

Minutes*

**Faculty Consultative Committee
Thursday, December 15, 1994
12:30 - 3:30
Dale Shephard Room, Campus Club**

Present: John Adams (chair), Thomas Burk, Sheila Corcoran-Perry, Dan Feeney, Virginia Gray, James Gremmels, Kenneth Heller, Roberta Humphreys, Robert Jones, Morris Kleiner, Geoffrey Maruyama, Harvey Peterson, Michael Steffes, Gerhard Weiss

Absent: Carl Adams, Lester Drewes

Guests: David Berg (MPIS), Dennis Cabral (Academic Affairs), Senior Vice President E. F. Infante

Others: Martha Kvanbeck (University Senate), Maureen Smith (University Relations)

[In these minutes: student grievance procedure; number of administrators; (with Dr. Infante:) tenure recommendation process; search process; various other items]

1. Student Grievance Procedure

Professor Adams convened the meeting at 12:30 and turned to Professor Weiss for a report. Professor Weiss recalled for Committee members that last year he had delivered to the Senate Consultative Committee a recommended set of procedures for handling student academic grievances; the recommendations were the product of a small task force SCC had appointed, and which he had chaired, following the reorientation of the University grievance procedures to employment-related issues. The recommendations had been developed after considerable consultation. SCC had approved the recommendations and forwarded them to the Senate, which adopted them unanimously. After that the procedures got lost for a period, but were subsequently found; after minor emendations from the deans, they were taken to the Board of Regents last week.

The chair of the Board, Regent Keffeler, was unhappy to see another set of procedures that will invite grievances against the University and urged that department chairs be to resolve these complaints. If the chairs will not do so, the deans should remove them, she said. She raised questions both in a Board committee meeting as well as with the full Board. Professor Weiss said he had pointed out that the procedures they had recommended would save the University time, money, and grief, and that many issues that might be grieved by students go beyond the bounds of a single department. (The one issue that must be resolved informally is grade disputes, he commented; there will be no committee to decide if a student should have received a B or a C.) But once again, he concluded, a fairly simply policy is put in limbo.

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At this point, Professor Weiss said in response to a query, the Committee should do nothing. Academic Affairs is preparing a letter to the Board explaining the culture in which the procedures would operate and the need for them. They will be brought back to the Board for action in January; it is to be hoped that the Board will approve the procedures. If there is to be another committee appointed to develop different procedures, Professor Weiss added, he would decline to be involved in it.

Professor Adams thanked Professor Weiss for his report.

2. Number of Administrators

Professor Adams next turned to Mr. Berg and explained that the question about the number of administrators at the University had arisen; the Committee needs guidance in trying to think about the issue, he told Mr. Berg, and even though the query is not well-formed, it is a worrisome issue in a time of very constrained resources. The term is also loose, he added.

The term "administrator" in the context of the question is incomprehensible, Mr. Berg observed. More than one legislator raises this question every year, and he must always ask them what they mean by "administrator." One legislator asked him the question; he said if the term could be defined, he would provide the information; the legislator finally conceded and asked Mr. Berg to define it. He did so, and identified the number of people in positions defined to include "administrator."

The problem with that approach, he said, is that terms and titles do not remain the same. His own title has changed, so he might not have been counted in some cases--but has been doing basically the same job all the time.

The better way to consider the issue is to look at what the University is spending on the function, not at the number of people who are administrators. One could eliminate an associate vice president and hire ten directors--by some counts, the number of administrators would have declined by one, but the administrative expenditures would have increased significantly. The University reports data on administrative expenditures to the federal government as part of a larger data reporting activity ["institutional support" expenditures in the IPEDS data]. There is a long series of data on the percentage of institutional expenditures for administration.

The President has made it very clear, Mr. Berg commented, that the reorganization is not to lead to more positions or expenditures of more money. Achieving that goal, he said, will be very, very tough, and he is not optimistic it can be done. The number of staff in Academic Affairs can be tracked, he said in response to a query, and some may go to provostal areas, but that won't be particularly useful information. The question is not about positions at the vice presidential/provostal level, it is about the staffs that the new officers will need in the reorganized structure.

One Committee member inquired about the amount of money Minnesota spends in comparison with its peers, and about the trends in expenditures for administration. Mr. Berg said that over the last 6-8 years, administrative expenditures have declined at the University, and it is about average for its peer institutions. There is not a lot of variation among institutions on this expenditure, he said; on average, it runs about 8-9% of the total, with a range of perhaps 6-12%.

