

[In these minutes: Reports, Discussion with President Bruininks, Student Conduct Code]

STUDENT SENATE CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE (SSCC) MINUTES

JANUARY 30, 2003

[These minutes reflect discussion and debate at a committee of the University of Minnesota Senate or Twin Cities Campus Assembly; none of the comments, conclusions, or actions reported in these minutes represent the views of, nor are they binding on, the Senate or Assembly, the Administration, or the Board of Regents.]

PRESENT: Judy Berning, (chair), Nick Cecconi, Scott Ferguson, Yev Garif, Kari Lindeman, Ryan Osero, Nathan Saete, Eric Steinhoff, Tom Walsh.

REGRETS: John Amble, Kelsi Holland, Dan O'Connor, Jasen Peterson.

GUESTS: President Robert Bruininks, Jacob Elo, Dan Gilchrist.

1. REPORTS

Since no reports were received in advance, all reports were provided orally.

CHAIR

Judy Berning said that she has been contacted regarding several issues for this semester. They include:

- Randy Croce, Chair of the Council of Academic Professionals and Administrators (CAPA) will be attending the February 6 SSCC meeting to talk to the students about the Academic Governance Policy that will be brought from FCC to the Faculty Senate for approval on February 20. While this policy governs faculty and academic professionals, it will also affect students. She will be talking with Dan Feeney to ask why students are not being provided the opportunity to vote.
- Regarding another voting student position on SCC, she reviewed old Senate minutes during the break. She is going to wait to hear from the SSCC Task Force before she proposes an additional student position. In the meantime, she would like to change the Senate/Assembly Constitution to allow the Student Senate Chair to at least be a non-voting ex officio member of the University Senate and Twin Cities Campus Assembly.
- Nan Kalke contacted her about talking to the committee regarding a work-life initiative that Nan is involved with. She will be scheduled for April.
- Student Health Advisory Committee (SHAC) contacted her about the process to institute a Regents policy banning tobacco sales on campus.
- She will be talking to MSA next week about the revisions to the Student Conduct Code.
- She would like to have a speaker at an upcoming meeting to talk to the committee about international students and the SEVIS registration program.
- She would like to invite members of the Student Affairs Committee to talk to SSCC about ways to streamline the process and the MPCC proposal.

- There is a committee chair's meeting on Thursday, February 13.
- She wants to work on improving the Student Senate. To do this she would like SSCC to talk about other mini workshops that could be offered and leadership experiences for students. She would also like to know what the Student Senate can do for each campus and college.

SSCC/STUDENT SENATE VICE CHAIR

Eric Steinhoff said that he will be focused on the 2003-04 Student Senate budget process and approval.

STUDENT SENATE CHAIR

Ryan Osero reported that he has been following the state grant funding issue and the Student Legislative Coalition (SLC) restructuring. This semester he will be focusing on the University's budget situation, involving coordinating student government organizations to look at streamlining the system.

CROOKSTON

Nate Saete said that a new SLC representative has been elected and that CSA will be visiting Duluth this weekend.

MORRIS

Eric Steinhoff said that MCSA is revamping the student election process and reviewing the activity fee budget.

GAPSA

Yev Garif noted that GAPSA Executive Committee met yesterday to approve several grants and discuss the President's inaugural events. GAPSA will also be working to extend the food service closing time in Coffman past the current 2:30 p.m.

MSA

Judy Berning said that MSA is also looking into the Coffman food service times. MSA Executive Committee will be holding a retreat next weekend and there is a joint GAPSA/MSA meeting this week.

EDUCATIONAL POLICY

Scott Ferguson said that at its last meeting SCEP approved the memberships for the teaching awards committee. It also received information on the freshmen seminars and graduation rates. For the second item, Governor Pawlenty wants the four-year rate to increase, but the University also wants to focus on the five-year graduation rate as well. SCEP will be looking at what the University is not doing to improve graduation rates and if a J-term would help. SCEP also changed language regarding the number of contact hours per class. This amount can be altered to allow for special classes (i.e. independent study, directed study). This change affects all campuses.

2. BUSINESS AND RULES COMMITTEE MEMBER

Ryan Osero volunteered to be the second Business and Rules Committee member from SSCC.

3. DISCUSSION WITH PRESIDENT BRUININKS

President Bruininks joined the meeting and started by discussing the state and University budget situation. He distributed a handout on the presentation he gave to the House Higher Education Finance Committee the day before. The handout details the role of the University to the state in terms of enrollment, degrees, and research dollars, the University's revenue breakdown, state appropriations in the past four years, and revenue by source for Twin Cities colleges.

He then said that the of the University's \$2 billion annual budget, 32 percent (\$650 million) is provided by state appropriations. This percentage has been declining in terms of the state's total budget.

Last May the University was assessed a \$24 million mid-year rescission to balance the state budget. Tuition was increased to cover \$10 million of this rescission and budget cuts made up the other \$14 million. The state budget is still out of balance, so the state needs a plan to balance it before June 30. Currently, the House and Senate plans are in conference committee with a final balance budget bill completed by the end of next week. The House and Governor have requested that the University be assessed another \$25 million rescission by June 30. To raise these funds, other institutions have made mid-year tuition increases, but this is not something that the University is considering.

Once this year's budget is balanced, the state still has a \$4.2 billion budget deficit projected during the next biennium which will need to be solved. This figure, though, does not include normal inflation and could end up being as \$5.5 billion. A proposal has been made to freeze state salaries for two years to lower the deficit. Since the University is autonomous from the state, the University would not have to abide by this wage freeze, but it would still need to find the resources internally to fund wage increases.

