

[In these minutes: 1. Discussion of the GPT with Ann Waltner, 2. Discussion of changes to the University Grievance Policy with Laura Cooper, 3. Approval of Student Senate Docket]

STUDENT SENATE CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE (SSCC) MINUTES

NOVEMBER 18, 1999

[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: Jason Reed (chair), Sabeen Altaf, Meggan Ellingboe, Jed Ipsen, Reid LeBeau, Chaz Rice, Tiffany Stedman, Aaron Street, Kerstin Trimble, Mark Uszenski.

GUESTS: Laura Cooper, Ann Waltner.

1. DISCUSSION OF THE GRADUATION PROFICIENCY TEST (GPT) WITH ANN WALTNER

Jason Reed welcomed Ann Waltner, Associate Dean for CLA, to the meeting. He said that the committee would like to discuss the possibility of the GPT being incorporated into the fourth semester language classes instead of standing as a separate test. The test is useful as a measure of what a student has learned, and should be kept as is for students who wish to test out of a language requirement, but should not be an additional hurdle for students who have completed all class requirements.

Ann Waltner said that some languages do incorporate the test, but most do not. She did say that although the GPT has a 95% pass rate by the second attempt, this does not help those who still fail. She expressed openness to this idea and was willing to take a proposal back to the language departments.

Committee members expressed the following comments:

- Some students are required to become a fifth-year senior because they did not pass the GPT
- IT students are required to take four semesters of calculus, and then are allowed to progress without being forced to test what knowledge they have accumulated
- Two years of class time should be enough of a commitment for students
- What does it say about classes if students are allowed to pass four classes but fail the GPT?
- GPT should be used as the final for the fourth semester class
- GPT should also be available for students who wish to test out of the requirement
- Many students are anxious about standardized tests, which lowers their scores
- It is hard for students to adjust to the listening parts of the test when it is not their professors who are speaking

Ann Waltner then said that in theory, the test was designed to gauge a student's knowledge, regardless of where it was learned. If the test was incorporated into the fourth semester, it would not seem to undercut any arguments in favor of this standard.

She then asked that the committee write a formal letter with these comments and concerns. She would then take it to the CLA Committee on Second Languages for information. She suggested that SSCC be represented at that meeting in case questions arise.

Jason Reed said that he would draft a letter, which the committee would approve at its December 9 meeting. He would then forward the approved version to her and send a representative to the meeting when it is discussed.

Ann Waltner then asked the committee what they thought about workload under semesters and if students would be taking fewer classes Spring Semester.

The committee made the following comments:

- Students have more stress with a fifth class
- 15 weeks makes classes feel much longer
- Students are in a transition phase now; feelings should dissipate in spring
- Some students want to take fewer credits, but cannot because of scholarships
- Morris students do not like semesters, especially since they have been in school a week longer
- Morris is considering a fall break to parallel spring break

Ann Waltner said that the Twin Cities has the problem of not being able to start any earlier. Thanksgiving break comes too late to be effective, so perhaps a two day break at Halloween might be better suited. Without any break, Fall Semester seems longer and harder than Spring Semester. She then thanked the committee for the opportunity to solicit feedback and looked forward to receiving a letter.

2. DISCUSSION OF CHANGES TO THE UNIVERSITY GRIEVANCE POLICY WITH LAURA COOPER

Laura Cooper, chair of the Grievance Advisory Committee (GAC), said that in 1993 a comprehensive policy was created to cover all employees at the University. This policy set-up the stages for the process, including the role of advising, and remedies to problems. It also mandated that the GAC be established and that this committee would review the policy in five years.

That time limit has since expired and a review was started. Feedback was received from all parties that have participated in the process since 1993, and lead the GAC to the conclusion that the policy was working very well and that most parties were satisfied with the process.

A few changes were needed, listed on page 3 and 4 of the packet, and include:

- Emeritus Professor, while not technically employees, were included in the expanded jurisdiction
- Sexual harassment previously was referred to and solely handled by the Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action (OEO/AA). Grievants found that once it was referred to the office, they lost control of the grievance. Language was changed to allow grievants to decide how to progress with the charge(s).
- A language change was made for jurisdictional disputes. The current practice is for the University Grievance Officer to decide if a complaint is appropriate or not. This has now been incorporated into the policy.
- For hearing panels, both the grievant and respondent are allowed to pick individuals to serve. Language was added to make sure that these parties will serve as neutrals in the case and therefore not be forced to vote for the side that appointed them.
- The number of days to pick panel members has been increased from five to ten.
- The definition of an attorney has been defined as "a person licensed to practice law in any jurisdiction." This language change precludes people, who were trained in law but have never practiced, from being part of the classification.

She then asked for any questions.

Q: Are students covered under this policy?

A: Only when they are serving in an employee role. Other grievances, violations of the Student Conduct Code, are handled by the Student Judicial Affairs Office.

Q: What is the rationale for two separate policies to cover students?

A: The Grievance Policy covers all employees, regardless of classification, and treats them all equal. For many students, they are not employees and would therefore not be covered by this policy. That is why they are covered under the Student Conduct Code.

Q: Does a panel member know who is selecting them?

A: There is no contact between them, but most people pick panel members from their own classification.

With no further questions, Jason Reed asked if Professor Cooper wanted the committee to endorse the policy today.

She said no, that it was just being brought for information at this time.

3. CHAIR'S REPORT

Jason Reed reminded members of the President's press conference at 2 p.m. on Friday in 2-101 Basic Science Building and the Assembly Steering Committee meeting at 1:45 on the same day but in the Child Rehab Building.

4. STUDENT SENATE CHAIR'S REPORT

Reid LeBeau said that the SLC president resigned the day before the meeting in Crookston and Joas Petithomme was elected the new president.

He also expressed his thanks to Mark Uszenski in Duluth for finding senators to fill their vacant seats.

5. APPROVAL OF THE STUDENT SENATE DOCKET

The December 2 Student Senate Docket was approved.

6. OTHER BUSINESS

Jason Reed informed members that the December 9 Senate meeting had been cancelled. Also, the Senate Consultative Committee has a Budget Subcommittee which looks at allocation of funds for the Senate Office. As SSCC chair, he is a member. Another SSCC member also serves, and he has asked Aaron Street since his role as Vice Chair includes the Student Senate budget preparation.

Reid LeBeau stated that the Student Advisory Committee (SAC) nominated Aaron Street for the Governor's committee and asked that he attend the next meeting on December 1.

Mark Uszenski said that the Duluth Student Assembly would be traveling to a conference in Chicago on December 3.

Becky Hippert said that at meeting of the Health Plan Task Force (HPTF) it was decided that membership should be increased to include a representative from all groups covered by University-provided health insurance. Therefore, the HPTF asked if SSCC could find an undergraduate student for this position. It was suggested that someone from the Student Health Advisory Council (SHAC) might be interested. Members said that they would ask other students and bring names to the December 9 meeting.

With no other business, Jason Reed thanked all members for attending and adjourned the meeting at 1:25 p.m.

Rebecca Hippert
University Senate