

Minutes*

Faculty Consultative Committee
Thursday, February 2, 1995
10:00 - 12:00
Room 238 Morrill Hall

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

Regrets: Lester Drewes, Morris Kleiner

Guests: President Nils Hasselmo, Regent Jean Keffeler

Others: Steven Bosacker (Regents' Office), Martha Kvanbeck (University Senate), Maureen Smith (University Relations)

[In these minutes: Discussion of the budget and planning with the President]

1. Discussion with President Hasselmo

Professor Adams convened the meeting at 10:00 and welcomed the President. He told the Committee he had given the President a list of issues; he invited President Hasselmo to address them in whichever order he wished.

The President began by saying that his overriding concern at this point is U2000 and the partnership proposal with the state. The plans for the University are now before the state, and the legislature, and they provide a platform from which to present the University's needs and priorities and to make the case for its importance. The University must stay steady on the course.

The President said he remains concerned that faculty and staff and students do not embrace U2000, because it touches their every-day lives. The future of every faculty, staff, and student depends on the success of U2000 and the partnership proposal, the President maintained, warning to the subject with vigor and enthusiasm. It is an agenda for change, and one must get beyond the notion that it is merely tinkering. There is a sea change occurring nationally, and the changes in higher education going into the next century will be as dramatic as those that occurred after World War II and the Vannevar Bush report that called for investment in university research. What is at stake is the role of universities in providing scientific and scholarly development in the United States: will they continue to have the major role, or will it shift into the private sector and government labs? The battle is engaged right now, he told the Committee, and the universities need to make their case. That role will not be safeguarded if universities try for the status quo, at a time when society sees them as collections of idiosyncratic people who are doing what they want. Most of what they want has been of value, but now universities must

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demonstrate their benefit to society--it will not work to say the status quo is fine and universities just need more money. That will not sell and it will not work, the President said.

Universities must not only demonstrate their scientific and scholarly work, they must SHARE it through new networks. The fundamental principles of U2000 try to capture that idea: this will be a leading university, a research university, with some disciplines and fields the best in the world, but it must also communicate what it learns, be cost-effective, provide apprenticeship relationships for students.

There is a need to rally around two concepts: preservation of scholarly communities, and radical change in the way the knowledge and skills are shared. The goal must be to preserve and redefine scholarly communities while linking them to a new delivery system.

The partnership proposal remains a good vehicle in the legislature, the President reported. He has been meeting with 3-5 legislators a day, and they are supportive; the problem is money. There will be a struggle for funding, and the University must be united on its basic message--and not fight among ourselves, he said, over spoils that may not exist. He said he is trying to give specificity to the plans, but is caught between laying out six or eight priorities and being told over and over that he must wait for plans to come forward from the colleges. He cannot wait too long, he observed.

There is also a concern that the planning process will not bring forward the restructuring options that the University MUST look at. There are signals that the colleges will tinker at the margins and look for loose change--which is exactly what he does NOT want to see. The budget instructions made it clear that would not be acceptable. What he wants, he said, is that colleges look at what they should be in the year 2000 and begin now to take the intermediate steps to get there. He said he is willing to provide every dollar he can for phasing, in order for the colleges to get to where they want to be in 2000.

Cluster planning was tried as one method of planning, the President recalled. There must be a more radical look at what the University does, and with faculty involved in the debate. It must also take on vested interests (or it will not succeed). U2000 is a vehicle for such change, but it needs greater specificity, which can only come from the University community. The central administration cannot restructure colleges, he pointed out; they must do that themselves. The administration can provide the urging, and use the inducement of budgets, but he does not see that they are getting to where they need to. He will have planning meetings with the deans, he said, to engage the debate, and the units must move.

The President then related ruefully that the University lives in a cloud of media activity, as well as internal campaigns, that are very disturbing and create hysteria. This makes it difficult to look calmly at the real issues and to try to solve them. He told the Committee he is trying to stay on course, to evaluate the facts and make decisions, and get through the fog of poorly-informed opinion in order to get the University restructured and ready for the future.

One Committee member congratulated the President on being more assertive, noting that it helps to have passion at the top. The partnership proposal has always been sound, it was said, and it is encouraging to hear that it is received well. Part of the job of the Committee is to get faculty to understand that they have a role in the proposal; the President, it was said, has the right to ask faculty

leadership to do something as well.

In terms of U2000, the outreach to the community and the internal clusters are both powerful, but there has been slippage in the implementation. The notion that the University must connect with the community is a change, but powerful; executing it, however, through creating a University College the size of CLA means the University has created a Metro State within. The University has bifurcated itself, and said that one part is the connection with the community. That is not a strong strategy and it dissipates the sense of what the University is. The concept that mainline units must be intimately involved in the connection to the community is powerful; a separate connection is not. Cluster planning was attractive but it was not directed enough; it was never translated into action. The implementation of the two has led to frustration on his part, it was said to the President.

