

ROTC SENATE MEETING  
MINUTES OF MEETING  
DECEMBER 17, 2004

[In these minutes: Report on the National Association of Navy ROTC Colleges and Universities Annual Meeting, Army ROTC Brief, Air Force Brief, Navy Brief, Grading Criteria, Solomon Amendment]

[These minutes reflect discussion and debate at a meeting of a committee of the University Senate or Twin Cities Assembly; none of the comments, conclusions, or actions reported in these minutes represent the view of, nor are they binding on the Senate or Assembly, the Administration, or the Board of Regents.]

PRESENT: Jo-Ida Hansen (Chair), Commander Charles Altman, Captain Jim Coulson, Colonel Henry Gilman, Craig Swan, Lieutenant Colonel Andrea Thompson, Dave Ghere, Paul Ruden

ABSENT: Ken Roering

OTHER: Ehrin Bittner, Midshipman Battalion Commander

I). Professor Hansen called the meeting to order and asked those present to introduce themselves.

II). Professor Hansen called on Professor Ruden to report on the National Association of Navy ROTC Colleges and Universities annual meeting, which he attended in Seattle, Washington in October. Professor Ruden began by noting that this is volunteer organization, which was founded shortly after WWII and its mission is to make the Naval ROTC Program the best it can be. No similar organization exists for the USAF or Army ROTC programs.

The annual meeting was a two-day affair with the first day being the Navy Day and the second day being a series of detailed briefings. Professor Ruden noted that the first day was spent touring the Navy's submarine base at Bangor, Washington and was followed by a ride in a flight simulator. Next, Professor Ruden highlighted the following information from the briefings:

- The Navy is approximately 35% deployed and moving towards a more flexible deployment schedule. Within five years, the Navy plans to have most units be sea-swap operations.
- Retention rates are extremely high, particularly among enlisted men and women pursuing educational and training opportunities through the Navy. This makes the on-going downsizing efforts of the Navy more challenging. Downsizing, in part, is being driven by the trend towards smaller ships.
- Naval ROTC programs across the country last year commissioned more officers than turned out to be necessary. As a result, volunteers were sought who were willing to be commissioned without any further obligation to serve in the Navy. (Captain Coulson noted that the men and women commissioned by the University ranked very high, and none were approached by the Navy to step down from service).
- While it appears the Navy is now on target in terms of the number of officers it needs to commission, there remains a problem with skill distribution. The Navy needs officers with technical competence that understand systems.

- The *Seaman to Admiral-21 Program* is still in the process of ramping up. (See <https://www.sta-21.navy.mil/> for more information on this program).
- There are issues around minority participation in the ROTC.
- Tuition increases remain an issue for the Navy. As tuition continues to rise at colleges and universities across the country, a larger and larger portion of the Navy's budget is being spent on tuition.
- In light of the fact that there is not as much demand to commission as many officers as in the past, there may be a need to reduce the number of NROTC units across the country.

Comments/questions from members:

- How many individuals are currently serving in the Navy? Captain Coulson stated that there were 380,000 but this number is on its way down to 370,000. By 2009, it is expected that there will be 309,000 men and women serving in the Navy. While smaller ships are partly responsible for this downsizing, the budget also plays an extremely important role.
- Regarding the possibility of reducing the number of NROTC units across the country, an effort was made to close the University of Minnesota NROTC unit 10 years ago. Captain Coulson stated that the University's NROTC program, in terms of production and budget, is extremely frugal and efficient. He doubts that the University's NROTC program is in danger of being cut, at least at this point. Robust University support in all areas continues to be the key to continue the program here.
- How easy or difficult is it for cadets to travel abroad? While each of the services responded that they encourage their students to pursue overseas studies it is not necessarily easy to do so e.g. budget concerns, time away from the program, etc. Concerns for cadets vary from service to service.

III). LTC Andrea Thompson provided members with an Army briefing. She highlighted the following:

- Rising tuition continues to be a concern. It is important to remember that not all cadets in the program are on scholarship. At the University of Minnesota an AROTC scholarship does not pay for room and board, but covers tuition and fees.
- The University of Minnesota and AROTC demographics are very similar in terms of race distribution. However, because the Army is predominantly a male profession, the gender breakdown is quite different from that of the University.
- A majority of cadets (55) in the AROTC program are enrolled at the University of Minnesota. The other two major schools with cadets in the program include University of St. Thomas (9) and Bethel College (5).
- The Army is critically short of nurses. There exists stiff competition between the civilian sector and the military sector when it comes to recruiting nurses. Currently, the AROTC program has one cadet enrolled in the nursing program at the College of St. Catherine, however, there are no cadets enrolled in the University of Minnesota's School of Nursing. The AROTC program has worked hard to build a solid relationship with the University's School of Nursing this semester, and is confident its efforts to recruit nurses will pay off.
- Warrior Forge (summer training that cadets attend after their junior year) results were shared with the subcommittee. The University of Minnesota did well both regionally and nationally in terms of performance and graduation rates from this program.
- The fall and spring semester's battalion training schedules were shared with members.

