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### Scholastic minutes 04/26/2007

Scholastic Committee

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University of Minnesota, Morris  
Scholastic Committee  
Minutes #17, April 26th, 2007

The Scholastic Committee met at 12:00 P.M. on April 26th, 2007 in Imholte 217.

Members Present: J. Anderson, J. Deane, D. De Jager (Ex. Asst.), K. Gonier Klopfliesch, J. Goodnough, S. Haugen, J. Larson, D. Magner, B. McQuarrie, N. McPhee (Chair), L. Meek (Secretary), M. Stewart, J. Schryver, C. Strand (Interim Registrar)

Guests: Members of the Functions and Awards Committee; P. Bremer (Chair), N. Giles, L. Keeler, P. Shorb, M. Zosel.

1. The out-going chair, McPhee was thanked for his service. Complimentary remarks were made and a certificate suitable for framing was presented.

2. Minutes # 16 were approved.

3. The committee formally endorsed the initiation of both the Master Advisor and Advising Mentoring Programs by the Advising Office. Drafts have been prepared and commented on by the Committee. These drafts will be refined summer 07 and submitted to the Dean during the summer, with the expectation that they will be put in place Fall 07.

4. Petition # 1171--Waive the FA requirement of the General Education Requirements. Tabled. More information will be collected about the analysis of this work. [Upon receiving further information, the committee voted electronically to approve.]

5. Petition #1172-- Waive the ArtP requirement of the General Education Requirements. Approved.

6. The Functions and Awards Committee, which reports to the Scholastic Committee joined us for a discussion of some of the problems that have been historically associated with the Scholar of the College Award.

Prior to the meeting, several documents were shared with both committees. They are attached below.

In response to document 1, the chair, P. Bremer, made these remarks:

- Functions and Awards will submit an annual report to Scholastic Committee in the future.
- Functions and Awards agrees that understanding the history of each award is necessary in the decision to grant the award.
- Criteria for each award are always given to committee members and in the future, historical information/data will also be shared.
- It is suggested that a formula be devised which uses the total number of degree-seeking students, the total numbers of degree-seeking students in a division to calculate the total number of recipients of the Scholar of the College for each academic year. It was further suggested that no more than 1% of total degree-seeking students in any particular year be allowed to obtain the award. For example, at our present population, 17 students could have received the award in 06-07, and when broken down by division, Humanities would be eligible to receive 4; Education 2; Science and Math 4 and Social Science 7.

- The Functions and Awards Committee agreed that they should do outreach to the disciplines to determine what benchmarks/criteria should be used if a revision of the criteria for the award occurs.

7. The Committee was adjourned. This was the last committee meeting of 06-07.

Documents Received by both Committees prior to the meeting:

Document 1: Talking Points for the April 26th Meeting of the Scholastic Committee with Functions and Awards:

1. Functions and Awards reports to Scholastic, but this has not occurred formally or informally for at least the last 10 years. SC requests that Functions and Awards complete an annual report at the end of each academic year that is submitted to SC by mid –August. Functions and Awards should then attend a committee meeting early in Fall semester for a discussion of their annual report and plans for the coming academic year.

(Note: Peter Bremer found this in the by-laws: “Each adjunct committee submits, at the end of spring semester on odd years, a written report of its actions and proposals to its assembly committee.”).

2. Functions and Awards should compile a historical record of the criteria and their interpretations for each award. Awards from year to year should conform with the historical record and deviations should not occur unless the criteria have been formally altered via Assembly approval.

If such a historical record does not exist, it should begin to be formally compiled at the beginning of the 07 – 08 academic year. Institutional memory should be plumbed to compile as much of a history as can be formulated before 07 – 08, from former Chairs, Maggie Larson, committee members, etc.

3. During the decision process for awards, committee members must be given information about the historical record of that award so that they can make decisions consistent with prior interpretations of the criteria. The historical information given to committee members should be in a form that is easy to interpret.

