whereas most Senate groups are composed of faculty and students with administrators as ex officio members.

Professor Martin suggested that a more appropriate route for the request should be through the Student Senate since this is a proposal for a subcommittee that will deal with student issues. Professor Wambach said she would like to see a charge to the proposed subcommittee. Professor Martin said that unless the Student Senate feels strongly that this group is relevant, this Committee should not play a role in the decision.

Professor Balas adjourned the meeting at 4:00.

Gary Engstrand

University of Minnesota