

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

Memo

To Lenny Kosch

From Maisha Kumbek

- For your information
- For your approval
- Per your request
- For your attention
- Note and file
- Note and return
- Note and forward
- Please advise
- Please reply
- Send copy
- Please see me

These items were distributed at the University Senate meeting yesterday (5-19-94). Thank you.

Date _____

Council on Liberal Education
Annual Report
1993-94
Richard H. Skaggs, Chair

This is the third annual report from the Council on Liberal Education (CLE). It comes as the first phase of implementation is being concluded. Therefore, this report is more comprehensive and evaluative than prior reports.

CLE was established by the Twin Cities Assembly in late October, 1991 in response to a recommendation from the Twin Cities Campus Task Force on Liberal Education whose report the Assembly approved in May, 1991. The first members of CLE were appointed by Vice President Hopkins by the end of January, 1992.

The first task of CLE was to implement the liberal education requirements recommended by the Task Force (Figure 1). Among the innovative features are:

1. a redefined breadth requirement, the diversified core,
2. a designated themes of liberal education requirement,
3. a writing skills requirement that includes writing intensive courses,
4. applicability of the requirements to all undergraduate students on the Twin Cities campus,
5. campus wide implementation of the requirements, and
6. participation by professional and graduate schools and colleges in teaching courses that satisfy the requirements, and
7. approval of courses for a fixed period of time to encourage continuous review.

At its first meeting (February 5, 1992) CLE agreed to a two stage implementation, with the diversified core and designated themes in the first stage and writing skills in a second stage (see the time line in Figure 2).

For the first two months, CLE divided into subcommittees to begin drafting policies and criteria for courses to satisfy the diversified core and designated themes requirements. CLE then revised the subcommittee recommendations and produced the first draft of policies and criteria in early May, 1992. The first draft was distributed widely and discussed with faculty, staff, and students including CLE liaisons in each college, the Advising Network, collegiate educational policy committees, departmental educational policy committees, associate deans for academic and/or student affairs, and individual faculty members, staff, and students. A second draft was written and distributed in the summer of 1992 for comment.

CLE completed a third and final draft of policies and criteria in the first half of the fall, 1992 quarter. Distribution of a call for proposals was delayed pending a decision on whether to attempt to change to a semester academic calendar. The call for proposals

was mailed to all Twin Cities faculty and administrators in early January, 1993. Two "deadlines" for proposals of courses: May 1 and November 1, 1993. Since the second "deadline" CLE has continued to review course proposals and will continue to do so once each quarter.

It was clear by the middle of December, 1993, that courses approved included sufficient seats to meet the demand if courses were scheduled as proposed. In late December, CLE wrote to unit chairs urging that courses be scheduled as proposed. By the end of February, 1994, the courses scheduled for the 1994-95 academic year confirmed that new curriculum could be required of new high school students matriculating in the fall of 1994.

At the end of April, 1994, approximately 600 courses had been proposed to satisfy the diversified core and/or designated themes requirements. Of the courses proposed, approximately 400 were approved by CLE. These courses come from 66 units in 11 colleges and schools. The two tables that follow give the contributions by colleges and schools to each of diversified core and to each of the designated theme requirements. The courses do not sum to 400 because diversified core courses may also satisfy a designated theme requirement and a single course may satisfy two designated themes.

Diversified Core

College	Physical and Biological Sciences	History and Social Sciences	Arts and Humanities	Mathematical Thinking
CALA*			7	
CBS	4			
CHE	2	3	2	
CLA	4	63	81	3
CNR	4			
CoA	10	2	5	
GC	3	4	5	2
IT	32	16		10
EDU		5	1	1
MED		4		
Total Courses	59	97	101	16
Total Seats per Year	26,500	34,550	17,300	8,150

* CALA--College of Architecture and Landscape Architecture, CBS--College of Biological Sciences, CHE--College of Human Ecology, CLA--College of Liberal Arts, CNR--College of Natural Resources, CoA--College of Agriculture, GC--General College, IT--Institute of Technology, EDU--College of Education, MED--Medical School.

