

10/00/32
ARCHIVES
PRINT
10/00/32
1978

NOTES FROM THE
"BRAINSTORMING RETREAT"
MARCH 18, 1978

NOTES FROM THE "BRAINSTORMING RETREAT"

March 18, 1978

The purpose of the Provost's "brainstorming retreat" held at the Kitchi Gammi on March 18, 1978, was to give selected faculty members an opportunity to discuss candidly their concerns with the Provost. The opinions and ideas expressed were diverse. The following summary then is an attempt to reflect the topics discussed and range of views and ideas given. Also, specific suggestions are included for further reference.

The morning started with a brief agenda-setting period. Faculty participants added to the list the Possible Topics for Discussion. The additions included the system of rewards, faculty development, interdisciplinary studies, quality of instruction and evaluation, advisement/retention, coordination of information dissemination as it relates to on campus events such as lecture series, non-traditional and minority students, quality of life, image, and identification of resources.

While agreeing that many of the items were inter-related, it was decided that the group would focus on several major topics during the day.

Promotion and tenure was the first major topic of discussion.

Clearly stated, campus criteria should and must be developed and then applied equitably across campus. They should clearly reflect UMD's mission about how the criteria are to be developed and the charge to the deans to develop collegiate criteria was mentioned. There were a number of questions. Concern was expressed that grassroots faculty should have a hand in criteria development.

Evaluation and documentation of teaching was of concern. A wide range of opinions

concerning available tools for evaluation was expressed. The complete Senate document regarding evaluation was referred to and the relationship of the department head to the individual faculty member was discussed. It appears that there is no easy answer to this problem. Some expressed concern over the as-yet-ignored teaching such as tutoring, advising, etc., that goes on outside the classroom. It was felt that this must somehow be considered for promotion and tenure.

Much discussion centered around the problems of morale as they relate to promotion and tenure. Several felt the administration is sending out mixed signals. While there may be less of a problem with the newer faculty, there are many others who feel as though the ground rules have shifted, and there was wide recognition by those present that in fact this is true. Faculty need to be kept informed about what the expectations are and what they can realistically expect in rewards. As noted by one, many faculty know they have to run, but they have no idea how far.

The use of performance agreements was discussed as a method of clarifying expectations. Also, it was suggested that five activities be considered: evaluation of (in contrast to consideration only of quantity) research, interdisciplinary work, outreach or community work, teaching improvement, and teaching quality evaluated in relation to assignment.

NOTE: The following comments or questions are included to give the reader a feeling for the tone of the discussion. A list of comments will occur after each major section. They appear in the order in which they occurred.

- Tools used to evaluate scholarly work are too simplistic.
- System approval of any criteria is a must.
- We want people to do some research even if it's not terrific.
- We have campus experts on evaluation and they should be used.
- You can't evaluate in a vacuum.
- No rewards currently exist in risk taking in improvement of teaching.
- Should every person expect to become a full professor?

1. A Policy on the Evaluation of University Teaching brought to the University Senate by the Senate Committee on Educational Policy and approved on May 30, 1974.

I would like to see examples of marginal files so that I can see what I have to do to get promoted or tenured.
We need to develop a somewhat static system so we can evaluate.

Physical facilities was another major area of discussion. It was noted that facilities can have a considerable impact on a teacher's performance. Some specific rooms and areas were mentioned, and it was suggested that a list of recommended changes in general purpose classrooms should be developed, either for use by the current building committees and/or use by future committees, particularly remodeling committees. Questions were raised as to why UMD operates in a crisis syndrome: i.e., why isn't part of the building money kept for improvement/remodeling. It was pointed out by the Provost that the Legislature does not appropriate money that way.

Some areas in Fine Arts are very short on adequate space.
Outlets, acoustics and lighting are abominable in some general purpose classrooms.
Maybe we should keep part of our building money automatically for improvements.

Another major topic was retention/enrollment. It was stated that while retrenchment may not occur in the near future, reallocation most certainly will. Nevertheless, the bulk of the discussion centered around UMD's image, externally and internally, and the need to remember that we should be marketing excellence.

Internal constituencies included both students and faculty, with one person noting that students often don't realize that the professor is anything except a classroom teacher, that research is being done, and the university professors have special expertise. It was suggested that the faculty need to learn to brag a bit. Campus Relations was criticized for lack of visibility, quality and activity. It was noted that limited resources may be a part of the problem. Among the suggestions for ways to improve campus relations were to set aside time and money for professional staff development and to provide the office with an advisory group

to keep them in line. An area for improvement would be the feedback system with faculty, and the Fine Arts experience could be used as a model. Alumni could also be helpful in developing a better image. While no specifics were discussed, need for change in advisement procedures was pointed out.

Maybe we should have floating positions to take care of enrollment bulges.

What's the front door to UMD?

Lake Superior Basin Studies does an excellent job in helping our image.

