

5-4-2009

Consultative minutes 05/04/2009

Consultative Committee

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Recommended Citation

Consultative Committee, "Consultative minutes 05/04/2009" (2009). *Consultative Committee*. 82.
<http://digitalcommons.morris.umn.edu/consult/82>

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FINAL

Consultative Committee Meeting Minutes

5.4.09

Members present: Jennifer Zych Herrmann, Jon Anderson, Brad Deane, Len Keeler, Pam Gades, Judy Korn, Maggie Larson, Lynn Schulz, Nancy Carpenter, ex-officio

Members absent: Alex Murphy, Adam Olson

Guest: Cheryl Contant, vice chancellor for academic affairs and dean

Contant addressed several topics re: budget-related decisions and reorganization.

Lab courses: Contant spoke briefly about miscommunication regarding lab courses and potential changes. She has no interest in “fiddling” with labs but does wish to explore and discuss space issues and equipment. At a time in which the campus is forced to reduce staffing due to budget constraints, she believes it is prudent to investigate the possibility of making small investments that could improve lab efficiencies without decreasing pedagogy, safety, and other standards. For example, the purchase of an additional microscope might perhaps eliminate the need for two lab sections.

Kallsen budget research: Contant spoke about Lincoln Kallsen’s budget investigation and research conducted on Morris’s behalf. Kallsen is director of financial research in the Office of Budget and Finance on the Twin Cities campus. He reports that the Morris campus’s reliance on state support is twice that of the Twin Cities and Duluth campuses. Even if state support remains stable, this situation is a concern. Morris’s revenue enhancements are currently limited to enrollment and grants. Tuition increases and no salary increases will keep the campus steady next year.

Student and faculty numbers: President Robert Buininks and Senior Vice President for System Academic Administration Robert Jones asked Morris to find the “right number of faculty for a given number of students.” Contant refrains from using the term “faculty: student ratio,” but rather wishes to discuss optimal class sizes and efficiencies in relation to Morris’s mission. The search for the answer to this question continues.

Consultation in regard to classroom/course changes: Contant noted that because division chairs know the pedagogy, they will drive the consultation process as changes occur. She drives the resource process, the faculty teaching workload, and covers core areas. Current level of change is “tinkering” with timing and size of classes. Campus Resources and Planning Committee (CRPC) would be involved with higher levels of change...majors, etc...as would the curriculum committee. Curriculum committee has spent time identifying and discussing factors that would lead to dissolution of a program or major. Program review will be re-implemented in a five- to six-year cycle. The value of an external review has been debated.

Contant hopes that all the major cuts have been made and that increased international enrollment will help the budget situation. Services will need to be provided for these students.

Contant spoke about “right measure” and having a better understanding of the resources the campus needs to make to a particular major. She stated that some courses can be effectively taught with 150 students in a classroom, but that isn’t “who we are.” She noted that questions like “How do we drive the resources to accomplish the things we want to accomplish?” are intended to get people thinking not create angst.

Tenure lines: The American Association of University Presidents suggests an 85 percent tenure/15 percent adjunct ratio. Morris has less than 10 percent non-tenure faculty. Contant stated: “We are heavily tenured, and this is what we want to do at a place like Morris.” But this ratio decreases flexibility in class offerings. She has been working with the Faculty Affairs Committee to establish a set of principles for adjuncts that considers a heavier classroom instruction load; increased salary for experience; increased salary for terminal degrees. The process must also take into consideration market availability, livable wages, and partner employment. Contant stated that it would be desirable for non-tenure faculty to receive 75 percent or higher appointments in order to receive benefits and encourage membership in the campus community.

Reorganization of Computing Services and Media Services: Contant stated that sometimes the two areas within Computing Services—technical/infrastructure and customer service—are in conflict. She has seen this situation in “place after place.” She stated that “the direction we are going is an attempt to provide services in the right place—straight forward, easy.” She noted that Media Services is set up as a 1960 services model rather than an instructional technology model. Reorganization is motivated by budget reductions, including no funds available for a chief info officer/computing services director, and by restructuring as a customer service/instructional technology model.

Contant was asked about “back up” in computing services. The last audit revealed that computing services staff did not have enough back up. It was noted that the restructuring of Computing Services could intensify this situation. Twin Cities programs do not provide the back up support needed on the Morris campus.

Reorganization of Continuing Education: Contant shared that in the past, Morris students paid extra tuition for Continuing Education courses. Now, sometimes a student doesn’t even know they are taking a class within Continuing Education. No additional revenue is generated for credit-bearing courses. Seventy-five percent of continuing education students are full-time Morris students. As a result, the curriculum for these students was determined outside of Morris’s undergraduate program. Those courses have been moved to the divisions. Continuing Education will focus on “developing new initiatives for the 21st century work force—true continuing education courses.” Contant used the new biomass course as an example. Continuing Education will respond to new challenges rather than supplement the “day school.”

Contant noted two factors influencing continuing education. Governor Tim Pawlenty is “pushing” online courses. And President Bob Bruininks is interested in Morris offering online general education courses that fulfill Minnesota Transfer Curriculum requirements. Morris could serve more Post Secondary Enrollment Options (PSEO) students, support the Crookston and Rochester campuses in their general education needs, and serve as a resource to eliminate “bottlenecks” primarily on the Twin Cities campus but also on the Morris campus if needed. The online courses would provide additional revenue for the campus and the primary focus will be on external audiences. Contant noted that the campus community will need to engage in more conversation about online courses.

Reorganization of Career Center and Advising: Contant shared that this reorganization is an intentional effort to deal with students’ needs from the first day they arrive to the first day of their first jobs. This team will provide stronger services for students and will include orientation, registration, and the first year experience. Future goals are to add academic assistance and tutoring, and a central location for all student services.

Respectful submitted,

Judy Korn