Designated Themes

College	Cultural Diversity	Environment	International Perspective	Citizenship and Public Ethics
CALA			2	
CBS		5		
CHE	4		5	4
CLA	37	4	82	22
CNR		20	1	1
CoA	5	10	9	4
EDU	1			1
GC	4	1	1	2
IT	2	10	13	
MED		1		
CSOM			1	
Total Courses	53	51	114	34
Total Seats Per Year	11,700	11,200	14,200	4,250

* CALA--College of Architecture and Landscape Architecture, CBS--College of Biological Sciences, CHE--College of Human Ecology, CLA--College of Liberal Arts, CNR--College of Natural Resources, CoA--College of Agriculture, GC--General College, IT--Institute of Technology, EDU--College of Education, MED--Medical School, CSOM--Carlson School of Management.

The vast majority of the courses are from the College of Liberal Arts and the Institute of Technology--over 67% with 55% from CLA alone. The College of Agriculture, the College of Human Ecology, and the College of Natural Resources contributed a sizable number of courses. Professional schools and colleges are, for the most part, conspicuous by their absence. Clearly, one of the primary goals of the central administration and CLE should be to increase participation by professional schools and colleges as required by the educational policy on liberal education on the Twin Cities campus.

Nearly all of the courses proposed and approved were currently existing courses. Few new courses were submitted. Most of the existing courses were proposed in a revised form to meet the criteria for the diversified core or the designated themes. Approximately \$600,000 was used by Vice President Hopkins to improve large classes for the new requirements. Approximately \$425,000 was granted on a continuing basis (as long as the funds are expended for the purposes proposed) to add discussion sections or reduce the size of existing discussion sections for purposes of active learning or more intensive writing. The departments to which continuing funds have been allocated include history,

political science, psychology, child psychology, astronomy, anthropology, food science and nutrition, classics, and physics. Approximately \$175,000 was allocated for one-time costs especially for computer equipment (biology program) and lecture demonstration equipment (chemistry).

The number of seats available in the Citizenship and Public Ethics theme is fewer than the Council prefers. Efforts at course development for this theme are occurring at the Center for Democracy and Citizenship, in the Office of the Vice President for Arts, Sciences, and Engineering, and through the Summer Session. The Council has agreed that if the number of seats in this theme does not increase in the next three years, it will be waived for students whose progress toward graduation is adversely affected.

At the request of the Council, undergraduate colleges agreed that courses approved for the new diversified core curriculum will be accepted for the corresponding or most appropriate distribution requirement in the current individual collegiate requirements. This procedure should minimize the impact on continuing students of elimination of or reduction in the size or frequency of courses that "counted" under the old requirements but not under the new requirements. Indeed, this policy generally increases the range of course options available to continuing students.

The diversified core and theme requirements become effective for New Advanced Standing (NAS) students in the fall of 1996. Evaluation of transfer credits toward the liberal education requirements will be done centrally in the admissions office. There will be a procedure by which decisions can be appealed to the Council. Transfer credit evaluation for the diversified core will not be significantly different from today and should be straightforward to implement centrally. Evaluation for the designated themes is more problematic; a data base of courses that satisfy the theme requirements will have to be built during the next two years by the admissions office in cooperation with the Council and the Colleges.

The Minnesota Transfer Curriculum (MTC) will be very important in making transfer of students from other Minnesota public post-secondary systems easier. The MTC is an agreement among the four Minnesota public post-secondary system that specifies 10 competency areas the completion of which satisfies the lower division liberal education requirements. The sending institution certifies completion and that certification is accepted by the receiving institution. The 10 competency areas are virtually identical with our new liberal education requirements including the designated themes requirements. Thus, transfer students from Minnesota public post-secondary institutions will bring with them courses that are easily recognizable to us even if they have not completed the full MTC. The Council on Liberal Education approved the MTC for the Twin Cities campus on March 17, 1994 and asked Vice President Hopkins to put it into effect on our campus with the fall quarter, 1994.

CLE is now fully engaged in implementing the writing skills requirements including writing intensive courses. Information from many sources locally and nationally are under review. The Council plans to have a first draft of goals and criteria for writing intensive courses and for "freshman" writing skills courses by the end of the spring 1994 quarter. These goals and criteria will be discussed with colleagues over the summer and early in the fall. It is anticipated that the call for course proposals will be issued as soon as possible in the fall. The Council will then turn other important issues necessary for effective implementation of the new writing skills requirements. These are:

1. improved entrance placement,
2. a writing center to which students having difficulty with writing intensive courses can be referred, and
3. assistance for faculty members and teaching assistants who are instructing writing skills courses.

