

SENATE COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL CONCERNS
MINUTES OF MEETING

February 27, 2012

Morrill Hall Room 238A

[In these minutes: student health benefit plan changes; forum on impact of alcohol use; tobacco-free campus]

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

PRESENT: Dave Golden (chair), Elizabeth Ault, John Broadhurst, Lolita Davis Carter, Carol Foth, David Fuhs, Stephen Gross, Maria Hanratty, Madisen Johnson, Dan Kelliher, Carolyn Mayberry, Theresa Mensinger, Michael O'Day, Anthony Quill, Tanner Roberts, Kim Robien, Timothy Sheldon, Teresa Schicker, Catherine Solheim

REGRETS: Susan Cable Morrison, Shannon Evans, Ahmed Heikal, Sandra Krebsbach, Amelious Whyte,

ABSENT: Lizzy Shay

GUESTS: Anne Joseph, M.D., M.P.H,

Dave Golden called the meeting to order, and asked Committee members to introduce themselves. He then reported on

New and Old Business.

- Changes to the Student Health Benefit Plan (SHBP). Benefits for gender reassignment have been added to the SHBP. There will be a \$35,000 cap annually on the benefits for a two-year period while the benefit is under review. It is expected that there will be only a minimal impact on premiums costs. The Committee indicated its support for the change.
- The Social Concerns Committee's resolution to allow Professional and Administrative employees at the Twin Cities and Rochester campuses to utilize their floating holiday any time during the year was approved by President Kaler on February 16, 2012 with implementation effective July 1, 2012.

Committee Sponsorship of Forum on the Impact of Alcohol Use on the University Community

The Committee continued its conversation from the October and November Social Concerns meetings about the impact of alcohol use on the University community and actions the Committee might take to assist in addressing the issue. Mr. Golden provided the Committee with background information on the University of Minnesota's participation in the National College Health Improvement Project (NCHIP) Learning

Collaborative on High-Risk Drinking. Mr. Golden also discussed the on-campus initiatives to limit high risk drinking such as and fraternity efforts to monitor party attendance, providing an alcohol screening to any student who utilizes Boynton Health Services and counseling for those identified as high risk drinkers. Mr. Golden further noted that high-risk drinking is not just a campus problem: as a state Minnesota, has one of the highest rates of alcohol consumption per capita.

Mr. Golden then stated that one aspect of the Committee's charge is to convene forums on current topics. He suggested the Committee could sponsor an open forum on the impact of alcohol use on the University community, and asked for discussion of his suggestion.

The Committee discussed several ways for disseminating information to students about high-risk drinking, and focused particularly on options for intervention-education. Professor Kim Robien stated that the Rothenberger Institute course, Alcohol and College Life, is optional for freshman at the University, but there are no mandatory courses. Elizabeth Ault asked if other members of NCHIP have required intervention-education. David Fuhs noted that the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities System requires that a course be taken on alcohol education. Professor Robien stated she would ask the Rothenberger Institute for data on alcohol education and the effectiveness of their program. Professor Catherine Solheim stated that an on-line asynchronous course might be beneficial at the University of Minnesota.

Ms. Ault asked about the content of the MNSCU course. Theresa Mensinger responded that she had taken the course and found it comprehensive and effective. Mr. Golden noted that it does not use scare tactics to discourage drinking; instead it focuses on avoiding the consequences of high-risk drinking.

Mr. Golden asked the Committee if it would like to convene a forum on alcohol use if the audience and intent of the forum could be defined. Anthony Quill expressed concern that a forum would not reach students, the population that needs advice and assistance. Mr. Sheldon explained that the forum would be intended to reach a broader audience than just students. It might involve Boynton Health Services, community neighborhood organizations, groups that plan freshman orientation, and the Office for Student Affairs. The Committee agreed to pursue convening a forum. Mr. Sheldon and Professor John Broadhurst stated they would assist with planning.

Given the Committee's interest in alcohol education, Mr. Golden suggested the Committee might also want to draft a resolution supporting an online course on alcohol education similar to that required by MNSCU. Mr. Fuhs indicated he supported this suggestion, and Professor Solheim stated the course could be co-curricular with the Office of Student Affairs.

Professor Maria Hanratty suggested that as an incentive for taking the course, students could receive a reduction in health insurance premiums. Mr. Golden noted that the Student Health Benefit Plan does not have differential premiums.

Mr. Golden stated he would contact Vice Provost Jerry Rinehart to see if NCHIP would be interested in the possibility of the forum or an alcohol education program.

Tobacco Free Campus Discussion

Next, Mr. Golden provided the Committee with background on the movement to make the Twin Cities campus tobacco free.¹ In February 2008, SHAC requested that President Bruininks consider implementing a tobacco-free policy, which would make the Twin Cities campus, tobacco free. President Bruininks charged a committee that conducted an investigation of the feasibility and campus support of a tobacco-free campus policy. The report presented to the President's policy advisors included the recommendation to make the campus tobacco free in January 2011. President Bruininks expressed concerns about policy implementation, and was unwilling to make a decision on the policy during his tenure.

In September SHAC sent a letter to President Kaler and its resolution that the Twin Cities campus become entirely tobacco-free by January of 2013. President Kaler responded that he did not support a tobacco free campus policy at this time because of concerns about implementing and enforcing the policy on a large urban campus and a lack of support among the campus community. He stated he would reconsider the proposal in the future if strong support for a tobacco-free campus was demonstrated among students and staff, and encouraged the continued SHAC and Boynton Health Services to continue educating the University community about the issue. Mr. Golden noted that the Benefits Advisory Committee supported the SHAC resolution.

