

## Minutes\*

### Faculty Consultative Committee February 18, 1988

Present: Ellen Berscheid, Mark Brenner, Charles Campbell, Shirley Clark, Richard Goldstein, M. Kathleen Price, W. Phillips Shively, James VanAlstine

Guests: Roger Benjamin, Edward Foster, Gayle Grika (Footnote), Geoffrey Maruyama, Irwin Rubenstein, Maureen Smith (Brief)

#### 1. Report of the Chair

Professor Shively brought up several housekeeping items. First, Committee members will soon be receiving a memo asking for their travel plans for the April SCC meeting in Crookston. Second, the Committee agreed that minutes would no longer be circulated in draft but would be subject to amendment at any meeting after they are distributed. Minutes from the previous meetings were approved. Third, Footnote will be evaluated for readership in Spring Quarter.

Three other items were discussed by the Committee.

First, the nature of consultation that would take place on the proposed change to the semester system. Committee members suggested that the details of the semester system needed to be known and wondered whether or not central administration had specifics prepared (e.g., 14 or 15 weeks, start/end dates, etc.) There was strong consensus that this, as a critical matter of educational policy, had to be brought to the governance system, inasmuch as the Senate is charged with setting educational policy. Committee members reviewed the procedural and substantive history of semester system proposals, including past Senate inaction, and concluded that the issues and questions raised in the past had to be brought to the attention of the administration. It was agreed that the Committee would ask the administration not to bring the semester proposal to the Board of Regents until it had been reviewed by the Senate and its committees, that the administration would be requested to provide the specifics of its proposal, and that if that proposal were received in the next month, the FCC would promise to have it ready for action on the agenda of the April or May meeting of the Senate (whichever was more convenient). [When he joined the meeting later, Provost Benjamin was informed of this request by the Committee, agreed readily that it was appropriate, and promised that his office would work to meet that schedule.]

Second, the Committee discussed its meetings with the Board of Regents. It agreed to find out from Regent Lebedoff what the Board members would like to see in the way of setting and atmosphere for future meetings. Committee members were agreed that the meetings were useful and well worth the time.

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Third, Professor Shively reported that he and Professor Goldstein, after the last SCC meeting, had concluded that T. A. preparation (communications skills) would have been ideal as a part of the Academic Priorities/Commitment to Focus. President Keller, after hearing about the idea from Professor Shively, concurred. Funding would have to be found, and Committee members suggested that a reduction in the study abroad funds would be appropriate, rather than try to dig up new money. The Committee approved unanimously a motion by Professor Shively that the Provost be requested to prepare a proposal to substantially improve the communications skills of international students who serve as TAs. [Again, Provost Benjamin was told of this proposal when he joined the meeting later; he also agreed that it was a good idea and said he would assist in acting on it.]

## **2. Discussion with Professor Rubenstein**

Professor Rubenstein told the Committee that the most important thing he had to do this legislative session, he thought, was to impress upon the legislature how much the faculty support the Academic Priorities prepared by the President and Provost. At a legislative presentation earlier in the day, Professor Rubenstein reported, underlying several questions to the President seemed to be a desire to know how much the priorities were supported by the Regents and, in his view, by the faculty and perhaps the students. He said the legislature would be more likely to act positively on the request if it knew it had support, and he would try to get that message to legislators. He also said he would take the broad view, as a representative of the whole faculty, and not just emphasize salaries.

Committee members discussed with Professor Rubenstein various issues, including information-gathering on faculty numbers in legislative districts, invitation of faculty to speak to legislators, and the respective roles of the legislative liaison and the President of UMFA. There was agreement that Professor Rubenstein should express strong support for faculty salary increases.

## **3. Discussion of the Academic Priorities Document**

Professor Shively welcomed Provost Benjamin to the meeting. Professor Shively told the Provost that he thought it was appropriate for the Committee to look at the final administrative plan.

The Provost said that he will be presenting the document to the Regents at their March meeting, and will address four categories: Academic and Educational Policy, Structural Changes, Collegiate Changes, and Funding. He will ask for comments on the collegiate changes, but except for CLA will not spend a lot of time on them. The funding question will be of great interest. The academic and educational policy changes will not be up for action because they need to go through the governance structure. He is also preparing an outline of what prerogatives now rest with the regents, the administration, and the faculty/governance system. The administration would like to adhere to a March/April timetable for action on the proposals, although the Provost acknowledged that the President is more willing than he to move more slowly.

In response to several concerns voiced earlier in the meeting, Provost Benjamin agreed that many of the academic policy matters do fall in the bailiwick of the governance system.

Professor Shively inquired what the Committee could do to be of help. Provost Benjamin said that an expression of support, if the Committee supports the priorities, would be helpful. He allowed that the

document is not perfect and that it may need adjustments, but that if it is largely right, it is time to push it. The opportunity will not come again. He told the Committee he is going around the University talking about the priorities; the problem is that no one looks "at the whole elephant." It is not, he emphasized, retrenchment and reallocation; it is setting priorities.

Committee members made a number of points about faculty response. One, support is broad, although there may be individual disagreement about some of the specifics. Second, the faculty are just tired of the issue and want to see action, see something happen. Third, that the recommendations should be viewed as loosely coupled, and that many parts can be implemented without one taking the position that all of the proposals must go or it will fail.

Professor Shively moved that the Committee strongly endorses the broad outline of the plan as consistent with the set of resolutions adopted by the Faculty Senate. The motion was approved unanimously.

#### **4. FCC Action on Plus/Minus Grades**

After brief discussion, it was unanimously agreed that the Committee goes on record favoring a change to plus/minus grading.

The Committee adjourned at 3:00.

-- Gary Engstrand

University of Minnesota