4. This year there was significant consternation on the campus about the interpretation of the criteria for Scholar of the College. This consternation should not be underestimated. It was not just a few people. A significant number of faculty are concerned that the criteria for the award were interpreted less strictly than formerly. In particular, the concern was that presenting only at the URS alone was considered to be sufficient evidence of scholarship “above and beyond the normal requirements of coursework and paid employment, and that is an addition to the knowledge of the discipline as that discipline defines how it recognizes scholarship.”

This is a valid concern, since much of the research presented at the URS is the result of coursework for which the student receives credit and grades and which is required to be completed in order to complete graduation requirements.

The committee needs to decide whether presenting only at the URS is valid evidence to support receiving the award. If they decide yes, then they need to support this decision in light of the

history of the award (which has not considered URS presentation alone sufficient in the past) and they are going to have to gain campus acceptance for this change, via Scholastic Committee and the Assembly. This would have to be done considerably before the next round of Scholar of the College awards, so that the campus is prepared for and informed of this change. When the committee deviates from historical interpretation of the criteria, they must understand that such changes must be justified, supported by the campus and the campus must be informed in a timely manner.

If the committee decides that URS presentation alone is not a sufficient basis for the award, the URS does not have to specifically be mentioned in the criteria; all that needs to be said is that “the work must have been presented to the scholarly community beyond UMM.”

5. There was concern this year about the number of Scholar of the College awards. If the criteria are interpreted consistently from year to year, an increasing number of awards is not a problem. It indicates that UMM is fulfilling its mission to give students a public honor's college experience and if the numbers increase, then that indicates that more students are gaining that experience via research. We should be proud of increasing numbers.

However, if criteria are not interpreted consistently from year to year, then this is a problem, since increasing numbers might indicate a loosening of criteria for the award and don't indicate anything about the quality of the experiences students are experiencing.

6. There was concern over the disparity in the number of S of C awards given to various divisions or by ethnicity. This is not necessarily the problem of the committee unless they are deliberately biasing their decisions. We assume the number of awards is essentially a direct reflection of the number of applications received.

The committee might want to consider whether there are simple things they can do to encourage disciplines to meet and discuss S of C when the call for nominations comes out. Perhaps some disciplines believe the criteria are extremely difficult for their students? Do they then have ideas for how that might be addressed? F&A might want to do some homework on this, as it's a constant source of minor tension.

7. Functions and Awards should consider using the Scholastic Committee as a resource. We represent a microcosm of the Assembly, with a vast combined experience negotiating the campus mechanisms/culture. We also have considerable clout and an endorsement from us means something in Assembly. For example, the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs has consulted with us and used us to approve and present information on Academic Integrity and Disruptive Conduct Procedures, Curriculum Committee consults us and asks for endorsements of some of their initiatives, Advising and Academic Assistance use us as a sounding board and endorser of new initiatives. Thus, if F & A wants advice about and support for changing criteria, interpreting criteria, or for support in Assembly, they should feel free to use us. In addition, the SC is very history/data oriented, so F & A may wish to request help in compiling historical information.

Criteria for Scholar of the College can be found at:  
<http://www.mrs.umn.edu/committees/funcaward/schocoll.txt>

Document 2: Some History from Maggie Larson, Support Staff for Functions and Awards:  
#1. For two years in a row the faculty on the F&A committee refused to act as chair, so Sam Schuman \_appointed\_ Bonnie Tipcke (AFSCME staff person) to be chair of the committee. Then it rolled to Peter when Bonnie was leaving, as I believe he was the most seasoned committee member. (I'm relying on memory here re: Peter being the most seasoned committee person...)

I can address a couple of the talking points: (and I copy Maddy Maxeiner to make sure I am correct in donor relationships)

#2. THEE ONLY award that the F&A committee has any "right" to alter the interpretation is the Scholar of the College. The criteria for all other awards that the actual committee determines (Farrell, Edson, Martelle) are set by the donors. For example, Fred Farrell and friends and family members that gift the award money determine the criteria for that award. Same with the Edson and Martelle. The Larson is a voting process by all faculty and seniors, complete with a ballot. All other awards come to the Committee as information only--the committee doesn't determine the awards within various divisions. The chancellor determines the Chancellor Awards and passes that information to us, and so forth.