- This year, of the 4,300 commissioned Army cadets nationwide, approximately one-third went into the National Guard and Reserves; this is higher than in previous years. Of the 14 cadets that graduated this month from the University, each got their first branch choice. Cadets compete nationally against their peers for branch choices.

Questions/comments:

- Demographically, why is there such a discrepancy between the percentages of Asian Americans attending the University versus the number of Asian Americans enrolled in the AROTC program? According to LTC Thompson this discrepancy can be attributed to a couple factors:
  - The percentage of Asian American students attending the University does not screen out those that are unqualified to serve e.g. non-U.S. citizens.
  - Culturally, not as many Asian Americans pursue military service.
- What is SMP? This is the Simultaneous Membership Program whereby an AROTC cadet is also in the National Guard or Reserves.
- Are SMP cadets at risk for getting activated if their unit gets activated? Yes, however, once a cadet is a junior or senior and has contracted they do not have to deploy. Colonel Gilman added many parents are confused and under the impression that ROTC students are being deployed to Iraq. This is simply not true.

IV). Colonel Gilman provided members with an Air Force briefing. He highlighted the following:

- The 2004 – 2005 Air Force ROTC activities were shared with members e.g. Project Warrior Event, Veteran's Day Open House, Joint Military Athletic Competition (JMAC), Tri-Service Ball, etc.
- The military has changed drastically in recent years, particularly for the Air Force. Those serving in the Air Force are increasingly finding themselves in combat. In the past, it used to be the only people in the Air Force that were involved in combat were pilots, but this is no longer the case. As a result, the Air Force has had to train its service-people differently.
- The University of St. Thomas has its own AFROTC program, which is separate from the University's program. The University of St. Thomas has 120 AFROTC students.
- All three ROTC programs have very strict physical fitness standards.
- The University has 75 AFROTC cadets, and their average GPA is slightly over 3.0.
- Forty-nine Air Force cadets are on scholarships at the University.
- The Air Force also has five Air Force Institute of Technology (AFIT) students. These students are already officers in the Air Force, and are attending the University to get advanced degrees. All AFIT students are on active duty and receiving full pay and an allowance while pursuing their advanced degrees.
- The University has fewer students enrolled in its AFROTC program than most other Big 10 schools. This can be attributed, in part, to the fact that several of these schools offer subsidies to their students e.g. room and board. All students that take ROTC scholarships are able to select their own school. The fact that the University of St. Thomas offers free room and board to any student with an ROTC scholarship, makes attending St. Thomas very appealing to students and/or their parents. The Air Force is focusing its efforts on giving its scholarship money to engineers. While the University of St. Thomas is a very good school, the University of Minnesota has a far superior engineering program. Colonel Gilman intends to contact the Air Force to discuss the impact these subsidies have on which school a student chooses.

V). Before providing members with a Navy briefing, Captain Coulson acknowledged Colonel Gilman's service while assigned to the University of Minnesota. Colonel Gilman will be reassigned this summer.

Next, Captain Coulson provided members with a Navy briefing. He highlighted the following:

- The year 2004 has been a year of change. Captain Jim Coulson relieved Captain Marc Stanley on May 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2004 and Commander Charles Altman replaced Commander Dave Hutton in September.
- All of the Navy's instructional staff at the University attends an intensive instructor-training course.
- All staff are CPR and First Aid certified.
- A mandatory study hall was implemented for all freshmen students and those on academic probation.
- There will be over 85 students in the program spring semester 2005. Captain Coulson's goal is to have over 100 students in the program when he leaves in 3 years.
- The Navy has over a 99% graduation rate and has put extra safeguards in place to train for success.
- The NROTC academic grade point average across all colleges is 3.19.
- The NROTC program brings in \$1.3 million to the University.
- The Navy's theme for the next three years is: *“One man or woman can make a difference”*<sup>1</sup>.
- The Navy does not have a 6-week <sup>3</sup>boot camp<sup>2</sup> similar to the Army, but it does have a very intense, 5-day comprehensive training program, which prepares the Midshipmen to join their battalion. Additionally, during the four years Midshipmen attend the University they receive intensive leadership and ethics training.
- The NROTC program's strengths were shared with members. Examples included: solid standardized curriculum guides, use of Midshipmen and officer mentors, students well-versed in expectations of staff and rigor of courses, etc.
- The unit still struggles with its image on campus. There are still some individuals that view ROTC as a sport or club rather than actual University departments. The desire is to increase Senate and University staff support. The unit remains committed to supporting all volunteer efforts, color guard needs, faculty events and University-wide focus items such as Convocation with all assigned Navy faculty.
- The Navy has had its overall operating budget reduced by 33% between University and government cuts, despite increased student load.
- Navy staff is very busy. The department has five instructors, and three administrative staff. One administrative billet has been gapped for over a year. There are no TAs authorized or allowed.
- Navy ROTC students carry a tremendous workload. It is not uncommon to have classes meet at 6:00 a.m. so students are able to attend the mandatory military science classes they need for commissioning. Mandatory Naval Science classes are properly scheduled within the University system, but almost always conflict with other academic major programs such as engineering projects, senior seminars and advanced language classes. This forces the Naval Science professors to work outside the University system to achieve the common desire to graduate students and commission officers on time. The goal is to realize a common solution so that the University's military science classes can