Mr. Golden then introduced Anne Joseph, M.D., M.P.H, a professor in the Department of Medicine at the University of Minnesota and a national expert on tobacco research. Dr. Joseph stated that she had done over 25 years of research on tobacco cessation and smoking reduction interventions and that she was glad to support the tobacco-free-campus initiative.

She then described the process by which the Minnesota Veteran's Administration (VA) Hospital became the first smoke free VA hospital. She also discussed the data gathered about the impact on bars and restaurants of becoming smoke-free. Dr. Joseph stated the hospitality and business arguments against having smoke free establishments were disproved. She stated that in each of these situations, becoming smoke-free was not initially a popular notion. At the hospital there was a large in-patient chemical dependency ward. Additionally, union contracts and work site policies had to be considered. But, the majority of people are non-smokers. Non-smokers are in favor of smoke free facilities. Also, the majority of smokers favor smoke-free facilities. Dr. Joseph also emphasized that no one needs to smoke. Nicotine addiction can be handled therapeutically.

¹ Prior to the meeting, Committee members received the following document regarding the tobacco free campus issue: *SHAC Tobacco Free Campus Letter and Resolution*, *Letter from President Kaler*, *University of California Smoke Free Policy Proposal*, and *Letter from President Yudof*

With regard to the University becoming tobacco-free, she stated many large state universities are already smoke free such as the University of California Davis and the University of California San Francisco. The University of Minnesota will soon be behind the standard of academic practice. Sharing public spaces is not an excuse for not becoming tobacco free, most large Universities share public spaces. Moreover, there are many examples the University can look to for guidance on how to implement the policy.

She stated two reasons the University should become tobacco free are to protect individuals from environmental tobacco smoke and to create a culture that discourages smoking. She noted that the initiation of tobacco smoking has moved from the teen years to the 18 to 25 year old age group, the time when many individuals are in college. Having a tobacco free campus is an important step to help young adults stop smoking. It is also important to have cessation services in place.

Professor Daniel Kelliher stated that the SHAC resolution is weak because it relies on exposure to second-hand smoke as a primary rationale for supporting a tobacco-free campus, and most people are not exposed to second-hand smoke. He feels the argument in the University of California materials about the initiation of smoking during college is a stronger argument and should be incorporated in the SHAC resolution. Dr. Joseph agreed that the arguments regarding preventing the initiation of smoking and cessation are stronger and should be at the top of the resolution. However, she stated the arguments regarding exposure to second-hand smoke are evidence-based and well supported by science.

Lolita Davis Carter asked if the University would receive any type of financial reward for being smoke free. Dr. Joseph responded that it would not, but that there are high costs to failing to do so. Ms. Davis Carter suggested including the potential savings to the University in the SHAC resolution. Dr. Joseph noted that financial incentives for quitting smoking are effective for engaging young adults.

Mr. Fuhs stated he believes there is a personal right to smoke and he would rather see individuals who choose to smoke penalized by higher insurance premiums than forced to walk a great distance to smoke during the workday.

Dr. Joseph responded that the arguments for making outdoor spaces tobacco free are somewhat different from those supporting tobacco-free indoor spaces. Although you are exposed to second-hand smoke outside, one of the primary arguments for making campuses tobacco free is encouraging young people to stop smoking by modeling healthy behaviors. Additionally, the University is under no obligation to allow people to smoke at work. Clean-nicotine options are available for those who want to smoke during the day.

Mr. Quill asked how the University would enforce a tobacco free campus particularly in areas where the University borders the surrounding community. Dr. Joseph responded that warnings and signage are very helpful, but it is best not to ticket violators. Over the

period of a few years, the culture of the campus changes to become nonsmoking. She emphasized the need to create a culture of nonsmoking and to help youth not to become victims of the health hazards caused by tobacco.

Mr. Sheldon indicated the SHAC Resolution would be stronger if focused on stopping the initiation of smoking by young people, and he pointed out this fits with the University's overall mission to educate. Professor Broadhurst noted that for students under 21 the University stands in loco parentis.

Professor Solheim asked at what point the unions were brought into the process of making the VA Hospital smoke free. Dr. Joseph responded that it is important to bring the unions and others who will be impacted by the policy change into the planning process at an early stage. They should be involved in anticipating the problems and addressing them.

Dr. Joseph also suggested running quit and win contests several months before the tobacco free date. She stated the general pattern that occurs when tobacco free policies are implemented is there is more worry about the problems that will happen with smoking cessation than actually occur.

Mr. Golden thanked Dr. Joseph for speaking with the Committee. He then asked the Committee whether it supported the SHAC resolution. The consensus of the Committee was that it supported the concept of the resolution but would like to it to be strengthened and supported with additional documentation. Professor Robien asked how SHAC could work with the University smoking cessation experts to enhance their resolution. Mr. Golden stated he would convene a group to work on revising the resolution with SHAC including Kelvin Choy, and Dr. Jean Forster. Mr. Golden also indicated he would write a letter to SHAC indicating the Social Concerns Committee's support for the concept of a tobacco free campus, but suggesting the resolution would be stronger with statements and supporting documents regarding the importance of: 1) discouraging the initiation of smoking and tobacco use in college years and 2) creating a campus environment that supports being tobacco free and models healthy behaviors.

Hearing no further business, Mr. Golden adjourned the meeting.

Dawn Zugay
University Senate Office