While the House and Senate both want more funding for higher education, there is none available to give. The University needs to get the public attention to promote investment in the University. Due to these rescissions and another predicted cut in funding from the state, the University will lose any previous funding gains that it made in the last five years.

President Bruininks then addressed the impact that budget cuts will have on students. He said that all units have been assessed a percentage of the \$25 million rescission based on what the unit can pay from their current budget and the size of their reserves. No unit will be spared from this initial round of cuts. He has instructed all units to protect student financial aid, scholarships, student services, and unit priorities. He wants units to look for administrative cost savings and cut activities that are less important to the mission of the unit. He said that it might be helpful for himself, EVPP Maziar, and Vice Provost Swan to return to the committee in the future and address what it means to improve the quality of the student experience and what can be done about it.

Q: If tuition alone would be used to cover the University's deficit, tuition would need to increase by 25 percent. How much will the actual increase be? What will happen with financial aid?

A: Tuition would never be used to cover the entire deficit, but it will increase more than 4.5 percent, likely in the double digits. Sources of financial aid will be protected to help low income students. For the difference, the University must reduce operating costs without sacrificing services, increase other revenue streams, and defer some investments.

Q: Is there pressure on local businesses to decrease the charges that they assess the University?

A: A committee is working on a list of possible cost-saving options and then will determine which ones are feasible at this time.

Q: What is MnSCU doing to cover their rescission?

A: MnSCU will not be increasing tuition mid-year either, but will take the same approach as the University for the first round.

President Bruininks then turned to other topics that the committee had submitted in advance of the meeting.

Q: International students are currently assessed a student fee of \$50 per semester. This fee started two years ago as a way for the International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS) to increase their funding to accommodate the services that they provide to international students. Since most international students are not vocal, their concern about this fee has largely been unheard. Many times they are also unable to work and come from financially deprived homes. Students can see a return for the other fees that they are assessed, but this fee only seems to pay for paperwork. Will the fee be made permanent?

A: The ISSS administrative burden and service costs have increased, and the fee was no other way for the ISSS services to be paid. The fee could be revisited at some point, but with the current budget situation it will likely remain unless private fundraising could alleviate some of this burden. The entire fee process needs to be revisited to see if one central fee could be created to cover all student services.

Q: With tuition increases and grant and scholarship decreases, students are graduating with increased debt loads and are looking towards more lucrative job markets. What affect will this have on public service fields and is the University looking at this effect?

A: The message to the legislature has been to keep financial aid affordable so that students continue to choose the public sector for their career. The University needs to help by increasing private aid for students, increasing assistantships, and bringing service learning into the curriculum. Higher education cannot be viewed a private good. The University is also opposed to all funding following the students since a balance is needed to keep public institutions affordable and keep private institutions from charging exorbitant rates.

Students also need to get involved with the legislature. There is information on the web on how to get involved and what each person can do. Students should also pay attention to the Regents selection process currently underway since those selected will sit on the board that makes the final decisions for the University. If students are quiet, it sends the signal to the legislature that students do not care and the legislature can do whatever they choose.

Q: One item on the February 20 Faculty Senate agenda is the Academic Governance Policy. Only faculty will be voting on this item. Do you think that students should be involved in the approval process?

A: Since the administration receives the policy following the vote, President Bruininks will only provide input at that point. He can then hear from other groups that might be affected but did not have a voice in the process.

Q: How does the University feel about the affirmative action case against Michigan in the Supreme Court?

A: The University supports Michigan since it was considered a target for the lawsuit at one time. The University does not support quotas but it does look at a variety of criteria, including race, during the selection process. A previous lawsuit affirms this view. Whatever the outcome, the University will continue to promote diversity.

Q: Is there any talk of General College closing in light of the budget situation?

A: There has been no discussion about any area of the University closing, including General College. This unit has been through many changes and improvements, and it is a strong symbol in the community as entry to the University.

In closing President Bruininks asked all members to think creatively about ways that the University can save funds and provide the same or better services. He noted that best ideas usually come from the students, staff, and faculty, not the administration.

4. DISCUSSION OF THE STUDENT CONDUCT CODE

Judy Berning reminded members that SSCC had been presented with the revised Student Conduct Code in December and that members were supposed to discuss the changes with their assemblies and bring comments back to this meeting. She asked if any objections had been raised.

Members expressed concern with the lack of a definition for the jurisdiction of the policy. The examples given are rather vague, so who actually determines jurisdiction. Members then discussed jurisdiction in regards to the hockey riots off-campus last spring and study group sessions off campus, noting that the Code should not be extended to surrounding communities. If members are not clear about jurisdiction, then will the average student be?

Members decided that an agenda item at next week's meeting would be to propose language to

define jurisdiction. Members should come to the meeting with suggested language.

5. OTHER BUSINESS

Judy Berning said that Dan O'Connor has expressed that his schedule does not allow him to attend Finance and Planning Committee meetings this semester, so he cannot provide reports to SSCC. Members decided to ask another SCFP member to provide SSCC with reports.

For the February meeting, Judy Berning said that the agenda items would include approval of the Student Conduct Code, approval of the February 20 Student Senate agenda, and a discussion with the Chair of CAPA. With no further business, she thanked all members for attending and adjourned the meeting.

Becky Hippert
University Senate