The Council anticipates that a number of writing skills courses will be available in the fall of 1995 and the full system in place by the fall of 1996.

Twin Cities Campus Liberal Education Requirements

Diversified Core

Physical and
Biological Science

History and Social
Science

Arts and
Humanities

Mathematical
Thinking

Designated Themes

Cultural Diversity

International
Perspective

Environment

Citizenship and
Public Ethics

Writing Skills

Writing Course

Writing Intensive
Courses

Figure 1











Liberal Education Time Line	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996
Task Force on Liberal Education							
Council on Liberal Education							
Policies and Criteria for Diversified Core and Designated Themes							
Proposal of Courses for Diversified Core and Designated Themes							
Approval of Courses for Diversified Core and Designated Themes							
Implementation of Diversified Core and Designated Themes							
Policies and Criteria for Writing Skills Courses							
Proposal of Writing Skills Courses							
Approval of Writing Skills Courses							
Implementation of Writing Skills							

Figure 2

**University of Minnesota
Disability Issues Committee
Annual Report, 1993-94**

In 1993-94 the Disability Issues Committee has had three strands of discussion.

The committee met with Pat Mullen to clarify the relationship between the Disability Issues Committee and the recently formed administrative Steering Committee on the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The ADA committee had a legal mandate to plan implementation and oversight of broad guidelines. To avoid overlap of effort and to insure continuity of consultation, the ADA steering committee will always include at least one member of the Senate Committee, and the Chair of the ADA steering committee (currently Pat Mullen) will meet annually with the Senate Committee.

Library accessibility has been uneven in the past in spite of good intentions and efforts of library staffs. Directors of key areas of service and administration in libraries on the Twin Cities and Crookston campuses were consulted early in the year. Subsequent interim reports to the committee indicate new purchases of accessible technology and workstations, and commitments to broader dissemination of information about accessible services and accommodations.

Examination of University 2000 planning as it might have impacts on students with disabilities occupied a series of meetings (and are ongoing at the time of this report.) While U2000 planning documents have been for the most part devoid of specific content, several areas of concerns have been raised. The first is equitable access. While many potential University students who have disabilities are high achieving in high school, it is also true that many students with disabilities do not achieve high school ranks or admission test scores at levels commensurate with their potential, owing to uneven special education resources and services and interrupted education. The movement toward concentrating University admissions in the upper quartile will work to exclude students with disabilities disproportionately. The University is restricted in the information it can obtain about students in the admissions process, compounding the difficulty of moving toward higher standard measures of prior achievement without negative impacts on disabled citizens. University planners and admissions personnel met with the committee, were made aware of the concern about access, but have not, as yet, satisfactorily addressed this concern with specific plans. Second, as programmatic outcome measures are written and implemented, the potential to provide disincentives to the recruitment of students with disabilities is presented. For example, to the extent that standard graduation timelines are a measure of a program's "success," and are tied to budget allocations or quality measures, that program will find itself wishing to admit students who are not likely to experience delays or interruptions owing to accessibility limits or health/treatment stopouts. Insuring that departments are not tacitly discouraged from actively recruiting students with disabilities who might have special needs for accommodations is a central concern to the committee which has not yet been addressed by planners who have met with the committee (additional meetings are envisioned at which this will be a focus).

Finally, the committee was happy to acknowledge central administration's support for access in the form of increased funding for disability services on the Twin Cities campus.

Terence Collins, CHAIR

Report of the University Grievance Officer
1993-94 Academic Year

May 10, 1994

The University Grievance Office has received more than 60 grievances within the first seven month operating period under the new University Grievance Policy which became effective September 15, 1993. the volume of grievances is not too surprising, given that the new policy now covers non-bargaining unit Faculty, Academic Professional/Administrative, Civil Service and Student employees.

Summary of Statistical Information

Of the 143 office consultations that have taken place prior to the filing of a formal grievance, 62 (43%) of those potential cases resulted in the receipt of an official grievance.

Thus far in the grievance process, 27 grievances have been settled; 16 at Phase I and 11 at Phase II of the grievance process. I should note that there are currently 20 cases at the mediation stages of Phase I and Phase II of the grievance process. Of the 15 remaining cases, 13 have progressed to Phase III (Panel Hearing); 1 has been withdrawn and 1 file has been closed.

