Faculty Council Meeting Minutes, February 23, 1995

Attendance

Present were: Nancy Knipping for Lloyd Barrow, Hardeep Bhullar, Dale Blevins, Benedict Campbell, Joe Charlson, Vicki Conn, Jay Dix, Allen Hahn, Peter Hall, Jean Hamilton, Richard Hatley, Edward Hunvald, Charles Knowles, Loren Nikolai, Larry Penney, Glenn Pierce, Ron Plain, Patricia Plummer, Michael Porter, Dennis Sentilles, Harry Tyrer, Betty Winfield, Bob Almony (Librarians). Absent were: Gary Allee, Leonard Forte, Deborah Pearsall, Michael Prewitt, Don Sievert, Mary Ellen Sievert, Fred Springsteel, Roy Utz (Retirees), and Mabel Grimes (Black Faculty & Staff).

Approval of Minutes

Chairman Ed Hunvald called the meeting to order in Room S110 in the Memorial Union at 3:40 p.m. The minutes of the February 9, 1995 meeting were approved subject to changing the departmental name Educational Administration to Educational Leadership & Policy Analysis on page 1.

Action Item

Motion on Tuition Remission. It was moved, seconded, and passed that:

"The MU Faculty Council acknowledges President Russell’s charge to the UM System Retirement and Staff Benefits Committee to undertake a long-range planning effort that includes consideration of tuition benefits for UM faculty and staff dependents. Accordingly, the MU Faculty Council urges the adoption of a substantial tuition benefit for faculty and staff and their dependents."

The rationale for this resolution may be found in the minutes of the February 23, 1995 meeting. The resolution was approved by the faculty council.

Discussion Items

Library Scholarship Policy Committee. Charlie Timberlake, Professor of History, made a presentation to the Faculty Council as a representative of the Library Scholarship Policy Task Force (Chairman John Foley was out of town) and a representative of the Four-Campus Advisory Committee to President Russell on the storage facility. Dr. Timberlake divided his report into three sections: 1) he gave a short report on the Library Space Forum which was held here at MU on February 10 & 11, 1995; 2) he reported on the activities of the Four-Campus Advisory Committee on library storage; and 3) he discussed and sought the advice of Faculty Council in determining the next steps that Faculty Council and the Library Scholarship Policy Task Force should take.

Several of the main points noted from the Forum include: 1) the Columbia campus is in an extreme situation relative to space; 2) the University needs a long-term plan for information management; and 3) there is a need for three types of space [centrally-located, intense-use space; occasional-use space for research by advanced undergraduates and faculty; low-use items, or items in need of security preservation, which could be more remote].

Next, he noted the Four-Campus Committee has recommended to the Board of Curators that they hire the architectural firm of PGAV (Mark Veits) to study various models of a storage facility for the UM campuses. After further discussion it was recommended that Faculty Council arrange for a meeting of the Library Scholarship Policy Task Force with the Chancellor to review the results of the Task Force’s work to date.

Report on Enrollment Management

Two draft policies for admissions standards, for the fall of 1996, were handed out for review for future consideration. The first deals with first-time college admissions standards, while the second deals with the transfer admissions policy standards. Copies of the draft policies are available from the Enrollment Management office.
Report on Plus/Minus Grading

Faculty members are urged to review the guidelines on plus/minus grading and to discuss how these will be used in their particular department or division.

Report on Midterm Grades for First Semester Freshman

The Executive Committee of Council has met with Ted Tarkow regarding a suggested midterm report for first-semester students. After discussion the Executive Committee asked Ted Tarkow to draw up guidelines that will require the students to become actively involved in this effort. A proposal from Ted will be brought to Faculty Council at a later date.

IFC Report

The IFC met with Curator McHugh. He noted in his meeting with IFC that the program reviews are to identify what we are doing really well. Secondly, Pat Plummer reported that the President has disbanded his Promotion and Tenure Committee, as he will now rely on the old procedures of recommendations from the Chancellors going directly to the Board of Curators.

Standing Committee Reports

There were no standing committee reports.

Closed Session and Adjournment

Faculty Council moved into closed session at 4:40 p.m. Faculty Council was adjourned at 5:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Robert Almony
Recorder

Misleading Metaphors:
Students as Customers

The speech we use is full of metaphors. They are useful because they allow us to introduce new ideas in terms that are already familiar. They can also be misleading. In higher education we hear the activities of universities described in commercial terms. We hear of students being customers, we hear of universities delivering product, and we hear of administrators who are described as CEO's. The terms may make for glib talk, but they are dangerously misleading.

