

**Faculty Consultative Committee  
Meeting Minutes\*  
Thursday, June 19, 2014  
Room 238A Morrill Hall**

\* 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.

- Present: Will Durfee (chair), Avner Ben-Ner, Colin Campbell, James Cloyd, Jigna Desai, Janet Ericksen, Russell Luepker, Alon McCormick, James Pacala, Ned Patterson, Paul Ranelli, Christopher Uggen, Eva von Dassow, Jean Wyman, Sue Wick
- Absent: Linda Bearinger, Gary Gardner, Maria Gini, Tabitha Grier-Reed, Joseph Konstan, Karen Mesce
- Guests: President Eric Kaler, Provost Karen Hanson, Vice Provost Robert McMaster, Linc Kallsen
- Other: Amy Phenix, Jon Steadland

[In these minutes: (1) Undergraduate interdisciplinary teaching; (2) Committee Business (3) Discussion with President Kaler]

**1. Undergraduate Interdisciplinary Teaching**

Professor Durfee began the discussion by introducing Provost Hanson, Vice Provost McMaster, and Linc Kallsen from the Office of Budget and Finance. The topic will be next steps to removing barriers to undergraduate cross-college teaching. He explained that there was agreement, which started at the last FCC meeting, that rather than forming another committee, it was time for action. The barriers have been identified, so it is time to move forward and discuss solutions. The SCEP committee report was distributed again in advance of the meeting.

Professor Durfee said that this initiative fits in with strategic planning, and that there has been a consensus that academic principles need to drive this effort. Solutions cannot be considered at a budget level until there is a clear academic direction.

Provost Hanson agreed that issues have been identified, but not yet solved through committees and task forces. She noted that the SCEP report listed issues that the faculty raised, such as finding a way for a degree to be granted from two colleges. She highlighted the following points:

- Find some solutions that do not continually take up the time of faculty and administrations.
- Ways to standardize practices should be discussed.
- The strategic planning process will highlight the aspirations apparent in reports that call for easing interdisciplinary work. She agrees that this task aligns with the strategic planning process.

Vice Provost McMaster agreed that it would not be necessary to have another committee around this issue. He then explained that there is a set of interdisciplinary courses offered, called *Challenge Courses*. The Bush Foundation challenged the University to create curriculum that addressed current societal issues. In the end, the curriculum was not funded, so instead of a *Challenge Curriculum*, they offered *Challenge Courses*. He distributed a handout that displayed tuition share models that were developed for the Challenge Courses. The courses have been successful and have been offered for the past three years.

Professor Durfee noted that in some departments, faculty workload and covering core courses is more of a concern than tuition revenue. Unless that issue is solved, collaborative courses are hindered. Members then discussed the issues:

- Professor Cloyd asked if there is adequate involvement of faculty in the professional programs with undergraduate education. VP McMaster responded that the Challenge Course titled *Our Common Waters* is an example of a professional faculty member collaborating with an undergraduate faculty member.
  - Provost Hanson said that Deans are discussing potential relationships between colleges and departments. She added that while student enrollment has grown, the faculty numbers have been cut or maintained. Economically, departments become tuition dependent and must focus on covering core courses.
- Professor Luepker pointed out that the system limits collaborations, especially if a course will not be listed in the faculty member's unit because they are paid per credit taught.
- Professor von Dassow posed the question: Why does this have to be expensive? What costs money is the faculty, who should be able to collaborate within the framework of their regular teaching load. She recalled the point raised at the last meeting that cross-trans- and inter-disciplinary courses must be differentiated. Professor Durfee said that to change the culture we must look at what students are required to take. If courses beyond the liberal education requirements, beyond their college were required, this would encourage collaboration.
- Professor McCormick said that the barrier between colleges needs to be addressed. He added that there is the feeling that multi-disciplinary is the term that is more appropriate. There is a need to balance disciplinary and interdisciplinary. The goal is to bring colleges together, but not create new disciplines. Provost Hanson added that if a faculty member is doing a multi-disciplinary collaboration, the college does not get the full benefit of the course, while the faculty workload is increased.
- Professor Desai proposed that separate courses be bundled instead of combined within one course. Faculty are still collaborating on the connection between the separate courses, but meeting local needs, and creating enhanced experiences for the undergraduate student. The difference between the disciplines is still clear, while there is a multi-disciplinary approach to the topic.
- Professor Uggen said that there is a need to advertise and make it known that there is a desire for multi-disciplinary courses and an affirmative statement that this is a focus.

