

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF  
THE LEGISLATIVE SUB-COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS FOR EDUCATION

February 23, 1977  
8:00 A. M.  
Room 132  
State Capitol Building

Subject: Work Session

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Carroll South.  
The following members of committee were present:

Sen. Larry Fasbender  
Rep. Ora Halvorson  
Sen. Matt Himsl  
Rep. Oscar Kvaalen  
Rep. Jack K. Moore

Also present in the meeting were Judy Rippingale, Legislative Fiscal Analyst, and John Krutar, Office of Budget and Planning.

There were no motions made in this meeting.

There was discussion regarding the Capital Equipment expenditures made at the university units. It was agreed that the units should have to list in their budget requests any and all capital equipment that they intend to purchase during the biennium. However, Chairman South said that the units have never been required to do this. In fact, the units have never been required to list or inventory the equipment that they now have on hand. Chairman South said that it is too late to expect to have this information this session and he didn't know how much time the committee would want to spend on it. The Board of Regents has not required the universities to make this information available.

Chairman South said that he didn't understand why there is such a discrepancy between UM and MSU in the area of capital equipment since they are about the same size and offer many of the same courses of study. UM has put very little funding into the purchase of capital equipment while MSU has spent appropriated funds for capital equipment as well as some federal funding that they were able to get for this purpose.

In discussing capital equipment there were only figures for the six university units but the Agricultural Experiment Station, Vocational-Education and Extension Service were excluded. They are part of the university system but are considered separately. Sen. Himsl requested that all nine units be considered together from now on. Chairman South said that this is something the committee must discuss and make a decision on since the operational base has been based on the nine units.

The committee said that they felt the UM is overstaffed with support personnel. Some funds earmarked for capital equipment has been used for salaries. Because of this the unit hasn't had the money to buy equipment. The committee expressed concern about this but said that under the present laws they have little control in this area. The only way they can correct the present situation is to give them more money to buy equipment.

The Board of Regents have the constitutional authority to have more control over the units than they are presently exercising. Chairman South said that the Regents in turn are responsible to the Legislative Committee. The Committee is hoping that through the use of SBAS and because of legislative intent made known, there will be more information available to committee the next legislative session. It was suggested during the work sessions this week that if when the legislative committee meets the next session there is not more financial responsibility and cooperation on the part of the units, the Legislative Committee will then have to consider their need to change the constitutional laws governing the units.

Until the accounting procedures have been made identical and until SBAS is operating, it will be impossible to have the information needed or to make comparisons. Chairman South said that according to all persons concerned SBAS is workable. All units are having difficulty making the present systems work.

It was noted again that the enrollment at UM has dropped about 1000 in number and MSU has increased enrollment of 1200 students over the past biennium. MSU had hired 45 new instructors during the past biennium. Tom Nopper from MSU had come to Helena to explain the need for this staff increase. He was meeting with Judy Ripplingale on this date.

Chairman South said that the committee will need to have statistics based on enrollment figures and historical trend. He asked Judy Ripplingale to make up a correlation between enrollment figures and the need for capital equipment for the information of the committee. To be considered, too, would be a possible correlation between personnel and operational costs if the figures can be compared.

There was discussion regarding Personal Services which includes contract services, supplies and materials, communication and transportation, travel rent and legal services. Decisions will be made at a future meeting.

Northern Montana College has a lower budget request than the Legislative Fiscal Analyst has recommended for the coming biennium. The committee asked Judy Ripplingale about this. She said that she simply based her recommendations on what had been needed for operation the last biennium and what, according to all figures and rise in cost of operation, would be needed to continue operating on the same basis. NMC had requested \$48,000 less than was recommended.

The organizational chart of the Commissioners Office which had been given to the committee when they met was reviewed and discussed. The chart showed 20 positions within the staff organization with 18 of them presently filled.

The committee agreed that they have no authority to say who should be working in certain positions. Chairman South said that he thought the committee was going to have to decide what number of employees would be adequate for the work that needs to be done. He said that he felt the two vacant positions should not be filled. He said that an auditor is needed on the staff but it was agreed that the committee would discourage the hiring of another attorney. Members said they should not fund any positions unless they are sure of the position and that it is needed.

There was discussion regarding the concept of a strong central office. Members seem to agree with Sen. Himsl when he said that he felt that they should either have a strong central office or none at all. It is the job of the Commissioners Office to have the information compiled and available for the consideration of the Legislative Committee.

The meeting adjourned at 10:00 A. M.

  
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CARROLL V. SOUTH, CHAIRMAN

  
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Betsy Clark, Secretary