

REPORT OF THE AD HOC COMMITTEE REVIEWING THE SENATE
COMMITTEE ON STUDENT AFFAIRS
AUGUST 2011

In the summer of 2010, the Faculty Consultative Committee (FCC) initiated and the Senate Consultative Committee (SCC) charged a working committee to review the structure and charges of University Senate committees. One recommendation resulting from this review was to further evaluate the charge and effectiveness of the Senate Committee on Student Affairs (SCSA). Toward that effort, Professor Kathryn VandenBosch, chair, SCC and Aaron Carlson, chair, Student Senate Consultative Committee (SSCC) formed an ad hoc committee to further review the SCSA. Members of the committee are: Vickie Courtney, director, University Senate Office (chair), Gerald Rinehart, Vice Provost for Student Affairs (OSA), Amelious Whyte, chief of staff, OSA, Silvia Canelon, co-chair SCSA, Joyce Holl, co-chair SCSA, Jane Phillips, P&A member of Senate Committee on Educational Policy (SCEP), Carlos Torelli, faculty member of SCSA, Bree Dalager, student representative, Takayuki Inukai, student representative, and Jonathon Lundberg, student representative.

The ad hoc committee was charged to consider the following issues:

- Whether the SCSA is appropriately sized and has the right balance of faculty and student members.
- Whether the elements of the charge are appropriate and the extent to which they are currently carried out.
- Whether the elements of the charge, which are not being carried out, should be eliminated from the charge to the committee or revised so that the charge can be carried out.
- Whether the language in the charge regarding international students should be revised or eliminated, and how the language intersects with the language in the charge to SCEP.
- Whether there is effective interaction between the SCSA and the administrative officers who have responsibility for issues that fall within the purview of the committee.
- Whether it is most effective for the SCSA to report to the SCC or the SSCC.

The ad hoc committee met on April 1, 2011, April 28, 2011, and May 31, 2011. It reviewed the SCSA charge, the SCEP charge, a summary of the SCSA's work in 2010-11, and the University Senate Organizational chart. It also discussed at-length the membership, work, and functioning of the SCSA with its co-chairs, a faculty member of the committee, and its ex officio membership from the OSA.

The ad hoc committee believes that under the leadership of its current co-chairs, the SCSA is functioning effectively and serves an important role. It serves the unique purpose of creating an opportunity for students, faculty and administrators to meet and

discuss issues. However, the ad hoc committee did identify some aspects of the charge that need to be updated, and has several recommendations it believes will improve the function and effectiveness of the SCSA.

Recommendations:

1. The ad hoc committee considered whether the SCSA's charge should continue to encompass student affairs issues system-wide, or whether it should be limited to the Twin Cities campus. It concludes that system-wide representation is an important aspect of the SCSA. However, it recommends that steps be taken to: 1) increase participation by coordinate campus students and student affairs administrators, and 2) ensure issues unique to the coordinate campuses are addressed by the SCSA when appropriate. The ad hoc committee encourages the SCSA to create a work plan that includes regular updates from the coordinate campuses' student affairs administrators and reports from the SCSA to the coordinate campuses. It also encourages the Student Committee on Committees to actively seek and appoint student representatives from the coordinate campuses.

2. The ad hoc committee considered creating ex officio positions on the committee for the coordinate campuses' student affairs administrators; however, it believes this would create an imbalance in the committee membership and would not be an effective use of administrative resources. Instead, as indicated above, the ad hoc committee recommends that the SCSA be encouraged to create a work plan that includes regular updates from the coordinate campuses' student affairs administrators.

3. After considering the balance between student and non-student-voting members on the SCSA, the majority of the ad hoc committee concludes that the number of students on the committee should be increased from nine (9) to twelve (12) for the 2011-12 academic-year. The increase in student committee members should be evaluated by the SCSA at the end of the year to determine if the increased number of students broadens the student representation on the committee and increases student participation.

The ad hoc committee believes it is important to note that it initially considered increasing the number of students on the SCSA from nine (9) to fifteen (15) in order to address concerns about poor student attendance and participation at meetings, and providing a broader representation of students. However, after considerable discussion, the majority of committee members agreed that increasing the number of students to fifteen (15) would make it more difficult to attain a quorum for committee business, might negatively impact consistent student attendance, and would cause an imbalance in the committee structure. Therefore, although some student members preferred increasing the number of students to fifteen (15), and one felt strongly about increasing the number to more than thirteen (13), the majority of the ad hoc committee members agreed that increasing the number to twelve (12) would broaden the group of students participating with little impact on the ability to achieve a quorum, would likely increase student involvement, and would maintain an appropriate balance between student and non-student-voting members on the SCSA.

4. The ad hoc committee recommends that the SCSA co-chairs Joyce Holl and Silvia Canelon meet with the Student Committee on Committees to discuss the ad hoc committee's concerns regarding: 1) the timing of student appointments and 2) ensuring that there is diverse student representation on the SCSA. The ad hoc committee also recommends that the process of appointing students to the University Senate committees be completed by early September. When the appointments process is not completed until mid-October, it impacts students' ability to meaningfully participate in governance committees particularly when committees begin meeting in September. Additionally, the ad hoc committee recommends that the Committee on Committees work to ensure that the appointments to the SCSA are diverse in terms of gender, ethnicity, collegiate affiliation, and other governance affiliations such as the Minnesota Student Association and the Graduate and Professional Student Association. This will help increase reciprocal communication between the SCSA and as broad a group of students as possible.

5. The ad hoc committee considered revising the SCSA charge to add ex officio members in the areas of housing and residential life, student advising, and international student services. It determined, however, that the current SCSA ex-officio membership is sufficient to provide perspectives on these areas of student life and to allow the committee to fulfill its charge. Additionally, the ad hoc committee recommends including in the work plan regular communication with the appropriate administrators in the areas of housing and residential life, student advising, and international student services.

6. The ad hoc committee considered revising the SCSA charge to include paragraphs specifically defining its duties regarding residential housing and student advising. After careful consideration, it concludes that the broad language of the SCSA charge allows the SCSA to be most effective, and that specifying particular areas of student life in the charge may inadvertently be viewed as excluding others. The ad hoc committee, therefore, recommends against revising the charge to include paragraphs defining its duties regarding residential housing and student advising.

7. The ad hoc committee believes it is appropriate to leave issues of international student life in the SCSA charge because they are not duplicative of the issues covered by the SCEP charge. The issues in the SCEP charge apply only to educational policies and the SCSA charge focuses on issues of international student welfare and services.

8. The ad hoc committee recommends that the SCSA charge be updated to remove obsolete language in paragraph "b" referring to the SCSA's relationship with Student Organizations. First, there is not a Policy on Registration and Classification of Student Groups; therefore, this language should be eliminated. Second, there are too many student groups (over 800) for the SCSA to fulfill its charge to act as a comprehensive link to them. In order to assist the SCSA in fulfilling this aspect of its charge, the ad hoc committee recommends that the OSA look into methods for notifying student organizations of the existence of the SCSA, and informing these organizations that they may bring policy issues to the SCSA.

9. The ad hoc committee recommends that the SCSA continue reporting to the SSCC. If at the end of the 2011-12 academic year, the SCSA determines this line of reporting is ineffective, it can raise that issue with the SSC and SSCC leadership.

Approved: