

Minutes\*

**Faculty Consultative Committee**  
**Thursday, February 21, 2008**  
**12:00 – 1:30**  
**238A Morrill Hall**

Present: Gary Balas (chair), Carol Chomsky, Shawn Curley, Dan Dahlberg, William Durfee, Barbara Elliott, Marti Hope Gonzales, Mary Jo Kane, Geoffrey Sirc, Jennifer Windsor, Becky Yust

Absent: Nancy Carpenter, Carolyn Hayes, Lois Heller, Emily Hoover, Jeff Kahn, Judith Martin, Nelson Rhodus, Martin Sampson

Guests: Vice President Kathryn Brown

Other: Kathryn Stuckert (Office of the President)

[In these minutes: (1) committee business (copyright committee; statement and message on governance); (2) representation from UMD on the committee; (3) discussion with Vice President Brown (strategic positioning); (4) admission of children of faculty to the University]

**1. Committee Business**

Professor Balas convened the meeting at 12:05 and began by announcing that the Provost has established a copyright committee to develop procedures to implement the Regents' policy. The Provost's committee consists of many of the same individuals who helped craft the Regents' policy but it will work with the subcommittee that this Committee established (with representatives from other Senate committees). The Provost's committee is to have procedures drafted by May 17. Provost Sullivan does see the need for faculty advocates who understand copyright and who can inform them. One question is what infrastructure should be in place to assist faculty. In light of the appointment of the Provost's committee, the charge to the copyright subcommittee will need to be re-examined.

He informed the Regents that faculty colleagues at one of the CIC schools had requested information about the written foundations and functioning of faculty governance from colleagues at the other CIC schools and that Minnesota had responded positively about the practices in place at the University. There was interest both among Regents and administrators in the message, so he and Professor Chomsky revised it slightly into the form of a Committee statement; he distributed copies to Committee members. He asked for Committee approval of the document.

Committee members voted unanimously in favor of it. The statement follows:

[Beginning of statement]

---

\* 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.

In response to a query about the written underpinnings of faculty governance from one of the CIC institutions, the Faculty Consultative Committee, at its meeting on February 22, 2008, unanimously approved the following brief statement on governance.

The University of Minnesota Senate constitution, which is adopted both by the Senate itself as well as by the University's Board of Regents, provides that "Consistent with actions and policies by the regents of the University of Minnesota, all matters relating to the educational and administrative affairs of the University are herein committed to the president, the Faculty Senate, the University Senate, and the several faculties." Both the Senate and the administration (at least for recent decades) have interpreted this language, in practice if not in formal policy, as a license for the governance system to talk with the administration about whatever is on the faculty's minds. No one now involved in governance can recall a time when a governance committee wanted to talk about something and the administration declined. (One former chair of the Faculty Consultative Committee (FCC), the executive committee of the Faculty Senate, said he interpreted the Regents policy incorporated in the Senate constitution to give the Senate the same jurisdiction—although not the same level of authority, of course—as the President.)

It is also accurate to say that the practice—again, not the written policy—is that the administration would not make any major decision without at least consulting with the chair of FCC. And in most instances, they would make time to consult with the committee itself. The charge to the FCC in the Senate Bylaws reinforces this practice, authorizing the FCC, among other things, to “discuss with the president and other University officers issues or policies of the University of concern to the faculty, [and] to consult with the president or senior academic officers . . . on planning and on the annual budget and the biennial request.” In the view of one of the former chairs, the Senate and its committees have authority reinforced by custom, much like the British constitution. Sometimes individual administration officials may neglect to consult on an issue, from lack of familiarity with the custom of consultation, but that doesn't mean that a decision was made that consultation was not appropriate. Also sometimes there are the appropriate "mea culpas" after the fact.

One legacy of the University's struggle over tenure about a dozen years ago, and the inflamed and unproductive communications among the players at the time, was a firm commitment by faculty, administrators, and Regents that the lines of communication should be open and honest so such an event would not happen again. As a result, for the last dozen years the relationships among the faculty, the administration, and the Board of Regents have been warm and cordial. (The relationships before the tenure struggle were also quite positive, but those events led to a mutual commitment to institutionalize the interactions and not allow them to go off track again.) The leadership of the administration, Regents, and faculty meet several times per year and the senior officers meet regularly with faculty committees. Regents have high praise for the willingness of the faculty to address important issues in a thoughtful way; the faculty, in turn, have great respect for the willingness of the senior administrators and the Regents to listen attentively to, and respond to, views expressed by the faculty.

