

Minutes*

Faculty Consultative Committee
Thursday, April 1, 2010
1:00 – 3:00
325 Coffman Union

Present: Marti Hope Gonzales (chair), Melissa Anderson, Nancy Carpenter, Carol Chomsky, Chris Cramer, Shawn Curley, Janet Fitzakerley, Kathryn Hanna, Caroline Hayes, Emily Hoover, Russell Luepker, Jan McCulloch, Michael Oakes, Martin Sampson, Kate VandenBosch, Becky Yust

Absent: Brian Isetts, Walt Jacobs, Jeff Kahn, Cathrine Wambach

Guests: **Regents Professors** Frank Bates, Allen Goldman, Megan Gunnar, Allen Isaacman, Richard Leppert, Elaine Tyler May, Lanny Schmidt, Eric Sheppard, Kathryn Sikkink, Madelon Sprengnether; Professor Jennifer Gunn (Chair, Senate Library Committee), University Librarian Wendy Lougee

Other: none

[In these minutes: (1) **discussion with the Regents Professors**; (2) open access; (3) committee business]

1. Discussion with the Regents Professors

Professor Gonzales convened the meeting at 12:10 and welcomed the Regents Professors. She said the Committee would be interested in hearing any concerns or issues that are on their minds, and said that in the interest of candor, the comments would be noted in the minutes but that names would not be attached to them.

-- As a DGS, one is seeing the impact of budget cuts and must be concerned about the future of graduate education. They have already taken a 4% cut in their instructional budget, which affects the TA budget, and now must model additional cuts. They only place they can take money is from the same budget because they are not lecturer-rich so that they could offer up

* 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.

those positions. The result is that the TA budget has been hit twice in the same year, which has an impact on what they can do today and tomorrow and on the number of students they can support. Every day is a bad news day, and down the road, one must ask what will happen to graduate education. In addition, the University is in transition, things are up in the air, so programs are difficult to administer.

-- One Regents Professor commented that their program has a lot of foundation money and is able to recruit the best students in the field. Foundation funds used to be given to departments to support students in years one and four, and the departments expected to fund years two and tree. Now smaller departments are saying they cannot come up with the money. That subverts great programs; how will this remain a great research university if it cannot attract first-rate graduate students—and the faculty who attract such students?

-- Across-the-board cuts are easier than targeted cuts but they do not make sense. There is a need for hard decisions and criteria for determining what is important so that the colleges can decide what departments to support or not support. The 3-5-8% cuts are frustrating because they undercut the quality of the University.

-- This group, the Regents Professors, is not hurt like others but they see the impact on their programs. One guest said that students are supported predominantly on RAs in their department. As people think about moving the University forward, they need to think about departments that do not traditionally support graduate students with grant funds because the faculty cannot obtain a lot of grant funding. When the University comes out of this, does it want strong science departments and weak humanities?

Professors Gonzales and Oakes reported that they have been pressing the President and Provost for strategic plans and scope of mission discussions and have worked on the fiscal crisis the entire year. They have no idea what the plan is. That is a problem, which is one reason why the Regents Professors were invited to join the Committee today.

-- The frustration in CLA with the protocols in place for approving Liberal Education courses (effective for incoming students as of Fall 2010), among a number of CLA department heads as well as faculty, is very high. At worst, the protocols as followed by the Committee on Liberal Education (CLE) have been described by several individuals in various departments as "infantilizing"; chairs have reported their course proposals being sent back repeatedly for

revision (if not outright refused), sometimes as many as four or five times, requiring an enormous expenditure of faculty time for what often seems like small return.

Fall registration begins in just two weeks. Though CLE has been reviewing courses for a full calendar year, the number of approved courses—required for graduation—remains a fraction of what was available to students under the old system now being phased out. Under the various categories (for example, Arts/Humanities & Literature; or Historical Perspectives and Historical Thinking) less than half as many courses as in the past are now listed as approved on the OneStop website. If insufficient numbers of courses are available to students, their graduation will necessarily be delayed, thus disrupting the University's efforts to improve the four-year graduation rate.

The liberal-education protocols likewise invite potential harm to the professionalization of graduate students. The protocols do not permit for even advanced graduate students (ABDs) to teach liberal-education courses (typically 1XXX level), teaching experience that in many disciplines is critical for new PhDs to be competitive on the job market (especially the case in a number of the humanities and social sciences).