Campus Relations is doing a very poor job.

Campus Relations should go to campus experts asking for opinions on current issues.

How do we identify other resources?

We need to raise our self-image.

The afternoon session focused on CEE, Outreach and the non-traditional student, faculty involvement on committees, salary equalization, and morale.

The apparent consensus was that in theory the outreach approach is good. It was suggested that any outreach programs should be implemented selectively as a critical mass must be maintained in order to run all departments and programs. Also, it was suggested that implementation be done on a program basis. Potential problems of outreach discussed included increased operational costs (travel, etc.) and the negative impact on faculty welfare. Also, problems relating to evening parking were discussed, and it was felt that ticketing people who are coming on campus for whatever function has a negative effect on our image.

A tremendous amount of irritation was expressed by several faculty concerning work with CEE. While it was suggested that perhaps UMD should run their own CEE, many felt that although the problems were great, the benefits outweighed them. Other solutions included using the UMTC geography model, bringing in a consultant and publishing class schedules in one book.

Faculty also expressed concern about the turfmanship exhibited with regard to outreach. It was suggested that the effective administrator of the future may be the one who will be able to work out ways to give up things, and the faculty will need to be versatile. The question of how to further explore the problems and implications of Outreach/CEE was then discussed. Some felt there ought to be action at the inter-collegiate level; others felt action should occur at the collegiate level.

How are we going to choose the programs that will participate in Outreach?

Cost of sending faculty to the Range is high.

Sometimes we have trouble getting students.

Could inload and overload at same time.

The good thing about it would be the increased flexibility.

Some programs can't offer four quarters of core courses.

We get a lot of money from CEE.

Lots of little things cause us to compete instead of cooperate.

The job of phase II of reorganization is to make connections between units.

A discussion on participation of faculty on committees ensued with several expressing dissatisfaction with a number of current advisory committees. The comment was made that in some cases the administration was utilizing committees because they didn't have any answers.

Why should we waste time on committees if they have no responsibility or authority?

Maybe we should let the administration administer.

Some people feel very good about committee work.

Salary equalization was explained, and future salary improvements were discussed. Considerable concern about the use of the term merit was expressed. And it was cautioned that people shouldn't be led to believe that the April improvements will "fill in the valleys" created by equalization. Questions were raised about identification of disadvantaged units and how the administration was going to get information on those.

There needs to be a definition of merit this time around.
Paradoxically, when there is no mystery there is no hope.

The discussion then returned to the problems of faculty morale. In contrast to the morning session, the concern was how to solve the problem of faculty who feel like losers and/or who may be tenured but unproductive. One suggestion is that they should be made to realize that they are a part of an evolving institution and they also should be growing. Department heads should be instrumental here.

How do you solve the problem of faculty who feel like losers?
Deans and other administrators can do things.
How do you deal with tenured faculty who aren't doing anything?
Security is particularly fundamental in an organization like this.
Perhaps we should take time with these people to help them come back.

A half hour was taken at the end to summarize and recap the day's discussion. It was suggested that notes of the day's proceedings be edited and shared and that some information about the session should be shared with the deans. A listing of topics and statements was then developed.

1. Faculty shouldn't waste their time on committees that have no clout; instead the administrators should administer. (It was noted, however, that the face to face contact offered by participation in all-university committees is important!)
2. We have an image problem with parents, students, community and UMTC, and there is a need to coordinate our efforts with regard to publicity, etc.
3. There is a communication problem between the administration and the faculty in general, though faculty who are heavily involved in key committees do have access to a great deal of information. Anything that the administration can do to make faculty aware of how decisions are made and what they are would be helpful. It is also important that the faculty feel that the administration is aware of their problems.
4. There is a need for coordination of lectures and convocations. Faculty seminars should be stressed.
5. Parking problems, more specifically, the giving of tickets in the evening needs to be solved.

6. Physical facilities need to be improved and upgraded so that classrooms work to help teachers.

The retreat was adjourned with thanks to faculty who generously gave of their time and energy.

LMC:mm

3/23/78



UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
DULUTH

Office of the Provost
515 Administration Building
Duluth, Minnesota 55812

March 31, 1978

Dr. Timothy Roufs
Head, Sociology-Anthropology
University of Minnesota, Duluth
Duluth, Minnesota 55812

Dear Tim:

I would like to express my thanks to you for giving so generously of your time and energies on Saturday, March 18. Your willingness to take the time to share your ideas and concerns with me is deeply appreciated.

As was noted at the end of our meeting on the 18th, I feel these "retreats" are important opportunities for faculty members to express their thoughts. UMD has benefited in the past from such meetings and we intend to continue these sessions in the future.

Attached are our notes from the retreat. I would like to encourage you to comment on the content, focus, and format and whatever else you feel would be helpful.

Once again, thank you for your insights and suggestions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Bob', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Robert L. Heller
Provost

RLH-ct

Attachment