be taught within the normal academic hours and achieve all aims. This goal will need University Senate and staff support to be attained.

- The Armory is facing severe degradation. Not only is the building material and classroom condition substandard but the electrical and fire systems are very out-dated. The building has had one light fixture fire and several flooding incidents in the past six months. The Senate ROTC subcommittee was asked: How can the three University departments located in the Armory raise awareness within the institution to a sufficient level so that the Armory can be put on the capital plan for renovation? There are serious safety concerns throughout the building. Numerous deficiencies were raised in an earlier renovation plan and the only action to date has been to document and reaffirm that those conditions still exist and others are occurring with the continued aging of the building. Safety apparently is not nearly the priority for the University as it is to the military. University facility personnel have had over a decade to identify and study problems and have provided limited assistance other than continued documentation. Vice Provost Swan volunteered to look into what, if any, renovation plans are being formulated for the Armory.

VI). Vice Provost Swan reported that SCEP (Senate Committee on Educational Policy) has become interested in looking into the grading criteria used by colleges at the University; specifically as it relates to courses that award a high percentage of A's. Data collected around this issue has been shared with each of the colleges. According to Vice Provost Swan, a few colleges have stated that they do not see this as an issue; however, Vice Provost Swan expects these colleges to receive push back on their viewpoint from Executive Vice President and Provost Sullivan as well as SCEP.

Naturally, in situations where students show distinctly different levels of proficiency an A – F grade would be appropriate, but in other situations an S/N grade may be more appropriate. Vice Provost Swan noted that the data collected indicates that there are a handful of ROTC courses that tend to award a high percentage of A's. Therefore, would it be possible to make some of these courses, particularly the skills courses such as physical education, S/N rather than A – F? ROTC staff noted that this would be possible, however, they would need to maintain two separate grading systems, one for the University and one for the ROTC. The two systems would be necessary because cadets compete nationally with their peers for ranking and A – F grades need to be used to calculate GPA.

Vice Provost Swan agreed to keep the ROTC program apprized of any policy decisions with respect to grading criteria.

VII). Vice Provost Swan noted a recent decision by the 3rd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, which ruled 2-1 that a federal law known as the Solomon Amendment infringes upon the free speech rights of schools that have restricted on-campus recruiting because of the military's ban on homosexuals.

Vice Provost Swan noted that there is a Board of Regent's policy that supports the ROTC program on campus (see <http://www1.umn.edu/regents/policies/academic/ROTC.html>). According to Vice Provost Swan, all Board of Regent's policies are in the process of being

reviewed, and the Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) policy is scheduled to undergo review in 2006. This policy is not in compliance with current thinking around policy at the University. It is thought that Regent's policies should be brief and devoid of introductory and procedural verbiage. Vice Provost Swan does not expect the substance of this policy to change.

According to Vice Provost Swan, the recent ruling by the 3<sup>rd</sup> Circuit Court of Appeals, does not impact the University and there is no intent by the University to take unilateral administrative action around this issue. However, should this issue be escalated, the University will be in a position to always fully comply with all applicable federal laws.

Captain Coulson stated that the ROTC is aware of this issue and plans to address it. He also requested that a draft of the revised ROTC policy be provided to the program before it becomes final.

Captain Coulson noted that there are gays and lesbians serving in the military today. Similar to the Hatch Act, which prohibits military personnel from openly campaigning for political officials, the military's "Don't Ask/Don't Tell" policy requires military personnel to be discreet about their sexual orientation. Military personnel give up certain individual rights for the good of the whole when they serve their country. ROTC students will be instructed to keep this issue low profile. Vice Provost Swan was asked to keep the ROTC subcommittee and program apprised of any initiatives that student groups on campus may be planning around this issue.

VIII). Hearing no further business, Professor Hansen adjourned the meeting.

Renee Dempsey  
University Senate