Further, without the ability to employ advanced graduate students to teach even entry-level liberal-education courses, departments are further strapped to be able to responsibly deliver their curriculum for majors. The University has already lost 150 faculty to the current budget crisis and will unquestionably lose that many or even more in the coming year or two. Lecturer budgets are also being cut. In effect, remaining faculty are asked to staff the most basic entry-level classes, thereby pulling them away from delivering courses within the disciplinary undergraduate majors, to say nothing of the impact on graduate courses. It's hard to argue that anyone is served well.

-- As one who served on CLE, it can be said to be a thankless task. But it is the only place where there is a campus-wide discussion of what the curriculum should be. There are problems with delays, but without CLE, departments could do whatever they wanted to. It may appear insulting, but one sometimes cannot believe what departments submit to CLE because they want to keep liberal-education credits in the department. CLE cannot rely on "he's a good teacher" to approve a course. In response: The issue is not the good faith of CLE members, it is with the protocol with which they must work and the demands placed on them; the premise is that departments and disciplines, given the chance, will act irresponsibly. And in reply: CLE has

seen departments act irresponsibly, some of which is based on self-interest: They don't want to require students to go to other departments to take classes. The reply: The strictures are so tight that there are not enough courses to allow students to graduate, so they will go elsewhere to school, and there is the impact on graduate education as well. Professor Hanna commented that this [self interest] sounds like an extension of the current budget model where tuition dollars are so important. One of the Regents Professors commented in response that "it [the budget model] is crazy."

-- One must be concerned about the decline in the sense of the collective and commitment to the University. It is difficult to get buy-in for a University-wide program, and when one cannot get feedback from central administration, one gets the sense that faculty are tolerated on campus, for the work they do, but the administration appears outcomes-oriented and seems not to welcome participation. **If the Faculty Consultative Committee cannot make headway, who can?** This situation represents a decline in a sense of the University shaped by the faculty, not just one where faculty members are employed by the University.

Professor Oakes said the administration clearly needs downsizing but it is difficult to talk about principles of downsizing; that could subvert morale and the community spirit. Professor Chomsky said that trimming the scope of the mission should not be top-down, it should be distributed, and the colleges should do it. That is what the administration has been saying, and faculty would agree that decision shouldn't be mandated from above. That process makes sense, but it means that nothing happens for a long time and that there must be consultation within the units. That process also rests on the quality of the deans, commented one Regents Professor, and that quality is variable. Professor VandenBosch recalled that this Committee wondered last August whether it would be difficult for units to criticize themselves and rank priorities, especially without criteria and principles by which to make decisions, which haven't been universally articulated. Except for the "nebulous seven" identified in earlier planning, Professor Oakes commented. He noted that Professors Luepker and Martin serve on the Advancing Excellence steering committee, the group charged with overseeing the planning process.

Professor Luepker observed that once again the University is faced with a crisis, and suddenly units face a 2% or 5% or 7% across-the-board cut. That may be the way to respond to the immediate problem but that does not make the hard decisions about the way the University is going. **Professors Gonzales and Oakes, and others, have been asking where the 3-5-year plan is.** What the University faces now is just a small bump in the road; in the summer of

2011 there will be a much deeper bump. Professor Luepker related what had been discussed at the Advancing Excellence steering committee and commented that faculty members must be involved in the discussions about the broader issues concerning where the University will be in 3-5 years. He said he hoped the process would not be top-down and that the colleges will get active. The University will get smaller, he concluded, and recalled that Senior Vice President Cerra told the Finance and Planning Committee that the Medical School will shrink by 10-12%. **In response to a question about whether the presidential transition is a problem, Professor Luepker said he thought it is.** A lame-duck president may be in a good position to make decisions, he said, and the University needs decisions now or the next president will be left with a bigger mess. He said he thought the faculty should press hard for decisions now. One Regents Professor said that there is a concern that if nothing except defending the institution is on the table for the incoming president, the situation would invite the administration and new president to do what they want. Their concern, Professor Oakes said, is that anyone in the room can make the case that his or her program is central to the mission. **That is another reason the Regents Professors were invited to the meeting: because they can emphasize the University-wide approach that is needed.**

-- None here would disagree with the proposition that the central purpose of the University is education and intellectual activity. **It seems that that central mission has been bled in the last three years for other purposes.** One can argue about 3% versus 5% cuts, but the University could get rid of its intercollegiate athletic program, sell the stadium, and let it function on its own. It's also worth asking if the investment in the branding campaign, "Driven to Discover," has contributed anything to the educational mission of the University.