Students cannot possibly be customers of an educational institution. One may be able to buy a diploma at some diploma mill, but learning is an achievement: it cannot be bought. Students do not enroll at a university to buy its products, but to be educated. The notion of learning implies that students cannot yet judge or select what they come for: they come to find out.

Of course there must be a relationship between students and faculty, but it is not the relationship of merchant and customer. Sometimes the relationship is like that of master and apprentice; at other times like that of confessor and penitent; at still other times it is a kind of friendship. Ultimately, it is a unique relationship that can only be described as being like itself. It is never—unless degraded or corrupted—a commercial relation of buyer and seller. It must be a relationship aimed at mutual enrichment and discovery.

Questions of competence arise. Faculty must be knowledgeable in the area of study, and they must have the skill to draw students into that area. Students, too, must be competent, in the areas of participation and inquiry. Students must be competent in the sense that they must want to learn. The notion of customer fails miserably in this context. Sports performance is much more narrowly defined than intellectual achievement, but nobody talks about a coach who delivers training to the squad. Not even good coaches develop athletes: they help people to develop themselves into athletes.

Speaking of students as products is not only misleading, it is also insulting. Product, in the commercial sense, implies uniformity and interchangeability. But no two students are alike, nor should anybody try to make them so. The term product leads to ideas of raw material, incoming inspection (and rejection), machining and manipulation, and finally, packaging. Product additionally implies a value entirely measured in the marketplace—but the value of education is not reducible to the market value of the degrees students earn or to the skills they acquire (although those do have market value). At its core, education—as opposed to mere training in useful skills—is valuable because of what the educated person becomes—such persons are valuable above all to themselves. Because they are valuable to themselves, educated persons become valuable to their friends, to their families, and to their fellow citizens.

To measure the value of people solely in terms of their market value, to value and treat them as a commodity, may well be the ultimate insult, because it denies the humanity of people. Perish the day when we accept Thomas Hobbes' cynical observation, made some 300 years ago, that "a man's dignity or work is simply his price." Even on simple logical grounds, if students were consumers, how could they possibly be product at the same time? The metaphors are not only wrong; they make no sense. When applied to people, they are too insulting to be merely laughed out of existence. They should be challenged, explicitly and vigorously.

The industrial metaphor has encroached beyond students and faculty. One now hears of administrators as CEO's, with all the risk that that entails in terms of bottom line and maybe even the balance sheet of a university. Universities are not businesses. Nobody talks about buying 1000 shares of University stock. The task of academic administrators is very
inquiry is encouraged. That does cost money, and it does require bookkeeping and sound management: we do not want to waste resources. But the driving force is not profit or even product. The challenge is to educate people. The word has an ancient Latin root that can be translated as to lead out; to show a path. Education is not something one can do to people by manipulating them as product. Nor is it something that people can buy as customers. Education is an achievement: one can only educate oneself.

So what about outcomes assessment? Just as we know that some students are better than others in some way, we know that some teachers are better than others at encouraging their students to flourish. But the skills those teachers bring to their work are no more measurable than the quality of the students they work with. The very idea of objective measurement flies in the face of our claims to individuality. Not everything that counts can be counted. Maybe even more strongly: if it can be counted or measured it is probably not really worth counting or measuring. We cannot escape the risky, rewarding, human responsibility of making judgment, unless we are willing to renounce being human and to become mere machines.

Maarten van Swaay
Computing and Information Sciences
Kansas State University

Faculty Council Meeting
Minutes, March 30, 1995

Attendance

Present were: Gary Allee, Lloyd Barrow, Dale Blevins, Benedict Campbell, Joe Charlson, Vicki Conn, Allen Hahn, Peter Hall, Jean Hamilton, Lonnie Echternacht for Richard Hatley, Edward Hunvald, Charles Knowles, Deborah Pearsall, Larry Penney, Glenn Pierce, Ron Plain, Patricia Plummer, Michael Porter, Dennis Sentilles, Mary Ellen Sievert, Fred Springsteel, Harry Tyrer, Betty Winfield, Bob Almony (Librarians), and Mabel Grimes (Black Faculty & Staff). Absent were: Hardeep Bhullar, Jay Dix, Leonard Forte, Loren Nikolai, Michael Prewitt, Don Sievert, and Roy Utz (Retirees).