Another argument for looking at functional expenditures, rather than numbers of people, Mr. Berg agreed, is that some faculty who become administrators nonetheless keep up a research program and occasionally teach. That division of labor can be tracked, if noted correctly, Mr. Berg pointed out.

One way to respond to the instructions to hold administrative costs the same, pointed out one Committee member, would be to pass duties down to the colleges. Could that be tracked? The COST would be the same, Mr. Berg pointed out. With Responsibility Centered Management, it was said, much greater management responsibility would devolve to the units, which would change what the central officers would do. Mr. Berg agreed, and noted that this is what happened when CUFS was installed--and the colleges pointed out the additional work they were obligated to take on. How can one be sure that the scope of responsibilities remains the same, with no change in central administrative budgets, it was asked?

One wants to keep the costs of administration the same, Mr. Berg observed, but in the last ten years there has been a big increase in administrative costs because of such things as unfunded mandates, accountability, lawsuits, reporting requirements, and so on. He could recall when the legislative request was a dittoed 20-page document prepared by an accountant. Now it's 140 pages, it takes a year to prepare, copies are distributed to much of the western world, and the University is told exactly how to prepare it. That process costs a lot of money.

Mr. Berg and the Committee agreed that he would try to develop some baseline data on administrative costs and would return in several months to help it discuss the issues. Professor Adams thanked Mr. Berg for informing the Committee.

3. Discussion with Senior Vice President Infante

Professor Adams welcomed Senior Vice President Infante to the meeting, and related to his colleagues that he had given Dr. Infante a written set of questions about various issues before the University. Dr. Infante addressed his remarks to those questions.

- (1) Any further thoughts on the question of central administration oversight (on quality standards; technical review) for tenure recommendations above the provost and chancellor level?

At present the recommendations come through the deans to the vice president or to the chancellors, Dr. Infante noted, although in the case of Duluth the chancellor makes the final decision; he transmit it to the President and Board of Regents. In the other cases, the Senior Vice President makes the final decision. Under the reorganization, the provosts and chancellors will make the final decision, but will receive advice from the Vice President for Research and Dean of the Graduate School (hereinafter VPRDGS). The provost structure is a reasonable proposal, he said. There were 187 promotions last year, and control can better be exercised at the provostal level than in Academic Affairs. He said he has taken the task of dossier review very seriously but believes the new system will work. He said he also wants it understood that his office will still be responsible for ensuring that the system is working.

Professor Feeney commented that the tenure subcommittee of the Committee on Faculty Affairs has been asked to recommend revisions in the tenure code to reflect the new structure. They have only

just realized that tenure decisions will be made without central oversight, and are uncertain what the role of the VPRDGS will be. Will that person advise the provosts and chancellors, as he now does the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs?

Dr. Infante said that is his understanding. He noted that even though Academic Affairs does not have final say about Duluth appointments, that does not mean they cannot say something about them.

Asked how the two vice presidents will work together in the new system, Dr. Infante said the VPRDGS would examine ALL recommendations and that he would ask that person if there is anything bothersome or any notable trends in the appointments. That may work with the present incumbents, it was said, but if the VPRDGS position is ill-defined, it might not work in the future. The responsibility of the VPRDGS is clear, Dr. Infante responded. The provosts report to the President, who will have vice presidential staff; that staff will say if they see that something is not working.

Dr. Infante acknowledged that in the new structure he would not have the authority to return a file to a unit because it was unacceptable. He described the process that has been used up to now, and described it as a painful experience to have to read all the dossiers. It is, he concluded, a job that will be done better by three or five people, rather than one.

(2) Any substance to the rumor that a merger of men's and women's athletics is being seriously considered?

Is there any substance to the rumor that he is going to play center for the Timberwolves? Dr. Infante quipped. Committee members suggested he might be able to help them.

(3) In senior position searches, there seems to be a lack of established protocols, except for EEO/AA. Each search committee seems to feel a need to develop its own approach. Is this a wise use of people's time? Is there a reason? Can this be corrected? What might be done?

The problem, Dr. Infante said, is that senior officer searches are episodic, and tend to be very different. Of necessity, there will always be variations in the searches, and that is acceptable. He agreed that there should be a core protocol that is followed, and there are parts of the process that need to be improved. First is the number of people who are invited to meet with candidates is a cast of thousands. Second, there has always been interest and participation by the governance system; there has been no provision for interaction between candidates and members of the Board of Regents. Even in the case of deans, Board members are interested in meeting the finalists.