-- **What will be the faculty participation in the presidential search?** [Professor Gonzales explained the interaction between the Committee and the Board of Regents about faculty participation in the presidential search.] **One hopes that the Bruininks/Sullivan regime will be gone; the University needs new leadership.** It is not getting leadership with the central educational mission at the heart of the concern, so this will be a smaller and weaker university. The effort to strengthen the core mission of the University has been bureaucratized to death because of what the central administration has been preoccupied with, such as the stadium and "Driven to Discover." **It is not clear how effective faculty governance is—if this Committee can't get plans out of the administration, who can?** The faculty rely on this Committee, which does great work.

-- **Why can't this Committee get the administration to provide plans?**

And if not, what should they do? This Committee is the faculty's voice; if it is unable to represent the faculty, other faculty should help. One does one's work knowing that the members of this Committee are doing the hard work of speaking for faculty in governance, for which they are to be thanked. **If nothing is getting done, the faculty needs to know that.**

-- The University is never going to get rid of athletics. The key message from the Regents Professors could be significant: **If there is not adequate faculty representation on major committees, including those dealing with budget cuts, the University is in big trouble.** Faculty should be at least 60% of the representatives on major committees; **the message from this Committee and the Regents Professors could be that without major faculty representation, it will be impossible to avoid having the administration run the institution.**

-- **The faculty are not just employees.** The faculty provide the intellectual and pedagogical stuff that makes for a great—or mediocre—university. **And it is the faculty, not the administration, that must shape the University. The faculty do the intellectual work that makes this a great university.**

In response to earlier comments about the effectiveness of this Committee, Professor Chomsky noted that in many instances the faculty role, through this Committee and the Senate, is advisory, although there are some areas where it must act, as with the vote on March 25. In particular they are advisory on budget issues. She said she believes the Committee is listened to, and the administration is responsive to its concerns, such as on salary cuts and the Graduate School, but the Committee cannot make the decisions. The Committee can talk and advise, and the administration may listen, but the Committee does not make the big decisions. **What's important is that the faculty be part of the process of deciding, and that the administration not make precipitous decisions.** And it can help to have faculty such as the Regents Professors talk to the administration directly, to confirm the faculty views shared by Committee.

Professor Sampson observed how difficult the task is, given the angst that a \$36 million cut is provoking for 2011. This cut is the maximum the state can impose under the stimulus legislation. **Were higher education instead absorbing a cut proportionate to its share of the state budget, then the overall cut to higher education would be about \$90 million in FY 2011, not \$47**

million, and the University's share of that would be far larger than the \$36 million it is now being cut. Excluding K-12 from any cut (as the Governor has done for 2011) would boost the higher education share far above \$90 million for 2011. Those are what-ifs for 2011. In regard to the coming biennium, if, for example, there is a \$5 billion shortfall and if higher education's cut is proportionate to its share of the budget, then the higher-education reduction might be \$450 million. **If one assumes, for example, that the University receives 2/3 of such a cut over two years, that could mean \$100 million the first year, that cut carried through the second year which is another \$100 million, plus an additional \$100 million the second year.**

-- **That projection clearly means the University will have to close programs. It is not evident that 12% smaller necessarily means it will be worse.**

-- It is not the coming budgets that are of concern as much as budget cuts being made now without consideration of quality. The colleges have not been asked what is good and what the quality measures are. One does not feel good about this process.

Professor Gonzales mentioned the upcoming "intellectual future" meeting and, in response to a query, explained that twice per year this Committee has a meeting with the President and senior vice presidents devoted to a discussion of the intellectual future of the University. The Committee identifies a theme to guide the discussion. The theme for the next meeting is "How to trim the tree of knowledge: Downsizing the University."