The system appears to be working and is being utilized extensively by all categories of University employees except Academic Professional & Administrative employees, who have filed only 2 of the 62 grievances received to date. The 15 faculty, 31 Civil Service, and 14 Student grievances deal with a wide variety of employment issues.

Preparation for the Implementation of the new Grievance Policy

After approval of the Policy by the Board of Regents, the Grievance Officer accomplished the following tasks:

1. Printed and Distributed the new policy in booklet form.
2. Worked with the Office of the General Counsel in the development of the Waiver and Release Agreement for Binding Arbitration.

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May 10, 1994**

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3. Coordinated a two-day training session for members of the University Grievance Board and the Hearing Officers' Panel.
4. Worked with the Bureau of Mediation Services to compile lists of Arbitrators for grievances which continue to Phase IV - Arbitration.
5. Developed Written Statement of Grievance form for use with the new policy.
6. Developed Guidelines for Phase III Panel Hearings to assist both panelists and participants in the Phase III portion of the grievance process.

Caseload

University downsizing, layoffs, and the imposition of involuntary early retirement have contributed to the increased workload of the Grievance Office. The new Grievance Policy is an internal mechanism for good faith review and resolution of cases considered under the Policy. It is important that such a policy is in place during this period of institutional restructuring.

Another reason for the increased activity being experienced by the Grievance Office is that more issues are grievable under the new policy. An analysis of the attached Summary of Grievances Received; Issues and Decisions, shows that many discretionary actions by supervisors are being challenged by employees throughout the University.

Also, experience thus far indicates that most grievants perceive the mediation efforts that are built into the grievance process to be fair and neutral. Consequently, employees are more likely to seek redress through the grievance process.

In spite of budgetary constraints, the Grievance Office has been able to handle the cases so far and the process seems to be working; however, I do not believe that this vital activity can continue to be successful with an unrealistic annual operating budget of \$110,000. This budget allocation includes the Grievance Officer's salary and benefits; an assistant's salary and benefits; training expenses; travel and lodging expenses for panelists and Hearing Officers on branch campuses as well as for the Grievance Officer to conduct Phase I and II proceedings at the other campuses; equipment and service contracts; telephone expenses; printing; office supplies and numerous other expenses.

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Issues Observed

A number of issues have arisen over the course of the 1993-94 Academic year that are related to the University Grievance Procedure:

First, some respondents view the grievance process as an unnecessary intrusion upon their time and managerial prerogative. In many cases, respondents react to a grievance with indignation and astonishment that an employee is allowed to grieve an action that they believe is procedurally and legally correct.

Unfortunately, individuals that are unreceptive or simply misunderstand the new policy compromise the process and underlying philosophy of "good faith review and resolution of employment grievances."

Second, the role of the Grievance Officer is misunderstood by some individuals. The Grievance Officer is policy-bound and has limitations on refusing to process a written grievance filed under the University Grievance Policy. The acceptance of a grievance by the Grievance Officer does not infer that a case has merit, nor does it confer any rights. It is the purview of Hearing Panel at Phase III that will determine the appropriateness and validity of a grievance, should a grievance progress to that stage.

The first two observations quite naturally lead to a third issue; namely, there is an unmet need to train respondent administrators as to the Policy's intent, purpose and proper use.

Fourth, while it might be inevitable that an employee may submit a grievance under the Policy to harass a respondent, this does not as yet appear to be a significant problem.

Fifth, the Policy calls for a prescribed number of Hearing Officers and Panelists that are available for service. Given the caseload and the number of cases currently at Phase III, this number needs to be increased.

With adequate training and the accumulation of experience, the previous issues described can be resolved and the University of Minnesota can have a well functioning and effective internal grievance process.

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Conclusion

Strong leadership is essential if an atmosphere of cooperation and communication is to be created and maintained throughout the University community. Hard and difficult decisions can be made in a fair and objective manner. Employment related grievance resolution is an integral part of the management of our human resources. To ensure that the University Grievance Policy operates as a fair and vital process, a commitment from Central Administration to provide both financial and leadership support is imperative.

Successful utilization of the grievance process is a cost-effective alternative to more expensive legal resolution of employment related grievances.

Respectfully submitted,



Clarence S. Carter
University Grievance Officer

CSC:jeb
Attachments

Report of the University Grievance Officer
1993-94 Academic Year

May 10, 1994

Summary of Grievances Received; Issues and Decisions

<u>Employee Classification</u>	<u>VP Reporting Category</u>	<u>Issue(s) Grievied</u>	<u>Decision/ Status</u>
1. Faculty	Agriculture, Forestry & Home Economics	Reprimand	Phase III
2. Faculty	Arts, Sciences & Engineering	Reprimand	Mediated Settlement at Phase I
3. Faculty	Health Sciences	Policy Interpretation	Mediated Settlement at Phase I
4. Faculty	Health Sciences	Withholding of Information	Mediated Settlement at Phase I
5. Faculty	Health Sciences	Due Process	Phase III
6. Faculty	Research	Due Process	Phase III
7. Faculty	Health Sciences	Disciplinary	Phase III
8. Faculty	Health Sciences	Reprimand	Mediated Settlement at Phase I
9. Faculty	Arts, Sciences & Engineering	Reprimand	Phase III
10. Faculty	Health Sciences	Sabbatical Denied	Mediated Settlement at Phase I
11. Faculty	Health Sciences	Due Process	Postponement
12. Faculty	Health Sciences	Discrimination	Phase III
13. Faculty/Adj	Academic Affairs	Termination	Phase I
14. Faculty	Health Sciences	Salary Equity	Phase I
15. Faculty	Academic Affairs	Reprimand	Phase I
16. P & A	Academic Affairs	Breach of Contract	Mediated Settlement at Phase II
17. P & A	Health Sciences	Reprimand	Phase III
18. Civil Serv	Finance & Operations	Reclass	Postponement

**Summary of Grievances Received; Issues and Decisions
May 10, 1994**

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19. Civil Serv	Finance & Operations	Rules Violations	Phase II
20. Civil Serv	Arts, Sciences & Engineering	Termination	Phase III
21. Civil Serv	Health Sciences	Termination (Probationary)	File Closed; Lack of Timely Response
22. Civil Serv	Student Affairs	Reclass	Mediated Settlement at Phase II
23. Civil Serv	Student Affairs	Discrimination	Mediated Settlement at Phase II
24. Civil Serv	Student Affairs	Demotion	Mediated Settlement at Phase II
25. Civil Serv	Health Sciences	Termination	Phase III
26. Civil Serv	Health Sciences	Reprimand	Postponement
27. Civil Serv	Finance & Operations	Preferential Treatment	Mediated Settlement at Phase I
28. Civil Serv	Finance & Operations	Rules Violations	Phase III
29. Civil Serv	Academic Affairs	Breach of Contract	Mediated Settlement at Phase II
30. Civil Serv	Academic Affairs	Breach of Contract	Mediated Settlement at Phase II
31. Civil Serv	Academic Affairs	Discrimination	Mediated Settlement at Phase II
32. Civil Serv	Academic Affairs	Termination	Withdrawn before Phase I
33. Civil Serv	Student Affairs	Termination	Phase II
34. Civil Serv	Health Sciences	Termination (Probationary)	Mediated Settlement at Phase II
35. Civil Serv	Arts, Sciences & Engineering	Discrimination	Phase III

**Summary of Grievances Received; Issues and Decisions
May 10, 1994**

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36. Civil Serv	Academic Affairs	Termination	Mediated Settlement at Phase II
37. Civil Serv	Health Sciences	Termination	Phase III
38. Civil Serv	Finance & Operations	Rules Violations	Phase II
39. Civil Serv	Finance & Operations	Performance Evaluation	Mediated Settlement at Phase I
40. Civil Serv	Health Sciences	Termination (Probationary)	Phase III
41. Civil Serv	Finance & Operations	Reprimand	Phase I
42. Civil Serv	Agriculture, Forestry & Home Economics	Reclass	Postponement
43. Civil Serv	Finance & Operations	Disciplinary	Phase I
44. Civil Serv	Finance & Operations	Harrassment	Phase I
45. Civil Serv	Finance & Operations	Performance Evaluations	Phase I
46. Civil Serv	Finance & Operations	Performance Evaluation	Phase I
47. Civil Serv	Finance & Operations	Harrassment	Phase I
48. Civil Serv	Finance & Operations	Rules Violations	Phase I
49. Grad	Academic Affairs	Reclass/back pay	Phase II
50. Grad	Academic Affairs	Termination	Mediated Settlement at Phase II
51. Grad	Arts, Sciences & Engineering	Termination	Mediated Settlement at Phase I
52. Grad	Agriculture, Forestry & Home Economics	Termination	Mediated Settlement at Phase I
53. Undergrad	Finance & Operations	Demotion	Mediated Settlement at Phase I

