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October 27, 2006

UMM Constitution Revision Committee
Meeting # 9: October 23, 2006

Present: M.E. Bazanson (Chair), B. Ahern, B. Jasper, M. Korth, T. McRoberts (Secretary), S. Olson-Loy, G. Rudney, K. Strissel, G. Thorson and R. Webb

G. Donovan was not able to be at this meeting.

As follow-up to the last meeting, the chair started by suggesting that we identify key constitutional issues that should be a part of the forums that will be held for the campus community. There emerged a long list of issues/concerns with regard to the constitution.

Constitutional Issues

1. Term limits of students, faculty and staff on committees—there followed a brief discussion of some examples where student terms are limited to the point where it is very difficult to develop some knowledge on key committees, such as the Scholastic and Curriculum committees. This is also true for faculty and staff.
2. Voting on committees and the (voting) role of exofficio membership needs to be clarified.
3. Staff status on committees—both voting and eligibility.
4. The Executive Committee—clarifying the duties and composition of that committee.
5. The role of the Vice Chancellors Group—it currently is not identified in the constitution and yet has developed in a body with considerable authority.
6. The role of the Division Chairs in the governance process. Note: one member commented that the constitution does describe the authority of the Division Chairs but that authority has been bypassed in recent years.
7. The Constitution is outdated in substance and practice—one member observed that there has been both structural changes and practices at UMM that are at variance with our constitution.
8. Membership on Campus Committees--another member observed that the United Staff Association and the MCSA are not mentioned in the constitution, but they select their membership on committees. In fact, both USA and MCSA

select their membership and forward their selections to the Executive Committee, which accepts them for placement on committees.

9. Committee jurisdiction and reform—a great deal of discussion followed about the scope and authority of such committees as the Campus Resources and Planning Committee and how that has changed over time. One concern is that a committee such as the Campus Resources and Planning Committee has become an overworked committee, dealing with financial issues and a host of planning matters. Perhaps there needs to be reconsideration of how strategic planning and budgetary matters are addressed in our committee structure.
10. The role of the Consultative and the Faculty Affairs Committees and their relationship to each other needs clarification in the revised constitution.
11. What should it take to amend the constitution and bylaws?
12. What constitutes a quorum at Assembly meetings?
13. Membership in the Assembly and the process of removing members who do not participate needs to be addressed.
14. How do we clarify the document when offices or units become outdated or change?
15. How do we change the constitution when titles and responsibilities change?
16. Outdated time frames for review of staff—the Chancellors review occurring every seven years as an example. From that, there followed considerable discussion about mandated reviews of senior administrators and how that has fallen by the wayside. Historically, administrative reviews were commonplace, at one time even at the director level. That fell by the wayside, but still there is the expectation that Division Chairs and higher would undergo periodic reviews. The practice has become uneven in its application.
17. Divisional authority needs to be clarified. The relationship of administrators to the campus governance system requires further clarification.
18. The nature of committee meetings—the standard should be that meetings are open to all, with written records.
19. The role of Assembly and Adjunct committees needs to be clarified. Indeed, there is one suggestion that these distinctions of Assembly and Adjunct should no longer be maintained.

20. A Steering Committee to help coordinate the work of the Campus governance committees. But there was some concern that this is the function of the Executive Committee. There followed a lengthy discussion of the functions of the Executive Committee in relation to what a Steering Committee might do.
21. Important institutional processes embedded (i.e. implementation of the student conduct) in campus committees (“Assembly,” ad hoc and sub committees). Much of this is not clarified in our constitution.
22. The role of the Consultative Committee and its jurisdiction—it was noted by one committee member that the Consultative Committee was intended in the early years of UMM to mimic the structure of the constitution and structure of the University Senate committees. The Consultative Committee was considered to be a “grievance committee” that was a sounding board for the campus community. Today, senior administrators consult with the Consultative Committee on key appointments. The committee also continues to be a sounding board for concerns expressed by all groups within the campus community. In part this is because it is an elective committee with representation from the entire campus community.
23. The level of responsibility of committees. Can they really effect legislation and actions or are they simply consulted without any impact?
24. One member of the committee observed that the Consultative and Executive Committees, both of which are elected, set agendas and set meeting dates. Some viewed this as fairly narrow interpretation of the constitution.

Grouping of Related Issues

The chair asked that we group related issues (above) under selected topics at the next meeting.

Major Topics

One committee member suggested that all of the items above fit within four major topics including: 1) committee structure, 2) Assembly and committee membership, 3) procedures and how things are organized, and 4) authority, power and responsibility in the constitution.

A member observed that a major issue is coming to grips with the fact that the Assembly and its committees have real authority and decision making in the life of the institution. This is a situation where in administrative and budgetary matters, the administration at various levels has a responsibility to report back to the Assembly.

The next meeting will be on Monday, October 30 at 3:30 pm and we will continue the discussion of grouping of the items as presented at this meeting under the four

categories identified above or some others yet to be identified. This is to be done in anticipation of campus forums.

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