

Minutes*

Faculty Consultative Committee
Thursday, November 7, 1996
1:30 - 3:00
Nolte Library

Present: Virginia Gray (chair), Carl Adams, Victor Bloomfield, W. Andrew Collins, Sara Evans, Dan Feeney, Russell Hobbie, Laura Coffin Koch, Michael Korth, Fred Morrison, Harvey Peterson, Michael Steffes, Craig Swan

Regrets: Carole Bland, Gary Davis, Matthew Tirrell

Others: Martha Kvanbeck (University Senate), Maureen Smith (University Relations)

[In these minutes: faculty representation to the Board of Regents; the presidential search]

1. Closed Session

Professor Gray convened the meeting at 1:30 and asked for a motion to close the meeting in order to discuss reaction to the Regents' action on the tenure code earlier in the day. It was moved, seconded, and unanimously voted to close the meeting. The Committee spent approximately an hour reviewing the situation and what it might do next.

2. Faculty Representation to the Board of Regents

Professor Gray recalled that she had informed the Committee earlier that she and others had been working on a proposal for a faculty seat on the Board of Regents. That proposal has not been warmly received by at least one legislative leader, so it appears more fruitful to work on non-voting representation--a change the Regents could implement itself. She invited Committee members to advise her on how the effort might proceed.

She reported that she had talked with previous FCC chairs, and their efforts to obtain non-voting representation had not met with success. Professor Swan suggested that the Board itself, at this point, may be looking for ways to build bridges, so may be more receptive than it has been in the past to this proposal.

Professor Gray pointed out that the Committee had voted previously in favor of seeking a voting representative; should efforts also be directed toward non-voting representation? She drew the attention of Committee members to a list of reasons supporting faculty representation to the Board.

Professor Adams said that there are two fundamental items of interest: one is communication; the other is power. At this point, one could understand why the faculty might seek power, but the attempt

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would not be well-received in most quarters. EVERYBODY should be in favor of communication. If the primary rationale for the proposal is communication, it would be difficult for people to oppose it. Everyone, on every side of the fence, would agree that there were communication difficulties.

Professor Adams made another point. If one wants to bring governance back into play, the way it has operated in the past, then some of the communication could be organized around the existing governance structure: e.g., the chair of the Committee on Faculty Affairs could be a non-voting member of the corresponding Regents' committee. This would reinforce communication as well as the governance structure.

That is the way she now has the monitoring set up, Professor Gray noted; Senate committee chairs attend appropriate Regents' committee meetings. She agreed that the arguments should be predicated on communication, not power. It would be better, Professor Adams said, if those individuals were officially recognized at the meetings. They need to be moved from the audience to the table, Professor Morrison observed.

Professor Steffes said he has yet to be convinced of the virtue of having a faculty member on the Board, because the faculty could lose some of their effectiveness. Such a presence could limit the kinds of criticisms the faculty could otherwise level at the Board. He acknowledged that he may be in a minority on this view. He said, however, that he very much favors Senate committee chairs being members of Regents' committees; it will also keep the governance structure in touch with the Regents, rather than having someone appoint faculty members to the Regents' committees. This would tie the systems together. The committee chairs should sit with the committees, and the FCC chair should sit with the Board's Committee of the Whole. This is straightforward, everyone can understand it, and it does not require a new system.

Professor Gray inquired if Committee members wished to pursue non-voting representation rather than voting status; no one objected to a change. Professor Adams said it is the high ground to take, because in his view NONE of the members of the Board should represent a particular constituency. For the faculty to argue for representation undermines that basic principle. Professor Gray reported that she had been informed that Board reforms will move in the direction of eliminating representation of constituencies.

Professor Bloomfield agreed with Professor Adams. He pointed out that the facilities committee of the Board is not proposed to have a faculty representative; Professor Morrison said that the chair of the Subcommittee on Facilities Management should be asked to serve.

Professor Morrison summarized: there is the Committee of the Whole, on which the FCC chair should sit; there are the substantive committees, on which the committee chairs should sit. There is also the Audit Committee; that may not need a faculty member. But it could be important, and perhaps the FCC vice chair should sit on it. It is moving from cash audits to program audits, and could become a very interesting and constructive committee.

Should the FCC chair also sit as a non-voting member of the Board meeting? The Committee thought that was unnecessary.

At present, it was noted, there are two students on each Regents' committee.

It was agreed that the document identifying reasons for faculty representation to the Board will be recast.

3. Presidential Search

Professor Gray reported that the Regents' office anticipates that the interviews with final candidates for president will be conducted the week of December 9. She said she has reasserted the faculty right, under the Senate protocol, to interview the candidates; she has also reminded the Board office that the provostal faculty consultative committees also wished to interview the candidates. She also maintained that this was getting very late, and that if it went later into December there would not be as many faculty around to participate. She has been assured that the process will not be delayed.

It was agreed that before those interviews take place, the Committee should formulate a set of questions. It was agreed that Committee members would email their questions to the staff, who would then compile them.

This is a perfect place to begin building trust, Professor Adams commented. The Board could take certain actions that would begin that process; they may not be thinking along that line at this point. This is an opportunity that would have a lot of visibility; the Committee might suggest interactions that would help to build trust. What will be the nature of the interaction with the candidates? Might the Committee have a meeting with the Board to communicate its views to the Board?

Professor Bloomfield, who chaired the search advisory committee last time, reported that the Board will hear from deans and students and other constituencies. Everyone provides their two cents' worth to the Regents, and they then make a choice. This is highly visible to the faculty, Professor Adams pointed out; if the Board orchestrates it properly, the search could be an opportunity to begin to build trust. Many are looking at it for a signal.

Professor Bloomfield said there was a meeting with FCC and the Regents in the last search, and the FCC had the opportunity to express its views on each candidate. This should be done again.

Does FCC get to write a report or attend a closed meeting, Professor Adams inquired? This is a difference that could be important. The Board might look for a report from external constituents, but would have a meeting with the faculty. There are opportunities here.

Professor Gray adjourned the meeting at 3:00.

-- Gary Engstrand