The University also has in place rules (adopted by both the Senate and the administration) governing participation in searches for senior officers, so that's altogether separate. That participation is also memorialized in the Faculty Senate Bylaws, which allocates to the FCC the duty “to advise the president on procedures for making major administrative appointments and to participate in the selection process.”

As should be clear, the Senate language sets the background here. The Senate has, for as many years as any can recall, delved into whatever matters seemed to it important, almost always with the consent of the administration, and the administration has rarely taken major action without consulting the Senate or its committees. (Sometimes the administration has warmly welcomed Senate/committee deliberation and inquiry, other times it has not been so excited about it, but at no time has the door been shut.)

[end of statement]

Along these same lines, Professor Balas asked that a copy of a message he recently sent to Senate committee chairs also be included in the minutes.

[beginning of message]

Dear Senate Committee Chairs,

Many of you were at the Senate committee chairs luncheon on Tuesday, but I thought I would share my experience at the last University of Minnesota Board of Regents meeting on Friday, February 8.

As you may know, the FCC chair reports quarterly to the Board of Regents. Upon finishing my FCC report to the Board last week, Regent Metzen complimented the faculty and administration for how well faculty governance works at UMN. He said it is impressive to see the amount of effort the faculty put into the process and he personally very much appreciates the benefits the University derives from all the behind-the-scenes effort.

Vice Chair Regent Allen echoed Regent Metzen's comments. He recalled that when he worked at a small college, the administration and faculty relationship was much more adversarial. In his time on the UMN board, he has been very impressed by how well faculty governance works at UMN. He understood it takes time and he appreciates that the faculty work so hard at it.

I thanked them for their comments on behalf of all of my faculty colleagues and I shared with the Board the fact that we recently sent an overview of how faculty governance works at UMN to our faculty counterparts at the CIC schools (the Big Ten plus the U Illinois—Chicago and the University of Chicago). One of the comments we received back was "this is how faculty governance should work at a top public research institution."

Regent Larson followed up to my comments and said that he also wanted to recognize the benefits of faculty governance and thanked us for all the work we do that they never see or hear about.

I want to thank all of you--faculty, staff, and students--for all your effort. You make this university special and we are a better university because of your work in governance. I would appreciate it if you would share with your committee this note and the thanks from the Board of

Regents for all their effort.

Regards

Gary Balas, Chair  
Faculty Consultative Committee

[end of message]

## **2. Representation from the Duluth Campus**

Professor Balas turned to the question of representation from the Duluth campus. The current bylaws of the Faculty Senate provide for an ex-officio non-voting representative from the Medical School faculty at Duluth.

Professor Elliott said that the undergraduate faculty at Duluth are unionized, so do not participate in the governance system, but that there a number of faculty in Duluth who are not in the union. Until recently, they have only been in the Medical School, but now there are also non-unionized faculty in Pharmacy. Since she was elected to the position, there has been a change in the accreditation of the Medical School complex; Duluth is now part of a University of Minnesota Medical School as a program in Duluth, not an independent medical school. Given that, the question was raised a couple of years ago about whether she should continue as an ex-officio member of this Committee. At that time it was decided the question should wait until the end of her term, which comes this year. So the question is whether Duluth faculty members not in the union should continue to have ex-officio representation on FCC. She said she believes it is a good idea and that the individual should be elected by all eligible faculty on the Duluth campus. That way the Duluth faculty can know what is going on, participate in governance, and feel a part of the larger University.

The other element to consider is that Professor Lois Heller (also from Duluth) has been chair of the Academic Health Center FCC (who also serves on this FCC ex officio); for the first time, there have been two representatives from Duluth. She also agrees it is important to have a Duluth representative.

In response to a question about whether the Pharmacy faculty could be included in the Duluth representation under the current rules, Professor Chomsky said the Committee needs to look at the language of the bylaws to see whether it is broad enough to include the Pharmacy faculty. [It is.] She said she agreed with Professors Elliott and Heller: the Duluth ex-officio representation should continue. The elected representatives to the FCC do not represent particular constituencies, but most of the time neither the elected representatives nor the other ex officio members are knowledgeable about the coordinate campuses. It has been and will continue to be important to have the other campus representatives because the Committee can be focused only on the Twin Cities; it is valuable to have the perspective of individuals from Morris and Duluth.

Professor Kane asked if there has been any resistance from the unionized faculty at Duluth to the idea of a medical complex representative on this Committee. Professor Elliott said she did not know; she has not talked with them about her role. But she does know that the Pharmacy faculty at Duluth are interested in participating.

