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The Role of Faculty at UMM, [1960s]

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Briggs, Rodney A., "The Role of Faculty at UMM, [1960s]" (1960). *UMN Morris Founding Documents Project*. 75.

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THE ROLE OF FACULTY

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA, MORRIS

by

Rodney A. Briggs
Dean - UMM

In December of 1959 I was named as Acting Dean of a new program announced by the Board of Regents of the University of Minnesota as a "one-year experimental program of collegiate instruction at Morris in the facilities operated by the West Central School of Agriculture". It was my good fortune to be named to the Morris Campus Advisory Committee and to assist in the deliberations which resulted in the philosophy of the college operation, organization of the college and the defining of the role and objectives of the then new University of Minnesota, Morris.

We are now at the threshold of possibly the most single significant achievement in the young life of this institution -- our first graduation.

I am taking this opportunity to reflect over the past four years in an examination specifically of the development of the faculty. Each faculty member at Morris has been selected to serve on the UMM faculty because of the special qualifications that each possess and each of you, is in a position which will lead to a tenure status within the faculty structure of the University of Minnesota. It is a distinct honor and privilege to serve on the faculty of the University of Minnesota, Morris. The potential of service in a fine academic institution is still within the grasp of all associated with the University of Minnesota, Morris. However, it will still take time for such potential to be realized.

The University of Minnesota, Morris is a public undergraduate liberal arts college with four general objectives as established by the Morris Campus Advisory Committee prior to the start of the college in 1960. They are as follows:

1. To develop within the framework of the liberal arts concept a

distinguished four-year college leading to the B. A. degree.

2. To develop within the collegiate offering, preprofessional curricula for entrance into professional schools within the University of Minnesota or in other institutions.
3. To develop within the collegiate offering a distinguished teacher education program.
4. To develop a program to serve the citizens of Minnesota by offering educational and cultural opportunities for area residents.

I must underscore two most important aspects of UMM. First that it is a public institution with funds for the ongoing program derived primarily from public tax monies and secondly, UMM is an instructional unit at the undergraduate level.

The faculty, both teaching and non-teaching, must be ever mindful of the responsibilities entailed because of the public nature of the institution as well as the obligation imposed upon each of us to meet the objectives as outlined above as an instructional undergraduate institution.

In a new developing college a course of action had to be defined which would allow for the orderly development of the college organization and administration. The first year of college the total faculty met frequently and exercised their judgments and prerogatives through the democratic process. There was no administrative structure during the first year of the collegiate program. There were a limited number of committees appointed which reported back to the total faculty. Budget responsibilities were retained centrally and all college actions were either taken by me or by the total faculty in one of its frequent meetings.

Divisions and division faculties as functional administrative units were

not formed until the 1962-63 academic year and it was during the 1962-63 academic year that administrative responsibilities were given to the Division Chairmen and the division faculty. It was during the 1962-63 academic year that a significant procedural and structural changes took place on the Morris campus that solidified the position of both the divisional and total faculty.

The faculty has grown now to a point where much of the deliberation and study of any question must be done by committee or sub-committee action and reported back to the faculty for action or information.

Today we are in the process of stabilizing the faculty and we can look forward to the adoption of a faculty constitution which sets forth the pattern of campus activity.

I would like now to pursue the role and responsibility for the faculty at UMM.

Possibly the major responsibilities of each faculty member are first to the entire academic community, then the university, and finally to the University of Minnesota, Morris. This responsibility implied a number of items:

1. The upholding of the dignity and tradition of things academic.
2. The understanding and upholding of the rules and regulations of the institution in which a faculty member serves.
3. To be responsible citizens who by their very actions bring credit to the institution in which they serve.
4. Recognition of administrative responsibility and authority.
5. The obligation of each faculty member to support, serve and contribute to the discipline or professional area in which they specialize.
6. The recognition of their responsibility to students.
7. The exercise of their judgement in areas "academic" as faculty

not as a discipline or in the basis of their position administrative or teaching on the campus.

8. To accept with trust the results of study and deliberation of their colleagues on specific questions referred to smaller groups of faculty.

If the major responsibility is to the academic community, in the large sense, in which they serve the next priority is in the recognition of their obligation and responsibility to the instructional unit in which they serve.

This manifests itself in many ways as follows:

1. Effective classroom instruction
2. Strong advisor-advisee relationships
3. Interest and sympathy toward students and their problems
4. The responsible discharge of committee assignments
5. The establishment of college-wide academic standards
6. Maintaining a posture of a cohesive faculty working together to implement the ongoing program.

As an undergraduate institution, research or other scholarly activities by faculty are highly desirable. This is not a "publish or perish" institution, yet it becomes an obligation of many faculty to reach beyond the classroom to maintain his competency and contribute to the ongoing scholarly and research posture of the institution and of his profession. The requirements of research and scholarly activities are as different as the many disciplines represented on the campus at Morris. To contribute to the increasing competency of the individual faculty member and to make significant contributions within each professional area, it would appear that the following is necessary:

1. An obligation to keep up to date by the reading of scholarly journals.

2. A responsibility to belong to the recognized learned societies representing their subject discipline.
3. For those qualified to actively pursue research or scholarly activities so they may contribute to the knowledge of the professional field, publication of this knowledge is necessary.

Each of you will be expected to contribute to the ongoing program in such a way that you will bring credit to your students, your college and possibly the most important, to yourselves. This contribution may take many forms, as an outstanding classroom teacher, as a productive scholar, a respected advisor or a publishing researcher. Each must attempt to explore fully and develop what may be your most effective contribution to the academic community.

I have a deep sense of responsibility to insure that each student who enrolls at Morris finds a faculty that is dynamic and vital. A faculty not only concerned in their own professional development but with a sincere dedication to the ongoing program and to the needs of students on our campus.

I am proud of this faculty. It is a distinct honor and privilege to serve with you. Service in the academic community entails obligations and responsibilities and I urge each of you to explore your own posture.