#3. The above awards are the only awards for which this committee has any historical information, and that historical information is as it is printed in the programs, the call for nominations, etc. Again, the criteria comes from the donors. All other historical information for awards would need to come from the various divisions as it comes to the committee as information only.

#5. I don't have time right now to dig into the files from past years, but I can assure you that we have absolutely and positively seen an increase in the number of SOC awards since 1998 when I came on board. I believe there were 20 in 1998.

#6. Prior to 1998, that "interpretation" clause did not exist. For the very reasons that the Scholastic Committee is now raising, the interpretation clause was added. Prior to that, the call for nominations read just as you see it now, MINUS THAT CLAUSE. And I might add that the committee only gets the name and the information the nominator provides. They have no idea of ethnicity. (Having absolutely nothing to do with F&A, but as a case in point, I had no idea a student with the name of Julia Schmitt was a minority student.)

#7. I can add a bit of information here. I think when the F&A Committee began deviating from seeking advice from the Scholastic Committee was when the VCAA and Dean was the chair of the F&A Committee. Bettina Blake was chair for several years and following that, Jack Imholte was chair. It was during that time that the F&A committee became sort of "self reliant".

#### Document 3: Info from the by-laws:

from the UMM By-Laws, July 2005:

#### Section 3. Review of Adjunct Committees

Each assembly committee reviews the actions and future proposals of all its adjunct committees in a biennial report to the campus assembly. The report recommends the renewal or elimination of such committees and/or the establishment of new adjunct committees. Each assembly committee considers the productivity and necessity of its adjunct committees and the needs of the campus in its recommendations to the campus assembly concerning the establishment, duties, and responsibilities of adjunct committees.

As the parent committee, we can request that F&A submit an annual report to us, so we have documentation on which to base our recommendation to the Assembly every two years.

Document 4: 1990 Minutes excerpt:

DATE: 9 May 1990  
TO: UMM Campus Assembly  
FROM: Sun Kahng, Chair, Functions and Awards Committee  
RE: Nominees for the Scholar of the College Award

This year the Functions and Awards Committee received 25 nominations for 18 students as possible Scholar of the College designees. The Committee is recommending that 16 students be designated as Scholar of the College for 1990. All of the recommendations and rejections were done by a unanimous vote.

The Committee spent seven meetings out of ten discussing, almost exclusively, the criteria and the nominations for the Scholar of the College Award. The Committee cannot stress enough, the importance of the Executive Committee to formulate a campus task force charged with establishing permanent criterion the Functions and Awards Committee would adhere to when making Scholar of the College recommendations.

As last year, the Committee used the criteria for recommendation based upon a summary as printed on the nomination form: "In addition to a high GPA, criteria used for justifying a nominee for the Scholar of the College Award should include a full description of the specific contribution with particular attention to the tangible results. For convenience, we include here a brief list of tangible results (evidence) which have, in the past, been acceptable to this Committee: a distinguished lecture/recital, joint research paper or project with a faculty member, authorship, presentation of a paper at a seminar, exhibition of works of creative excellence, receipt of a UROP Scholarship, serving as a research assistant, and participating in educational research abroad."

This criteria continues to cause debate throughout the campus: should or shouldn't GPA be used at all; the definition presented on page 30 of the UMM Bulletin is just as weak," . . . to students who have demonstrated distinguished scholarship by making a valuable contribution to one or more of the academic disciplines. . . ." Should then, the award be renamed "Scholar of the Discipline?" The current award name, Scholar of the College, has broader implications.

The Committee emphasizes that the GPA was not the absolute determining factor in the selection, but that the Committee considered in a cumulative way a majority of the criteria as fulfilling the requirements for a Scholar of the College Award. It was on the bases of the cumulative contributions that two were rejected And the following were recommended for 1990 Scholar of the College designation:

.....Last year, the Committee received 38 nominations for 33 students, and recommended 28 for final approval by the Campus Assembly.