**Summary of Grievances Received; Issues and Decisions
May 10, 1994**

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54. Undergrad	Arts, Sciences & Engineering	Termination	Mediated Settlement at Phase I
55. Undergrad	Finance & Operations	Termination	Mediated Settlement at Phase I
56. Undergrad	Finance & Operations	Reprimand	Mediated Settlement at Phase I
57. Undergrad	President's Office	Termination	Mediated Settlement at Phase I
58. Undergrad	Student Affairs	Termination	Mediated Settlement at Phase II
59. Undergrad	Finance & Operations	Termination	Phase II
60. Undergrad	Health Sciences	Termination	Phase II
61. Undergrad	Finance & Operations	Harassment	Mediated Settlement at Phase I
62. Undergrad	Academic Affairs	Payroll Dispute	Mediated Settlement at Phase I

Statistical Summary of Grievance Office Activity

Consultations since September 15, 1993:		143	
Grievances Filed:		62	100%
Mediated Settlements:		27	44%
Phase I:	16		26%
Phase II:	11		18%
Postponements:		4	6%
Withdrawn:		1	2%
Files Closed:		1	2%
Grievances Open:		29	47%
Phase I:	10		16%
Phase II:	6		10%
Phase III:	13		21%
Phase IV:	0		0%

**Summary of Grievances Received; Issues and Decisions
May 10, 1994**

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Summary of Mediated Settlements by Employee Classification

Faculty

Grievances Filed: 15
Mediated Settlements: 5
Percent Settled: 33%

Academic Professional & Administrative

Grievances Filed: 2
Mediated Settlements: 1
Percent Settled: 50%

Civil Service

Grievances Filed: 31
Mediated Settlements: 10
Percent Settled: 32%

Students

Grievances Filed: 14
Mediated Settlements: 11
Percent Settled: 79%

Statistical Comparison of Issues Grieved by Employee Classification

<u>Issue Grieved</u>	<u>Faculty</u>	<u>P & A</u>	<u>Civ Serv</u>	<u>Student</u>	<u>Total</u>
Contractual		1	2		3
Demotion			1	1	2
Discipline	2		1		3
Discrimination	1		4		5
Due Process	4				4
Equity	1				1
Harrassment			2	1	3
Payroll				1	1
Performance Eval			3		3
Reclassification			3	1	4
Reprimand	5	1	2	1	9
Rules Violation	1		4		5
<u>Termination</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>19</u>
Total Grievances:	15	2	31	14	62

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

University Senate

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March 7, 1994

**TO: Judy Garrard, Chair
Senate Consultative Committee**

**FROM: Albert Yonas, Chair
Senate Research Committee**

RE: Attached Resolution

On behalf of the Senate Research Committee, I am forwarding to you a Resolution passed by the Research Committee at its February 25 meeting, relative to the University of Minnesota Animal Care and Use Committee.

If you would like to discuss this further, you may contact me at 4-6805. For additional information and background on the problem, you may contact Dick Bianco, the chair of the Animal Care Committee, at 5-5914.

**cc: Ann Russell, Associate General Counsel
Research Committee
Dick Bianco, Chair, Animal Care Committee**

**RESOLUTION RELATED TO
UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
ANIMAL CARE AND USE COMMITTEE**

WHEREAS, the Senate Research Committee recognizes that a number of recent developments indicate that research with animals has become a target of the Animal Rights Coalition; and

WHEREAS, these developments have imposed a threat to the personal health and safety of the people involved with animal care;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that:

The Senate Research Committee strongly encourages the University of Minnesota General Counsel to consider, a high priority, the personal safety and health of all individuals involved with animal care, and especially protecting these individuals from possible litigation.