Approval of Minutes

Chairman Ed Hunvald brought the meeting to order in Room S110 of the Memorial Union at 3:40 p.m. The minutes of the March 9, 1995 meeting were approved as presented.

Report of Officers

It was reported by Chairman Ed Hunvald that a nominating committee for the position of Chairperson and Vice Chairperson will be appointed in the near future. The chairperson will be on the Council for one year. The vice chairperson will be on the Council for two years.

Action Items

Mid-Semester Grades. After much discussion it was decided that the Student Affairs Committee will try to work with the Undergraduate Deans Group to arrive at some method to be tried this fall, in a resolution of this problem. It was moved and passed that Faculty Council recommends that faculty members work out a method to make sure that students in their first semester of college be clearly informed how they are doing by mid-semester.

Admissions Policies. It was moved and passed by a hand vote to approve the First-Time College Admissions Standards. The administration has been asked to explain at a forthcoming meeting how they plan to implement these standards. Secondly, the draft Transfer Admissions Policy for Transfer Students was passed as presented, to be effective Fall 1996. See Appendix A for statements.

Cap on Fees

Gary Smith had provided Faculty Council with a fee schedule and an average undergraduate and graduate coursework history since the fall of 1975. Some faculty members questioned whether or not the decrease in average coursework by undergraduate and graduate students is a statistically significant amount. A cap on fees proposal will be an action item at the next meeting of Faculty Council.

Discussion Items

U.S. Senate Bill 314: Pat Plummer introduced a resolution calling for Faculty Council support in opposing Senate Bill 314 in the U.S. Senate because of its implications relative to first amendment rights and people’s use of the Internet. However, after some discussion, this resolution was tabled so that faculty members will be able to consider text of the proposed Senate Bill.

Health Oversight Committee Report: The Health Oversight Committee Report was presented by Dennis Sentilles. A resolution will be acted upon at the next meeting of Faculty Council.

Board of Curators Report

The Board of Curators Report from the meeting on March 23-24, held at U-M-Rolla, was presented by Gary Allee to the Faculty Council.
IFC Report
The IFC has forwarded to President Russell and Vice President McGill various questions regarding the health insurance plan. Secondly, the grievance procedures have been sent to Vice President Wallace.

Standing Committee Reports
There were no standing committee reports.

Closed Session and Adjournment
At 5:20 p.m. Faculty Council moved into closed session. Faculty Council was adjourned at 5:25 p.m. after making committee appointments.

Respectfully submitted,
Robert Almony, Recorder

Appendix A
FIRST TIME COLLEGE ADMISSION STANDARD

Freshmen will be admitted based on a predicted freshman grade point average of 2.00 or greater. The predicted GPA is calculated using the relationship of the following academic factors: high school courses, grades in core courses, and ACT/SAT tests.

TRANSFER ADMISSION POLICY
1. Accept transfer applicants from Missouri Community Colleges with a core degree.
2. Accept transfer applicants from other University of Missouri campuses who have a 2.00 or greater GPA.
3. Transfer applicants with less than 15 hours of college credit and who meet freshmen admission standards are eligible with a 2.00 or greater GPA.
4. Transfer applicants with 15-29 hours of college credit are eligible for admission if:
   (a) they have met freshman admission standards and have a 2.00 GPA or,
   (b) they have a 2.75 GPA and have completed either the equivalent of Math 10 or English 20 with a C or better.
   (Must also have completed Math 80 or approved equivalent with a C or better if an Engineering applicant.)
5. Transfer applicants, not from other UM campuses, with 30-59 hours must have a 2.75 GPA and have completed the equivalent of Math 10 and English 20, with a C or better. (Completion of Math 80 or approved equivalent with a C or better is required for Engineering applicants.)
6. Transfer applicants, not from other UM campuses, with 60 or more hours must have a 2.50 GPA and have completed the equivalent of Math 10 and English 20, with a C or better. Completion of Math 80 or approved equivalent with a C or better is required for Engineering applicants.

The admissions office will report to Council in the fall on fall 1995 admissions, problems likely to arise and proposed actions to be taken for admissions for fall 1996.