

Minutes of the ARFAC Meeting of April 29, 1998

Present: Kathy Chadwick (chair), Wendy Allen, Michelle Gierke, Bill Green, Barb Lundberg, Tim Mahr, Kathy Ruby, and Anna Trefz.

Guests: Pat Quade, Director of International and Off-Campus Study, and Gwendolyn Barnes-Karol, chair of IDOCS.

The meeting was called to order by Kathy Chadwick, Chair, at 3:20 p.m. The agenda for the day was announced as follows:

1. Discussion with Pat Quade and Gwen Barnes-Karol of policy regarding international student admission
2. Review of minutes from earlier meetings
3. Enrollment update

1. DISCUSSION OF POLICY REGARDING INTERNATIONAL STUDENT ADMISSION.
Kathy Chadwick asked Kathy Ruby, Director of Financial Aid, to bring ARFAC members and our guests up to date concerning financial aid relative to international students.

a) Ruby reported that endowed scholarships funds are adequate for students from Norway and that other funding mechanisms allow us to bring students from Germany, but that our funds for bringing students from other countries are inadequate. The problem of inadequate current funds for international students is in part the result of past financial aid policies, which have in some cases tended to be more generous than was advisable. In addition, St. Olaf has made loans to international students, which it has then not been in a position to enforce, leaving the institution to repay the loans. Ruby reported that, in academic year 1998-99, for example, of the approximately \$286,000 earmarked for financial aid for international students, only \$47,000 is actually available for incoming students because of past policies. She explained the challenges involved in making financial aid decisions regarding international students, including the difficulty of obtaining accurate information regarding family resources, the difficulty of interpreting the information we do receive (because of its non-comparability to information provided by American students), and the difficulty of holding international students accountable for their share of St. Olaf tuition and/or for repayment of loans. Some of our current international students are receiving more financial aid than they need; others are not receiving enough. In response to an analysis of our current situation regarding financial aid for international students, a new policy has been implemented this year: international students who apply for financial aid will be eligible to receive half of the St. Olaf tuition (\$8570) plus a \$2,000 work award. international students will receive half of the St. Olaf tuition (\$8570) plus a \$2,000 work award. We anticipate a lower international student

yield because of this change in policy. Ruby concluded by citing the need for additional outside funding for international student financial aid.

b) Barb Lundberg provided additional information regarding the context that led to the recent change in policy: large awards made to relatively few international students had hindered St. Olaf's ability to attract a wide mix of students from diverse regions of the world. The hope is that the new policy will bring us students from a wider representation of countries and regions. Lundberg noted that St. Olaf prefers to admit full-time degree-earning international students rather than one-year exchange students; that we have this year increased the TOEFL requirement to 550; that international students must submit ACT or SAT scores; that we no longer waive the application fee. These changes have resulted in a decrease in international applications for next year. As of April 28, seventy-eight first-year international students had applied and 22 other international students who would be considered transfers. Of this number, 17 first-year international students have been admitted, 7 transfers have been accepted, and 48 are still in the processing stage.

c) Gwen Barnes-Karol reported that IDOCS has just completed the organization of a task force whose charge will be to examine the College's global mission, including the integration of on-campus and off-campus courses, residential life, and international students. The task force is scheduled to complete its work by the end of first semester 1998.

d) Pat Quade reported that, with the exception of the exchange students, his office is not really connected to international students. He expressed a concern about items and issues that fall through the cracks because so many different units of the College have a hand in them (Admissions, Financial Aid, Gordeen Gorder, International Studies, various sources of technical support). Who is coordinating all of these efforts? How can we pull these things together so as to be more effective?

e) All present agreed on the need for a policy document regarding the role of international students at St. Olaf—how do they fit into our overall mission. Until now, we have taken for granted the very important role played by these students; we need to take the time to articulate precisely what that role is. The document must address, at a minimum, the following issues: why international students? what do they contribute? which ones do we want to attract (region, country, characteristics, etc.)? how can we recruit them? Barnes-Karol indicated that once the task force had gotten up and running, and once it had something concrete to share with ARFAC, a joint meeting would be arranged sometime next fall.

2. MINUTES OF APRIL 22. The minutes of the April 22 meeting were approved with the two minor corrections that had been submitted to committee members via e-mail prior to the meeting.

3. ADMISSIONS UPDATE. Lundberg reported that Admissions continues to be confident that we will admit an entering first-year class of 750 students. In response to modifications in the Staff Plan, Mary Carlsen is calling first-year applicants interested in social work; the wrestling coach is contacting his recruits, and hockey coaches are making visits to families in the tri-state

area. The Buntrock yield looks very promising: only six Regents scholars have withdrawn; we have already received payment from twenty-six Regents scholars. Although not all of the figures are in, retention seems to be holding. The percentage of multicultural students will be approximately the same as this year: 7%. The issue of Buntrock-quality applicants who do not apply for the Buntrock program was raised. Should we move the Buntrock deadline up? Should we recast the Buntrock program (slightly) and have a Fall scholarship program and a Spring program? No decision was made regarding either suggestion. The possibility of the Buntrock subcommittee's reflecting on this issue was mentioned.

4. NEXT MEETING. The next meeting will be held in one week, May 6. We will review the overall admissions process, including comparison of our policies and time line with those of our major competitors. Kathy Chadwick will ask Lee Swan (Athletics) and Alison Feldt (Music) to attend the meeting and to submit to committee members in advance of the meeting, a list of their concerns. We still need to review proposed essay topics for the Fall 1998 Buntrock applications. Kathie Fishbeck has circulated a list of the topics used in the past; Michelle Gierke will prepare a list of topics being used by other institutions. Given time constraints, committee members suggested the possibility of conducting this review/discussion via e-mail.

The meeting adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Wendy W. Allen, secretary