President Hasselmo agreed. Cluster planning was intended to allow identification of goals across clusters of units. He expressed strong support for the activities in the Academic Health Center and the way that Provost Brody is leading the discussions. The faculty must be engaged in what will be a vigorous and difficult debate; "there are herds of sacred cows that must be slaughtered." There are specific initiatives in the University that are a model, where the university of the 21st century has arrived; he mentioned the Center for Interfacial Engineering, the consortium on Children, Youth, and Family, and the Urban Design Center--and there are many others, he added. The Center for Interfacial Engineering includes faculty, undergraduates and graduate students, representatives of corporations, active work in technology transfer, and students in apprenticeship roles. That is what he means by scholarly community, the President said. And one can't have world class scholars also in the field establishing connections, he said, so there must be staff in these centers for that purpose.

Another Committee member also commended the President's passion, but related that at the lower levels of the University, the transformation is seen mostly as punitive. The vision of where the University can, must, and should go, the challenge to sacred cows, the urgency of change, is mostly seen at the bottom as people are doing a bad job and must improve.

The reason this will be an outstanding university in the future is because it has outstanding faculty, the President said; the intellectual power of the faculty must be capitalized upon. But the University will not receive major new state funds, so it must leverage what it gets and consider what size scholarly community it can sustain.

The problem, said one Committee member, is that "when you're up to your ass in alligators, it's hard to think about draining the swamp." (To which the President replied, "you're telling me!") As far as faculty in the main departments are concerned, the 21st century model--based on the centers to which the President referred--appears to be one without a lot of students, not the ones that now exist in CLA and IT. Faculty in these departments have to deal with day-to-day operations of the University, with fewer funds, with the threat of continued cuts in funds in the future, where there are no secretaries and no technicians, and where the goal is simply to get back to where they were five years ago. To ask faculty to look at new ways of doing things without beating off the alligators and providing funds for departments with big teaching and research loads--it will not happen. The new organizations to which the President alluded do not carry the main load of the University; they are great models, and they do good things, but the faculty do not see them as what they do in daily life.

The President said he envisions centers, with world leaders, in history and other arts and sciences disciplines, not just in areas that produce commercial products.

The pressure faculty see, it was then said, is for MORE student credit hours. That was downplayed a few years ago, but is now back up. There is a decrease in service and support, efforts to increase research, and also to increase apprenticeships--which are very time-consuming and don't show up on the dean's books anywhere.

New modes of instruction must be used, the President said; medieval techniques cannot continue to be used. There are a number of new techniques available, and the University must get students to expect to LEARN things, not to sit through classes. And the faculty must change, too, he said. Some things have been tried through the undergraduate initiative, but that has been only a drop in the bucket, so other ways must be found to use new technologies to serve students. The President said he had been very impressed by the creativity shown in the President's Forums on Teaching and Learning; there is a lot going on at the University, and it needs to spread.

What is missing at the level of the faculty is incentive, said one Committee member. Increased controls and declining funding are disincentives; the Conflict of Interest and Conflict of Commitment policies, depending on how they are interpreted, could be seen as coming from on high. With retrenchment, and increased teaching, faculty have no time for creativity and see planning as an activity at the central level. Faculty creativity at the unit level must be tapped; faculty must be asked what they can do, how they can help create a better research environment, and how they can help generate funds.

How is that to be accomplished, asked the President? The way to do so has not been identified yet. This is a subject that needs discussion, and he wants the faculty leadership to be involved. What are the fundamental questions, the incentives that are needed? There is \$10 million for strategic investments in the partnership proposal, over the two years of the biennium, that he does not want to tamper with; perhaps part of it could be set aside for experimentation.

The earlier point, said one Committee member, about faculty members being nibbled to death, cannot be ignored. If a department is challenged, by being given a fixed amount of money and told to reconfigure and deploy it for instruction and so on, can things be accomplished? The College of Education faced a tough situation, but today it is optimistic, with a sense that it has turned the corner. It isn't clear if there are lessons to be learned from Education, or if it is a special environment, or if it is what the dean did. The challenge has not been put to deans and department heads. The message from the administration, however, is the right one; the world has changed. The selling job externally has been very good, but something inside has just not connected.

One major factor working against innovation, said one Committee member, is tuition revenue targets; it appears that units will be punished unless they pack students into lectures. One worries both about the incentives and academic standards. The units must attend to enrollment, but this is beginning to feel like the pre-Commitment to Focus times.

