

## DISABILITIES ISSUES COMMITTEE

September 23, 2015

Minutes of Meeting

[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 notes represent the views of, nor are they binding on, the Senate, the Administration or the Board of Regents]

**In these minutes:** [Review of committee charge, Disability Resource Center update, goals and aims of the committee, Disabled Student Cultural Center presentation]

PRESENT: Peggy Martin (chair), Michele Chilinski, Kim Doberstein, Katherine Murphy, Betsy Kerr, Donna Johnson, Maki Isaka, Chris Dallager, Lars Oddsson, Heather Peters

REGRETS: Andy Hillis, David Johnson, Anna Mosser

ABSENT: John De Haan, Perry Moriearty, Jane Jones

GUESTS: Earl Wilson, financial director, Disabled Student Cultural Center

**1. Introductions:** Peggy Martin welcomed the committee and each member introduced themselves.

**2. Committee Charge:** Martin read the committee charge and asked if there were questions, comments, or suggestions. Donna Johnson asked about the resolution process. Martin explained that the role of the committee is to be the voice of faculty, staff and students with disability issues. Once the committee sees a need for change, a resolution is created, and it is then communicated to the University Senate Consultative Committee (SCC) while working with concerned stakeholders. Katherine Murphy mentioned multiple points:

- The committee still needs two undergraduate student representatives.
- In the committee charge, “Disability Services Office” needs to be changed to “Disabilities Resource Center.”
- Item “C” on the committee charge: *To review policies and practices in light of legal compliance aspects, deployment of resources, and effectiveness in meeting the needs of the University community, and to recommend changes.* Murphy acknowledged the great resources available on campus but questioned how “effective” they are.
- Item “D” on the committee charge: *To inform the University community to the special concerns of its members with disabilities and of the available resources.* There is a typo, the sentence should read: “To inform the University community of the special...” This item on the charge seems like a large responsibility for a small committee, Murphy said.
  - Johnson interprets this as certain committee members following up with community action items.
  - Martin added that while some committees only focus on information coming in, the Disabilities Issues Committee would focus on information coming in AND going out.
- Professor Heather Peters said to make item “A” on the charge plural, since there is more than one DRC within the University system. Each campus has one.

Professor Maki Isaka asked how binding the committee could be with resolutions. She wanted to know how much weight the committee carries with the SCC. Martin said that the faculty, when acting collectively, has a very strong voice. Once approved by the SCC, the resolution carries a lot of power. There are many opportunities to partner with the administration. Any academic policy/procedure needs to be vetted by faculty and the committee is a part of the vetting process. The committee wants to create a strategic plan to organize its efforts in a way to have the most impact with the University.

Martin asked the members to review the 2014-2015 year end committee report so they could close it and spur ideas for what to do next. Martin wants to create regular reports to present to the next level in the University governance structure and the administration.

**3. Disability Resource Center Update:** Donna Johnson, director, Disability Resource Center (DRC) addressed the members regarding DRC business.

- Roberta Kehne, coordinator, DRC is performing a physical audit of the Twin Cities campus. Kehne has completed the West Bank, the arboretum, 40% of the St. Paul campus, and Twin Cities campus housing reviews. She was in Morris in 2012, and they are working to implement her recommendations.
- Paratransit hired a third driver and added a third van on the Twin Cities campus. They provide curb-to-curb service.
- Johnson noted that the University has no authority over Metro Mobility despite the high ridership among disabled staff, students, and faculty. Kehne is working on developing an electronic physical access map for campus. It should be available on the website by the end of the semester.
- The last four student cases within PeopleSoft will be accessible and completed by September 27, 2015.
- Johnson is working with Vice Provost Peter Radcliff, Office of Planning and Analysis, to start pulling data for students on the Twin Cities campus who are and who are not registered with the DRC. Graduation and retention is all that is being currently viewed.

**4. Strategic goal areas:** Martin laid out her goals for the committee which include: creating a communication plan so committee work can be conveyed to the SCC properly; developing a sense of who the stakeholders are regarding disability issues within the University through identifying individuals/groups/departments and expanding on the list; identifying the committee's goal in relation to online learning and online learning systems; and, creating a plan to address the aging workforce and staff/faculty with disabilities.

**5. Disabled Student Cultural Center:** Earl Wilson, financial director, Disabled Student Cultural Center (DSCC) gave an overview of the DSCC and the services it provides.

- The DSCC is a student group separate from the DRC, which provides a place for students to hang out and relax. There is accessible technology available and they provide advocacy efforts for students. All students are welcome.
- This semester the group is focusing on Metro Mobility issues. The DSCC believes that Metro Mobility is too limited in the amount of rides per rider. Students are only able to take enough rides to cover three quarters of the class days in a semester. The DSCC wants them to increase their flexibility.

- Other DSCC work is very situational. They work on giving out referrals to students who need specific types of assistance out of the realm of the DSCC. They provide both quiet hours as well as advocacy hours. They also host movie nights with discussions afterwards.
- Around 50 students per day take advantage of the group's space and resources.
  - Affiliate groups also use the space. There is a regular balance between the regular people and the affiliate groups.
- The DSCC is working on programing and how to connect with people. They are working on how to reach out to incoming freshman through their packets each fall.
- The DSCC is located in Coffman Union on the second floor. There are two staff positions (the financial director and programming director) which each staffs the center for 15 hours apiece. There are office hours for volunteers, the president and officers.
- The DSCC is primarily used by undergraduate students. Wilson said that graduate students tend to be too busy for the downtime the DCSS offers.

Professor Lars Oddsson asked what the top three issues seen by the DSCC were. Wilson responded with 1) situational issues such as temporary or permanent use of wheelchairs; 2) accessibility issues such as weather making it difficult to navigate a wheelchair around campus, and; 3) resources after graduation, such as career advancement, how to fill out job applications, and how to attend job fairs effectively.

Martin announced the next meeting date as October 21, 2015. Murphy expressed interest in having the topic of Metro Mobility on the agenda.

Hearing no further business, Martin adjourned the meeting.

Avonna Starck  
University Senate