-- **There will be no way around budget cuts.** One small example is [the speaker's] department, where, under great leadership, they went through a planning process and improved undergraduate education and teaching because they had to plan how they would do so. No longer would it be possible for faculty in the department to individually control what they wanted to teach; they needed a plan on how they would offer the large courses that are needed. The department decided its faculty would no longer teach what and when they individually want. The result is that their undergraduates are much happier than they were two years ago and the department is offering CLE courses that it can get approved. The department does not believe that introductory courses should be taught by graduate students and that departments often let graduate students teach too much. There is always the temptation among faculty not to teach the introductory courses, but faculty members do not always want to do what is good for a department. They herded cats and improved undergraduate education. Professor Cramer asked how this change

saved money. By no longer using adjuncts and by teaching larger classes; not all the faculty like the change but the undergraduates are happy. With good leadership in a crisis, departments can improve. The response: Another department has had a different experience with CLE courses and it is the one-size-fits-all approach that is objectionable.

-- If one were a central administrator anticipating a crisis, and had to deal with faculty griping, one would not want to deal with it. The FCC and the RPs need to rise above parochialism in the messages they send to central otherwise we should not be surprised that the administration does not want an open dialogue with us. This Committee needs gravitas. Professor Oakes reported that in conversations with central administrators, he and Professor Gonzales always ask what the Committee can do to help.

-- **Faculty members in general recognize that this is an extraordinary situation.** Their parochialism will or must give way to recognizing they are part of a larger community, and that decisions will be required for tough cuts. **Faculty voices must be a part of the decisions.**

-- **The Regents Professors have one advantage: They have been here a long time and built their careers at the University.** They have seen a lot and have seen bad times in the past; they have institutional memory. They can bring a collective memory to the situation. **They believe in the University and want to be sure that any decisions made in a crisis are made with the core mission of the University in mind. One does not always see that to be the case in recent decisions.** One hopes that the faculty at the meeting, and the hundreds who are not, will think hard about what the University should look like.

-- To use the example from the department that made changes in undergraduate teaching: They did things they did not all like. How does one generalize that to the University? Most faculty members do recognize the problems, but if they are seen as part of a collectivity, that will help bring them into discussions and help ensure wise decisions. If the faculty feel alienated, self-interest will come to the fore. Some believe the members of this Committee are skills for the administration; the Regents Professors could exert their voice directly on these issues.

-- **The Regents Professors insisted that the administration talk with them about the Graduate School and could do the same thing again.** The Regents Professors have some status—and because of it, are "protected from bad stuff."

What can they do, Professor VandenBosch asked? College processes are not the same and there are different levels of engagement. It would help if they were to lead within the colleges, helping to set criteria to identify high-priority activities.

-- They are trying to argue for the collective, not the parochial. **The Regents Professors come from across the University and speak not about protecting their own college or department but about the process to make the University better—that is where the Regents Professors can have a role.**

Professor Chomsky said she endorsed the idea of the Regents Professors speaking. The administration hears from this Committee, with considerable communication in private, **and it also hears shriller voices (who complain correctly about concerns like the failure to justify administrative expenses, but aren't doing so effectively).** For the administration to hear directly from the Regents Professors cannot hurt.

-- **The department chairs in one college were informed about the budget cuts and told they nonetheless had the responsibility to retain current student headcounts in order to generate tuition revenue at current levels.** The necessary result is larger class sizes, for which, in the 1980s, the University was criticized severely by the legislature. The President's communication to the University regarding the budget cuts insist that quality will not be sacrificed, which can be read to suggest that the institution has been wasteful, which hardly seems to be the case. **At what point do claims about steady-state quality (demonstrably untrue) in the face of repetitive severe cuts become counterproductive** (for example, in the eyes of the legislature)? It appears that **the University's response is that it will have a lot less and at the same time somehow get better.**

Professor Sampson reported that the University has always said it needed more revenue and that it cannot continue to do what it is doing if the state significantly drops its contribution, because there is no way to replace that contribution.

There are some legislative voices who regard the University's aspirations to improve itself as the explanation for why tuition is so high. People who have been around longer than he has also say there is now more appreciation among legislators than there used to be of the importance of the quality of the University, including the need for it to continue to bring in large research grants and contribute vitality to the local high tech industry.

Professor Gonzales thanked the Regents Professors for joining the meeting and for their candor. Professor Oakes said that if the Committee could help in developing a statement, it would be glad to do so. Several of the Regents Professors thanked Committee members for all their hard work.