Professor Durfee asked Mr. Kallsen to explain some of the barriers from the perspective of the budget model:

- Mr. Kallsen said that it has been considered how to enable cross-college courses. He emphasized that the budget model is only one part of the incentives and disincentives to this collaboration.
- Professor Avner Ben-Ner said that the need for multidisciplinary curriculum reflects an underlying change in disciplines that is not always reflected in the curriculum. How can we make things better under the current curricular model given the financial model? How do we deal with the disciplinary models that have evolved and are slow to change? How do we shape disciplines to reflect the changes in science?
- Professor von Dassow said that often funding is the barrier, and even team teaching within a department presents hurdles.
- Mr. Kallsen pointed out that there are issues in assigning adequate credit for the work that is being done.

Professor Durfee said that the dean and the college will need to recognize where additional resources need to be requested. Provost Hanson added that this is a curricular issue that rests with the faculty. They have to discuss within departments what they will need, if units agree upon the need for multidisciplinary opportunities, and how workloads will be affected. She cautioned that this will involve the shifting of the normal course of business for many departments. She added that there are ways that institutional support can be shown with smaller funding opportunities.

## **2. Committee Business**

Professor Uggen began the committee business discussion by asking members for orienting questions or topics that they would like discussed during the following panels at the FCC retreat. Members provided the following suggestions:

- Diversity at the University:
  - How can progress be improved and what strategies can be used for discipline specific recruiting? What sort of targeting goals can legally be set?
  - What is being done to retain minority faculty? What are different, non-traditional hiring methods that can be used, which would include demographics?
- Effects of External Environment on University:
  - How are we doing in community engagement and relationships with business partners?
  - What is the philanthropic environment currently?
  - What is the legislative atmosphere according to the lobbyists and fundraisers?
- Non-Tenure Track Faculty:
  - Professor Ranelli pointed out that UMD is considered a department, though in his opinion it should not be.
  - Add the chair of the P&T committee of the Medical School to the panel
  - There are issues involving non-tenure track faculty that are unpaid
  - More than one year contracts are desired by faculty
- Student Government Leaders
- Academic Programs - Undergraduate and Graduate Issues:
  - Accreditation and Program Review - Focus on graduate programs because over the next few years there will be changes

- The need to identify meaningful benchmarks - The tools to do this are not trivial and it does not always need to be a comparison to another institution

### **3. Discussion with President Kaler**

Professor Durfee introduced President Kaler and began an off the record discussion of the FY16 budget and the next legislative biennial request, as both are being formed this summer. The president and the committee discussed several potential areas of focus.

The discussion then turned to the strategic planning process. President Kaler provided the following details:

- There will not be a separate structure created for the implementation of the plan. The expectation is that deans and department heads will align the goals with those they have already established for their units.
- The reject complacency goal will be intensely faculty driven as tenure standards, post-tenure review, how to incentivize excellence, and program reviews are topics that will be discussed.
  - Members commented that this topic has been misunderstood and created some tension as to the intentions of this goal. President Kaler responded that the focus is on what and how things can be done better.
  - Professor McCormick added that in his opinion, this is an opportunity to change things that have needed to be changed and understand what aspirational, peer institutions are doing.
- The Grand Challenges theme will allow for an analysis of available graduate programs and if some should be combined or others added.

Professor Durfee then informed members that the President received a very laudatory review at the Board of Regents meeting. The regents cited that President Kaler is a leader, a motivator, clear, direct, and said that they believe the Strategic Plan will contribute to the growth of the University.

In response to a question, President Kaler explained that a contract has been signed with the Association for the Accreditation of Human Research Protection Programs. He restated that he is supportive of an examination of current practices.

- Professor von Dassow urged that there be a conversation with faculty members to explain why this method will satisfy the resolution requesting an external review.

Hearing no further business, Professor Durfee adjourned the meeting.

Jeannine Rich  
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