Will there be a request, in the future, for a representative from the Rochester campus, Professor Windsor inquired? Professor Balas said that was his concern—that other groups, not now represented, will wish to have a member on the Committee. Several colleges on the Twin Cities campus have not had representatives for a few years; the Extension faculty have not been represented, either—should they also have a voice? Professor Chomsky pointed out that the bylaws are clear that the elected members of the Committee are not to represent their colleges. Twin Cities members can talk with their colleagues from other colleges and can be broadly representative, but the University is a system with coordinate campuses and they need representation. She added that she does not believe the Twin Cities faculty see FCC members as representatives of their college.

Professor Dahlberg said that as an ex-officio member he has been impressed with the work of the FCC. If the FCC expands, however, it may reach a size which could limit its effectiveness.

Professor Balas said he did not sense any wish to change the bylaw to eliminate the Duluth ex-officio representative but said the Committee would return to the topic for a final decision at a future meeting.

### **3. Discussion with Vice President Brown**

Professor Balas welcomed Vice President Brown to the meeting for a discussion of strategic positioning and other matters.

Vice President Brown began by telling the Committee she had no formal agenda or particular issues to bring up but that she did want to make a few comments about strategic positioning. Her visit is primarily so she can listen and learn about issues of concern, both about strategic positioning and because President Bruininks has now been in office for five years: are there things they should be paying attention to?

With respect to strategic positioning, the senior officers have met several times in the last few months and asked what is on the critical path for the University to be among the top three public research universities. They have identified critical-path goals, but Vice President Brown emphasized that they do not capture all the work done in strategic positioning, all of which is important.

-- In exceptional students: improvement in graduation rates and movement of graduate and professional students to timely completion of their programs; and tracking of post-graduate placement (they want key indicators and a tracking program in order for the University to tell its story—which is difficult to with a complex institution that has no simple story).

-- In exceptional faculty and staff: make strategic hires and retain top faculty; and create a culture in which all understand their contribution to the University's mission and are fully engaged.

-- In exceptional organization: financing the future (the President has talked about this with the Committee and wants to be on the right path to fund the institution in the future); and effective services to support the academic mission.

-- In exceptional innovation: increase sponsored research for the public good; and support and enhance the position of programs.

They have also talked about key performance indicators and the need for a good set of metrics. Vice President Brown said she would try to facilitate more faculty participation in developing metrics. At that point she said she would welcome questions.

Professor Durfee asked about relationship between the recent thoughts of the senior officers and the work of the strategic-positioning task forces. Are they done with and melded into the process? They are, Vice President Brown said. One can do strategic positioning in different ways; one is to use a small group to set out ideas and then fill in the details. The University turned that process upside-down and relied on a lot of people, and the process generated so many good ideas that not all of them can be implemented. She has not been talking about a new comprehensive strategic-positioning process, rather a focus on some of the central ideas that arose from the process of the last few years.

Professor Durfee then recalled that the Committee had received a checklist from the Provost with all of the recommendations from the task forces and the status of each one. One had the impression that if all the items were checked off as completed, the University would be among the top three. What she has been talking about sounds more strategic. Will the Committee receive another checklist from the Provost? Vice President Brown said while she could not speak for the Provost, she doubted another such list would be prepared.

Professor Windsor commented that about half of the list of items Vice President Brown enumerated require money. Where will the funds come from? Who decides how to allocate the money? Given that the source of funds is finite, who decides how much will go to each unit? Vice President Brown agreed that many of the items need financing, which is why the President has also been focusing on financing the future of the University. There will not be a single source of funds; there will be state dollars, tuition, sponsored research, private funds, and so on. In terms of decision-making, that is part of the ongoing budget process: units have compacts with priorities and they are discussed with the deans and vice presidents. Professor Windsor said it was her impression that compacts tend to keep the operations adequate, which is not the same as moving to the top three. There needs to be a large influx of funding to move to the top three. Vice President Brown responded that money is not necessary to do everything; the University also needs to change how it thinks about some things (for example, carrying out the administration of the institution more efficiently and effectively so that more money is available for academic activities). That is something they are wrestling with now: what needs to be done at the strategic level and what at the ground level.

Professor Kane recalled that the Committee has talked with the Provost about how the Wave 1 colleges are doing after three years. They need to look at them, Vice President Brown agreed, and to ask if they have the right metrics. It may be too early to tell, but the University does want to be sure they are going in the right direction and deal with the challenges—and see if new opportunities have arisen. The mergers were undertaken because it was thought they made sense in terms of creating new synergies and enhanced academic activities. One needs to ask if they occurred—and if not, what can be done to stimulate them.