Is that appropriate, asked one Committee member? Where does it stop? It makes sense for them to interview presidential, vice presidential, provostal, and chancellor candidates. Many deans, Dr. Infante said, have very public positions; the involvement of the Board, or lack of it, can send the wrong message. He said he has asked Associate Vice President Carrier to develop a protocol for central officer searches. He repeated that not all searches need be the same, but there should be a core protocol.

Asked if the process was weak across the Twin Cities campus, Dr. Infante said it is. He recalled two embarrassing events that occurred during searches when he was new in his position. In one case, the meeting of a candidate with staff members turned into an inquisition, and probably led the University to

lose the candidate; there are interviews, but there is also an element of recruitment to them. In another case, a group of people were invited to talk with a candidate; few showed up. Another problem, related one Committee member, is information to candidates; the University is acquiring a reputation for not keeping them informed of the status of searches. That likely varies with the search.

This is partly related to staffing; some training for search committee staff might be appropriate, suggested one Committee member. The University tends to be somewhat more boorish than other institutions in this regard, Dr. Infante commented. Nominators, for example, should receive thank you letters; of the three central officer searches now in progress, only one sent such letters (the one being chaired by Professor Weiss). The right way to do this, Dr. Infante said, might be to have a central office that staffs all such searches (such as Associate Vice President Carrier's office). In addition to finding good people to do that, it was said, a small manual (LESS THAN 5 pages) could be prepared on the conduct of a search.

(4) Are representatives of faculty leadership scheduled to see provost finalists as they are interviewed?

Yes.

(5) What is the status of the work of the Transition Task Force?

The one of interest is attempting to inventory and define where responsibilities rest under the provostal structure (the other is considering central administrative activities in vice presidential areas). The task force has identified 17 topics and has dealt with five of them; those first five were difficult ones, but they have been done well. In human resources there are problems, because the University has not done things well in human resources in the past.

There will be three areas that will be difficulties and about which there will be arguments, Dr. Infante surmised: research, institutional relations, and outreach. In a very decentralized organization, there is still a need for some centralization so the institution speaks with one voice--while retaining a free flow of information. The question will come down to one of balance. Dr. Infante said he did not know enough about institutional relations to comment on it, but said he believed that oversight responsibility in research must be centralized.

The process is going slower than he had expected, he told the Committee, but they have a deadline of February 1 to decide how to reorganize, especially in Academic Affairs. There will be two problem areas in Academic Affairs in terms of relating to the rest of the campus, he said: information technology, which is everywhere on campus, and planning and budgeting. Neither will be problematic; they just have to happen.

(6) Central officers were taking a look at the proposed revision of the Regents' Policy on Academic Freedom and Responsibility. Anything to report?

Dr. Infante said he has asked that Dr. Cabral meet with Professor Adams to work on a statement that can be simple and well written; it is, he said, the most important policy of all. He has a group of people looking at the statement, Dr. Infante said, that includes representation from the deans, Student

Affairs, and the General Counsel's office; they are to work with this Committee.

(7) There seem to be matters concerning finances/audit/accounting/CUFS that should be discussed. Please let us know what we need to know.

Dr. Infante and the Committee held a closed discussion about these issues.

One Committee member subsequently inquired, following the financial discussions, whether or not CUFS should "be dumped." It will not work well with Responsibility Centered Management, it was noted.

Dr. Infante agreed with the second point. He said his own plate is so full that he has decided not to think about CUFS; it would take him too long to understand all the problems. It would be hard, he commented, to walk away from a \$20 million investment.

(8) A rumor is circulating that faculty numbers should be shrunk so that money released can be diverted to building maintenance. Comments?

Money could also be diverted to CUFS and to pay consultants and a lot of other things, Dr. Infante rejoined. The University is spending a lot of money fixing things that should never have been broken--perhaps because it did not spend enough on them in the past. He reported on problems facing the Libraries, as an example; LUMINA will need to be replaced because it is on its last legs. It is old, overloaded, and obsolete. If the University puts money into the staff, the technology will collapse; if the money is put into technology, the staff will collapse. The problems of the library are those of the University in microcosm--there is not enough space, not enough money to maintain deteriorating resources, and a sad environment.

-- Gary Engstrand

University of Minnesota