

Minutes\*

**Senate Committee on Educational Policy  
Wednesday, April 21, 1999  
1:00 – 3:00  
Room 238 Morrill Hall**

- Present: Judith Martin (chair), Darwin Hendel, Gordon Hirsch, Jed Ipsen, Kathleen Newell, Palmer Rogers, Tina Rovick, Suzanne Bates Smith, Thomas Soulen, Steven Sperber, Craig Swan
- Regrets: Robert Johnson, Laura Coffin Koch, Christine Maziar, Jeff Ratliff-Crain, Richard Skaggs
- Absent: Shumaila Anwer, Laura Beauchane, Angela Bos, Darcia Narvaez, Martin O'Hely,
- Guests: Chuck Dahl (Office of the Registrar)

[In these minutes: calendars; teaching awards; tuition policy; international education; repeating courses; indexing group]

**1. Calendars**

Professor Martin convened the meeting at 1:00 and announced that the business of the meeting was to finish up a number of loose ends. First on the list was the calendar for 2001-2002. Mr. Dahl, attending the meeting in place of Ms. VanVoorhis, distributed copies of the draft calendar and reported that the professional schools were set but that the coordinate campuses, except for Crookston, were tentative. The next step, he said, is to draft the calendars for 2002-2003 and 2003-2004. He said the draft calendars for those two years are being prepared and will be sent out for review.

Committee members had questions about the Twin Cities (non-professional-school) 2000-2001 calendar compared to the 2001-2002 calendar: there are two fewer instructional days in the former (70 rather than 72) and there is no study day; classes end Wednesday and finals begin Thursday. One Committee member said it is detrimental to students to go directly from class into finals; students need a day to change gears and time to prepare. Another pointed out that Fall, 2000, would have two fewer Thursday sessions, which affects labs. Mr. Dahl said he would investigate if it is possible to add one or two instructional days and a study day.

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With respect to the proposal (before the Senate the next day) to eliminate the uniform calendar, Mr. Dahl told the Committee that there would be a uniform undergraduate calendar on the Twin Cities campus. The variations in the calendar are in Law, Medicine, and Dentistry.

Professor Martin thanked Mr. Dahl for his help.

## **2. Teaching Awards**

Professor Martin next drew the attention of Committee members to the two policies approved by the Senate creating the Morse-Alumni and (to-be-named) graduate/professional teaching award. The Committee had earlier proposed collapsing the policies and procedures into one document. After brief discussion, it was agreed the Committee would review a draft and try to have it ready for the May 20 Senate docket.

## **3. International Education**

Professor Martin now took up the draft language concerning international education that had been prepared by Professor Allen and presented at an earlier meeting; she asked if the Committee wished it on the May Senate docket.

One Committee member inquired if it should be Senate policy--one could argue either way--and said that the Committee should not act quickly. There are other issues that could be addressed, and references to other policies could be included. It was suggested that the document be sent to the Graduate School, the Twin Cities Deans' Council, and the coordinate campus academic vice chancellors for review. It was agreed that it will also be put on the Senate web page; the URL is <http://www1.umn.edu/usenate/scep/intlexchanges.html>, and will be presented to the Senate in May for discussion.

## **4. Regents' Tuition Policy**

Professor Martin distributed copies of the Regents' Tuition Policy and asked Committee members to review it. She asked them to review it before the next meeting and decide if they wished to recommend any changes to the Regents.

With respect to the tuition discount, and the absence of a cap on the number of credits which qualify for the discount, Dr. Swan said the administration would monitor the situation to determine if there are abuses (i.e., large numbers of students registering for 21 or more credits).

## **5. Repeating Courses**

The Committee next examined data provided by Dr. Swan on the number of students who repeat courses and the grades they obtain both the first and second time they take a course.

Dr. Swan recalled that the Council of Undergraduate Deans discussion had focussed on the question of access: for a number of courses in winter and spring, there were very few seats available, and one question was whether the current Senate policy, allowing any student to repeat any course any number of times, contributed to the problem. (At the 1-XXX level, there were 1822 repeats; at the 3-XXX level there were 1270; the data excluded Marching Band and other kinds of courses that could legitimately be repeated, such as seminars.) Of the 1822 repeats at the 1-XXX level, 117 were taken by students who had obtained a B or a C the first time. An alternative policy, he suggested, might be that once a student obtains a passing grade, he or she cannot take it again.

One Committee member said there are three ways to look at the data: what they say about course access, what they say about student behavior, and what they say about instruction and advising. There needs to be follow-up. Information on instructors is not available, Dr. Swan said in response to a question.

It was noted that one college does not allow unlimited repeats; Dr. Swan pointed out that the policy provides that "if a college allows course repetition," so a college does not have to permit them at all. One Committee member noted that about 1/3 of the course repetitions were in Math; while this could mean something is wrong with the way students are advised in Math, it could also be affected by the fact that math is a gateway to many courses for students in engineering, biology, etc. Most of the course repetitions in math seemed to be legitimate, noticed one Committee member; courses were retaken by students who obtained very low grades the first time. Another Committee member wondered if advisors know that repeating a course does not help a GPA very much. It was noted that only about half of those who repeat courses get a better grade the second time.

Dr. Swan suggested that the Committee could await a recommendation from the Council of Undergraduate Deans, which may try to develop one this year. It was agreed to do so.

## **6. Indexing Group**

Professor Martin told the Committee she would like to appoint a small subcommittee, consisting of herself, Professors Hirsch and Newell, and the Committee staff, to meet once or twice during the summer to review the indexing and web site for University Senate policies. This proposal was accepted.

## **7. Other Business**

Professor Martin next drew the attention of Committee members to a list of "issues pending" before the Committee and reviewed the items on it. Among other things, the Committee will need to take up the matter of metropolitan higher education and any report prepared by MnSCU on this topic, service learning units will be on the fall agenda, there will be an advisory committee on classrooms, and there will be a question on how to allocate any new funds that might be provided by the legislature. On the question of classrooms on the Twin

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Cities campus, the Provost has spoken with the deans and told them that the classroom problem can be solved if department classrooms can be used and asked for their help.

Professor Martin adjourned the meeting at 2:55.

-- Gary Engstrand

University of Minnesota