The President assured the Committee that is NOT what is intended. But the University has to get out of the bind that somehow the central administration owes the colleges students. There was a system of enrollment plans and tuition projections; everyone was surprised at what happened each fall, but no

one felt any responsibility for it. The intent is not to pack students in--that is what the University has tried to get away from. The goal is that the dean and department heads are responsible for enrollment, and cannot afford to miss their target, because the University cannot afford empty capacity.

Colleges will be punished if they do not meet their enrollment targets, it was pointed out. The program examples he cited earlier in the meeting have relatively few students, and the College of Education is primarily graduate. If CLA were to adopt any of those models, the University would not survive.

The President agreed that the colleges with large undergraduate enrollments have problems that must be addressed. Enrollment management means setting realistic targets and trying to meet them. If units miss, they lose 70% of the income; if they have more students, they can keep 70% of the additional income. He agreed that these can be dangerous incentives, but said they represent an effort to delegate authority and accountability.

What has prevailed has been a pass-down philosophy, said one Committee member: the deans get enrollment and budget targets and pass them along to departments. That is wrong. The targets are acceptable, but just parceling them out is wrong.

Professor Adams reported that he and Professor (Carl) Adams have talked about having a special FCC meeting (or meetings) with IT and CLA department heads to discuss the planning process and how it is working. He said he has received a number of calls from department heads asking what is going on with the budget. A meeting of department heads with the President would be important; so would a meeting with the Committee.

The University needs a strategy for restructuring the big colleges, the President said, and it must work with the faculty and deans. The problem, he agreed, is that everyone is so saddled with day-to-day responsibilities they can't manage restructuring. It must be asked what it would take for the big colleges to radically restructure--divorced from budget concerns--and the University must be ready to put some strategic funding into the effort.

There is a planning and budgeting issue, said one Committee member. There is a perception, among department heads, that Finance and Operations has been insulated from the budget pressures that are being exerted on academic units. They may not see the whole story, and Finance and Operations provides support to units, but it needs to be reported that that is the perception.

Professor Gray reported that the issue had arisen at the Finance and Planning meeting, but the information presented had been too aggregated. Her committee has suggested, she said, that it is the responsibility of central administration to address the concern, to supply the data, and to put the issue to rest. One cannot expect people to buy into a planning process unless the administration can show that academic units are not being hurt, to the gain of the non-academic units.

The President said he was not sure that the case can be demonstrated with simple sheets of data. There have been reviews of Finance and Operations units by faculty and staff, he noted. It is also necessary to put this in context; the University has historically underfunded maintenance, and in 1991 gutted Finance and Operations. We have overdone it, he commented, and had to put money back in. He

agreed the problem needed evaluation, and said he was not sure that the existing balance between academic and non-academic units is necessarily the right one. Should there be a team to review this issue? It is too complicated to review in a committee meeting, he said.

Another way to get faculty buy-in, said one Committee member, is to look at the relationship between faculty and local leaders. Some faculty feel stifled because of the way their units are administered; they feel oppressed. Professor Feeney reported that the Committee on Faculty Affairs is looking at how administrative reviews are handled; this is an issue that has bubbled to the top of the pile.

The deans face very tough agendas that they must struggle with, the President cautioned. It may be that there are different ways to approach the process, and the right one hasn't been identified, but it isn't profitable to say that people aren't doing their jobs. He then repeated his statement that he wanted a discussion about how to frame questions for the units and how to provide incentives to answer them. Working with a subgroup of FCC might be a useful way to proceed.

There is a morale problem, maintained one Committee member. One hears that the administration wants the faculty involved and to do more, but with budget cuts, it is hard to get faculty with a severe morale problem to buy into anything. The message must be more positive. This is not a problem that has developed just this year; it has been building for a long time and is now at a crisis. The faculty are hunkering down, trying to keep what they've got. The President's enthusiasm today is good, but the message is not getting down. Is this an issue of middle management? The President said he was painfully aware of the morale problem and that the message somehow has to get through.

Professor Adams thanked the President for joining the meeting.

2. Discussion

Professor Adams inquired what the best way to promote the discussion would be, so that there is more effective interaction between the faculty and the institutional agenda, recognizing that deans and department heads are key players. Committee members bring the faculty view; the President brings the administrative view; the weakness of the role of the deans and department heads is real. What role does this Committee have, he asked?

3. Discussion with Regent Keffeler

At this point Professor Adams welcomed Regent Keffeler to the meeting. It was agreed that the meeting would be off the record. The discussion lasted an hour and covered a wide range of issues related to the selection and activities of the Board and its relationship with the faculty.

Professor Adams adjourned the meeting at noon.

-- Gary Engstrand