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March 7, 2006

Constitutional Revision Committee
University of Minnesota, Morris
Meeting #2, 2/27/06

Present: M.E. Bezanson (Chair), M. Korth, T. Lindberg, J. Ratliff-Crain, G. Rudney, K. Strissel, G. Thorson, R. Wareham, R. Webb and T. McRoberts (interim secretary)

1. Minutes-Though completed, the minutes of the February 20 (meeting #1) were not distributed earlier. We agreed that the committee members should have a chance to review the minutes before posting them on the website. (They will have up to a week to review them before they are posted.)
2. Permanent Secretary-Need for a secretary-the chair is continuing to pursue assistance.
3. Vice-Chair-The chair asked if anybody would be willing to serve with her as vice-chair in anticipation of illness and other demands on the chair's time.
4. Review of the Constitution-The chair posed the question if we are examining the constitution (looking at the document article by article) or do we wish to address global issues first? One member suggested that we take a brief period of time to sketch out the global issues right away and then return to the review of the constitution. Another member joined in and indicated a desire to address the global issues as well.
5. Global Issues Regarding the Constitution (cited here as they were raised by one or more members)-
 - Campus governance is bypassed by task forces or special committees; the existing committee structure is ignored. Campus governance is consistently bypassed.
 - Some questioned the legitimacy of the Chancellor's leadership team as an institutional (constitutional) entity and its leadership authority.
 - The function of the Campus Assembly and its constituent members is not clear.
 - The jurisdiction and the relationship of such committees as the Executive Committee, the Consultative Committee and the Faculty Affairs Committee is unclear.
 - The role of staff members on committees-when there are changes or reductions in committee sizes, frequently the staff member is dropped.
 - The selection process for committee membership is uneven--the selection of the student members for committees is not in sync with semesters-membership is affirmed by the Assembly before students are appointed.
 - Committee jurisdiction-too much work for too few committees.

- Mechanism for removing members for non-attendance at the Assembly (or on committees) is unclear or nonexistent.
- Committee service is uneven-some faculty with sufficient seniority don't have to serve at all, where others must serve.
- The relative power of the Assembly is unclear-in relation to the Chancellor and the Executive Committee. Under current practice, policy matters are shaped by the Chancellor, not by the Assembly.
- Discipline coordinators are not in the constitution, but play an increasing role in day-to-day activity in the divisions.
- The Academic Dean is not in the constitution.
- Should all senior administrative officers be in the constitution and at what level do they need to be identified (i.e. directors, vice-chancellors, division chairs)?
- We need to define governance and define who has authority in our constitutional system.
- What role does the Assembly or the broader campus community play in the institutional budgeting process?
- A host of matters related to the constitution remain vague, from the amendment process to the definition of a quorum. In our constitution, the nature and scope of responsibility of key committees is not entirely clear and their relationship to each other, particularly the Consultative and Executive Committees is not spelled out, and in one case, the Grievance Committee is non-existent.
- There is an absence of a philosophy of shared governance-how do we make it more shared? Pressure is for a corporate model of governance.
- If the Assembly is supposed to function as a Town Meeting, it does not function with the authority it should have.
- The constitution lacks clarity on matters of process.
- The constitution lacks clarity on the various constituencies that make up the Assembly and their role in our governing processes (faculty, academic staff, students, civil service and bargaining unit staff).
- Much of the constitution is not really usable any longer. A committee member noted that the basic structure of the constitution may be sound-we don't need to blow up the structure-but we may need to better define the existing structure. It was suggested that we look at other models of governance. If there is a need to change the constitution, we have to have a clearly define the amendment process.

The chair expressed concern about where we were going. One member suggested that the nature of the comments suggested that the constitutional revision needs to be substantial. There followed a conversation about how we would actually go about making these changes. One member suggested that we use on-line technology (wikki) whereby each of us could participate in an ongoing dialogue about constitutional change.

6. Return to the Constitution Article 1, Section 3

- There was a discussion of the budget development process that is clearly not consultative. It is not clear from our constitution if consultation is expected or required. Another committee member wondered about the role of the Campus Resources and Planning Committee—does the Chancellor consult and the Campus Resources and Planning Committee simply sign off on the Chancellor's position? There followed a discussion about whether or not the campus budget should be developed by the Chancellor or by the Campus Resources and Planning Committee.
- There was a suggestion that the Campus Resources and Planning Committee simply approves or disapproves of administrative actions and is not really a policy body. That seems to be true of other committees as well. The process of committee business is not clear. Another member observed that there is no mechanism for cross committee consultation—they function in isolation. Others suggested that such efforts at consultation were actually thwarted.
- Section 4: There is a concern that the college is micromanaged by senior administrators at the expense of committees. There is also the concern about the creation of new positions that require consultation, where little has occurred. There is a concern that there is a proliferation of administrators without consultation. Our constitution does not adequately define the limits of administrative authority in the process of selecting administrators.
- Under section 5, Faculty tenure, there followed a lengthy discussion about how tenure is defined within each of the divisions. There are some questions as to whether or not the definitions of tenure should be in the constitution. The discussion ended at that point.
- The committee will reconvene on March 13. In the meantime, committee members should look at various articles on shared governance and other colleges' constitutions.