

Senate Committee on Social Concerns
April 25, 2016
Minutes of the 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 minutes represent the views of, nor are they binding on, the Senate, the Administration or the Board of Regents.

[**In these minutes:** Chair's Report; Resolution on Equal Opportunity and Title IX Training; Sustainability and Waste Reduction Report; Retaining Faculty of Color Subcommittee Report; Parental Leave Report]

PRESENT: Randy Croce (chair), David Fuhs, Megan Sweet, Lindsey Budde, Laura Duckett, Zan Gao, Naomi Scheman, Rachel Schurman, Deborah Hendricks, Kendra Okposo, Sarah Sexton

REGRETS: Sandeep Kataria, Maria del Carmen Garcia de LaSerrana Lozan, Becca Gercken

ABSENT: Stuart Mason, Anne Sumanjil, Felicia Christy, Katie Benson, Curtis Williamson, Kjerstie Wiltzen

GUESTS: Chuck Turchik

1. Chair's Report: Randy Croce, chair, thanked the committee for their year of service, and then provided an update on many of the issues with which the committee had been engaged over the past year:

- The resolution supporting bathroom and locker room access for all gender identities that was previously voted on and passed by the committee will appear on the May Senate docket. Croce thanked Professor Laura Duckett for her work. Duckett stated that Stef Wilenchek, director, Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender, Ally Programs Office, drafted the majority of the resolution and that more than one committee was working on this. Duckett said she had attempted to write it as a policy, but the advice was that it was a good opportunity to take advantage of the current climate and energy supporting bathroom access rights for individuals who need them. Sarah Sexton suggested that electronic mapping of all available restrooms would be a great option to include for individuals seeking restrooms.
- The Ban-the-Box initiative, whereby undergraduate applicants to the University are asked about criminal histories, had not advanced since the last discussion. Rachelle Hernandez, associate vice provost, Office of Admissions, is happy to speak to the committee next fall, after one full admission cycle has been completed and data can be evaluated.
- Regarding the issue of bargaining unit employees serving on the committee as ex officio members, Croce recalled that this has been addressed in a fall meeting, and the administration perceived a conflict of interest and potential unfair labor practice if bargaining unit employees were to partake in committee discussions touching on "terms and conditions of employment." Croce stated that he drafted a resolution asking for their inclusion, but that since writing it, he found out that the May Senate meeting docket will include the resolution passed last fall regarding the committee's inability to fulfill their

charge without inclusion of these employees. He felt that it was not necessary to pursue another resolution on this same issue. Scheman agreed that this was a good idea and thought that perhaps it would be a good question to ask at the upcoming Community Forum focused on faculty unionization.

- The chair for next year will be Professor Mark Pedelty of the School for Journalism and Communications.

2. Resolution on Equal Opportunity and Title IX Training: Croce reminded the committee that after Kendra Okposo's presentation on the various trainings offered by the EOAA office at the last meeting, the committee decided that there should be required training on the most critical issues for all employees. He provided a draft of a resolution written by Okposo and himself.

Scheman suggested that the proposed training would not be solely to inform individuals of their obligations but also of their rights, and perhaps it would be valuable to include that point in the resolution. She suggested the following edit: "To ensure that all university members uphold, are aware of, and have access to the protections of federal and state civil rights laws." She also thought that if the committee created a buzz, the training could be fun; there could be some excitement generated across the University. She added that the training should be able to be re-accessed in case individuals wanted to go back to the session.

Duckett stated that her reaction to the term "training" is quite negative, so the language that is used to introduce the mandatory training should be framed correctly. She stays away from the word itself, and recommended the term "required education" rather than mandatory training. Megan Sweet added that there was a state statute requiring all students to take this training, and so requiring all employees to take similar training made sense and provided parity. Kelliher wondered about the online training aspect: he acknowledged it was a cheaper and more accessible option; however, he was skeptical as to its effectiveness. Okposo stated that she agreed online is less effective, but questioned the ability of the University to train all employees, given the resources it would require.

The draft, amended to reflect Scheman's suggestion, to include a link to the state bill that requires students to take training, and to change the term 'training' to 'education' or 'offering' was passed unanimously. Croce reminded the committee that the resolution would appear on the fall docket of the SCC.

3. Sustainability and Waste Reduction Report: Lindsey Budde stated that the MSA proposal on University sustainability goals was presented at a Board of Regents meeting. They had hoped for more a vocal reception, but so far Shane Stennes, director, Sustainability Office, had not reported back on which aspects of the MSA proposal had been implemented as goals for his office. MSA has decided to initially focus sustainability efforts on events on-campus. They will move forward in small steps on the other issues, said Budde, and their goals would be revisited in fall.

4. Retaining Faculty of Color Subcommittee Report: Croce said he met with the dean of the Carlson School of Management, Sri Zaheer, who is also the chair of the Council of Deans.

Zaheer wondered about survey fatigue, but was supportive of much of the committee's other proposals. Croce also said that Brandon Sullivan, Office of Human Resources, had provided a list of questions already existing in the Employee Engagement survey that might relate to campus or University climate for faculty of color. Croce reminded everyone that the subcommittee had thought that there was some denial that problems exist at the University for faculty of color, and the goal was to consider whether other questions might be added to the survey.

Deborah Hendricks asked if the survey was solely quantitative or if there were options for write-in questions. Croce replied that there were two open-ended questions on the survey. Schurman suggested adding a question like "What would make this a place you would want to be or stay?" She was aware of individuals who left because the University did not feel like a place that was welcoming to them. Croce added that he felt there were a lot of conversations that need to happen with administration before any resolution could be passed.

Duckett asked if the survey currently asks what an individual's ethnicity or gender or sexual orientation was. She added that on a survey like the Employee Engagement survey it is helpful to have numeric data so comparisons could be made from year to year. But an open box for comments is also a great opportunity to collect information.

Hendricks wanted to assure that community-engaged research be discussed as a value as often discipline-specific research and service is the only kind that is recognized, which can be a barrier to tenure.

Okposo was concerned that a survey would be perceived as questioning the experience of individuals of color. She thought faculty of color would need to understand that this was a value of the institution, and not their [faculty of color] responsibility or burden to educate white people. She will think about how to better phrase some of the questions.

Parental Leave report: Croce reported that Debra Fitzpatrick, who was the lead author of a report commissioned by Governor Dayton on parental leave, had agreed to do some projections for the committee regarding how much enhanced benefits might cost the University. Additionally, said Croce, John Kellogg from the Office of Institutional Research will do some data analysis to help Fitzpatrick with her projections. Kellogg thinks less than 1% of all employees would actually take advantage of parental leave, said Croce. He added that Dean Zaheer from the Carlson School of Management thought the deans would be supportive of a central fund if that could work for the University financially and structurally. He will continue to follow up on this issue.

Hearing no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Patricia Straub
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