Professor Sirc commented that in his (and similarly-situated) department, they just sigh when they see the glamour of and support for the top programs. Would it make any sense to support programs

that are NOT in the top right now? "Burnish the burnished," he said, but help the others as well. That goes to Professor Windsor's question about how to allocate resources, Vice President Brown responded. There is no right or wrong answer; retaining top programs means providing the support to keep them there. Recognition of the institution rises when it has top programs. In other cases, the University should try to elevate programs to the top five. There is no single right answer for every department, she emphasized.

Professor Elliott said that around this table over the last several years the Committee has talked about the perception that strategic positioning started out on a broad scope with a lot of participation, but as they see decisions made and where investments are made, the process is led from the top and people are told what to do. How are faculty involved in these decisions? Is the process administration-led or have they found ways for everyone to work together? Vice President Brown said she hoped that everyone was working together. The challenge, with an organization this size, is to engage people but not slow the process down to the point that it does not move. They have talked with faculty all along and most of the ideas come from the task forces. They have tried to distill the recommendations into a manageable quantity that can be tracked. As metrics are put in place, they can bring the results back for further discussion, but they do need a structure so that they can frame the issues. It has been a challenge, she said.

Professor Yust asked who is responsible for linking strategic positioning, financing the future, and the new capital campaign. Who is accountable for being sure the campaign is supporting strategic positioning, other than the President? The President is ultimately responsible for seeing that they are linked, Vice President Brown said, but he talks with the other senior officers and reports to the Regents.

Professor Dahlberg followed up on Professor Windsor's line of questions. Across the country, state funds for public universities are declining and there is nothing to indicate that pattern will change. Those in the trenches want the University to move up in the rankings, but that takes money. That means there must be winners and losers; there has to be consolidation. He recalled that he was on the ad hoc budget-model subcommittee, and he had some impression as to who the winners and losers were, but there didn't seem to be any stated plan. In addition, as a measure of being an outstanding University it is interesting to look at the plaques on the Scholars Walk, he said; the last time anyone at the University won a Pulitzer Prize is a very long time ago. It is hard to imagine being an outstanding University while neglecting the core. How is the planning being done? Has someone decided which departments must be made strong and how to find the resources to accomplish their improvement?

Vice President Brown said she has never seen a plan proposing that Department A be strong and Department B not. All are contributors. In terms of resources, as all units using resources as effectively and efficiently they can, are they the right size, and do they have the appropriate staff? She said she is not suggesting that any unit has too much money, but when one talks about making choices, one must be sure that units are using money effectively and efficiently. That is the point of accountability. Professor Dahlberg is correct that state funds are trending downward, she said, but the University must pursue them vigorously because there is no easy way to replace them.

In terms of bottom-up versus top-down, Professor Chomsky said, no one is talking about the connections between the task forces and the proposals now. It would make a difference to the faculty to be able to see the connections. Everyone recognizes that the University cannot do everything at once, but there is a sense that after all the task force recommendations, everything is now administratively-driven.

Vice President Brown said she could not agree. In terms of graduation rates, everything being done came from the task force reports; the same is true with K-12 education, affordability, diversity, first-year support, student engagement, honors, writing, and so on. All the recommendations were put under the umbrella of improving graduation rates and they have implemented proposals that people believed would make a difference. It would be impossible at this point to link every task force recommendation to an action; some have fallen off the table, some are in the queue, some have been blended. But all the work is highly driven by the work of the task forces. That is an articulation different from what Vice President Brown first said, Professor Chomsky told her. In this formulation, Professor Chomsky said, Vice President Brown did connect the current efforts to the task forces and showed that the recommendations have been synthesized. She may have a summary but the Committee has not seen it. It would help to see and hear about the specific recommendations that fit into each of the broader categories, Professor Chomsky added; there need not be a direct line to the specific set of task force recommendations. Vice President Brown agreed. The amount of work the task forces did was enormous and it has taken time to synthesize it, but that work has driven the efforts they are now engaged in.

Professor Windsor said that whatever the key indicators are, improvement will take a lot of money. There will be a finite number of high-quality departments or a lot of second-rank departments. What is the strategy? The University of Arizona appears to be successful because it has hooked itself on what is distinct in the state and the role it plays. Is the University going to do that? Vice President Brown said the University makes the point that it is the only research university in the state and its contributions to the state and region make it unique in a number of ways. It is the key provider of human capital in a number of areas. It is the driver of economic development in start-up companies and new businesses. The President emphasizes these points. One question is whether to highlight one program to the exclusion of others. That would be an unrealistically narrow focus for this institution so one must continue to think about the broader scale of the University's impact on the state and region and public good. The strategic use of funds goes to the question of how the University measures itself: against a ranking system or against progress to excellence? The University of Arizona appears to have selected to measure itself against certain elements of a ranking system, but President Bruininks believes that approach is shortsighted and could lead to a hollow victory; one can be high on one ranking but then see the focus turn to others. All institutions will likely use sponsored-research funding as a measure, she said, but the University must also identify what it is trying to accomplish and use key indicators to assess progress to those broader goals.

Professor Durfee said the Committee has heard over and over about the importance of supporting core disciplines and that perhaps there should be less emphasis on central investments in new multidisciplinary centers if they come at the expense of supporting the core. For example, additional resources to the Office of the Vice President for Research for supporting groups of faculty from various disciplines who wish to go after large federal grants would be a cost effective means of increasing multidisciplinary activities. Vice President Brown said she understands the message but since she is not an academic officer she would not try to respond but rather would pass the message to the President.

Professor Wambach said that if everyone must do better with no additional funding, how can the institution see faculty productivity gains? Faculty have the same number of classes, the same amount of time needed for advisees, the same demands for grant-getting, and so on. Where will an increase in productivity come? Faculty are at the limit of the amount of time they have to spend, and the money can't come from the supply budgets—cutting the number of paperclips won't help much. How will the

University get to the top three with the horses it has? Vice President Brown said she would again defer on answering but would communicate the message to the President.

It is a question of priorities when there is a fixed amount of money, Professor Dahlberg said. The bottom line is that any great university is a great faculty, reflected in Nobels, membership in the national academies, etc. As public funding declines, the University must develop the private-university model-and there are no large private universities. They focus on some number of core departments. He went on to say that his experience on the budget-model subcommittee led him to conclude that in the view of many the budget model is convoluted with strategic positioning and so many of the comments from people the committee interviewed dealt more with strategic positioning rather than the new budget model. In those comments no dean north of Washington Avenue believes that he or she gained resources with the budget model.

Professor Balas said the Committee knows the Regents will track the metrics and treat them seriously and that they will affect policy decisions. They are wise to see the connection, he said. But distilling five metrics could change policy decisions unless there is a richer discussion with the Board. They should not be distilled to too small a number, especially the measures of faculty work. Vice President Brown said the number would be more like 20-30 measures and she agreed there needs to be a rich discussion with the Board.

Professor Balas said the Committee would also like to talk about succession plans (which does not mean it is interested in getting rid of anyone, he emphasized). When there has been a rapid transition, the University has sometimes hired people without a thoughtful search process. If there will need to be a transition in senior officers at some point, how will it be handled? He said he would like the University to starting thinking about it ahead of time. Vice President Brown agreed that the key to succession planning is to do it long before the event, in part by developing a strong pool of candidates within the institution. It is not a particular position but rather the development of a set of leadership skills so that when the time comes, the University has a diverse pool of candidates. The University should be developing the many good people on its campuses.

Professor Durfee asked if there is a timeline for strategic positioning. Five-ten-twenty years? It is an ongoing, iterative process, Vice President Brown said, one that re-evaluates goals as things go along (such as interdisciplinary centers versus core disciplines, strategic priorities, how to achieve the funding needed). The institution should ask over and over if it is still on the course it wants to be on. What is most valuable to the University is systematic discussions about whether it is on the correct course.

Professor Durfee suggested, apropos the top-three goal, that as the University proceeds, there may be a change in goals and the endpoint may not define them. Vice President Brown noted that the President has said that the top three is an aspiration for excellence, not a destination.

As they critiqued the current situation, were there things that jumped out that were either pleasant surprises or red flags, Professor Kane asked? There was much that was pleasant, Vice President Brown said. The recent Quality Fair had 60 applications for poster sessions but they had to select 30, and those reflected outstanding work in both academic and administrative units. The level of conversation at this year's event about changed management, working together, and benchmarking was at a much higher level than the previous year, affirming that people are working hard. One has seen recently a number of stories in the news about faculty members; she surmised that it may be greater than it was five years ago.

Faculty are excited about getting their ideas funded, Professor Curley said, and support the push forward and the reduction in barriers. They are less excited about top-down initiatives.

Professor Balas thanked Vice President Brown for joining the Committee and hearing the concerns.

#### **4. Admission of Children of Faculty to the University**

Professor Sirc reported that he had received a message from a faculty member who contended that the children of faculty members are not treated fairly in the admissions process and that the admissions criteria are focused too much on class rank and test scores. Committee members reported that they had not heard any such concern, but it was agreed that the Committee on Faculty Affairs, which Professor Sirc chairs, would consider the issue and report back.

Professor Balas adjourned the meeting at 1:30.

-- Gary Engstrand

University of Minnesota