

ACADEMIC HEALTH CENTER STUDENT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE (AHC SCC) MINUTES

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 2003

5:00 - 6:00 PM

488 CHILD REHAB CENTER

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

PRESENT:

Melissa Highman, Chair (Nursing), Kim Canfield (Public Health), Angela Feneis (Occupational Therapy), Jessica Hammell (Veterinary Medicine), Wesley Kurszewski (Physical Therapy), Alisa Madson (Dentistry), David Renstrom (Pharmacy), Kelly Schneider (Mortuary Science), Mark Weisbrod (Medical School).

ABSENT: Leslie Carranza (Medical School – 1st Year), Andy Grande (Medical School), Mark Wiisanen (UMD School of Medicine).

GUESTS: Barbara Brandt, Representatives from the PEERS group.

1. IMPACT OF TUITION, BUDGET, AND FINANCIAL AID ISSUES ON AHC STUDENTS

Melissa Highman said that recently there had been an article in the Minnesota Daily and then an email from Dr. Cerra to AHC students in regards to this year's budget situation. She asked Barbara Brandt to provide some information before questions.

Barbara Brandt said that she would appreciate any feedback that members have regarding access to accurate information and student perceptions about the budget situation. She then said that the AHC has been watching the budget since November, at which time the University received a \$25 million rescission.

For next year, the Governor has proposed using all the tobacco endowment funds to balance the budget. This would be a great loss for the AHC, in the amount of \$185 million which funds general education and interdisciplinary studies within the AHC, and helps fund the new Pharmacy program at Duluth and the Nursing program in Rochester. The Governor does value these services, though, and has proposed that future funding be provided by money from the cigarette tax.

Barbara Brandt said that she is holding an emergency meeting tomorrow with the deans to think of creative responses and solutions to this potential shortfall.

Members then made the following comments:

- Current students just accept the situation since they are enrolled and cannot leave
- It seems hypocritical to fund AHC education through a tax on tobacco products
- Student advocacy two years impressed the legislator enough to provide extra funding
- Some students are applying to other institutions with lower tuition
- Incoming students are taking longer to decide because of the potential increases
- Any basic cuts to the University impact the AHC
- Students need to be aware of what they can do in this process
- Faculty need to make announcements in class
- Legislators need to personally hear from many students and their parents

Q: When will a decision be finalized?

A: The Governor's plan is being considered by the House and Senate, although they might have different ways to use funds. Nothing will be finalized until late in the session.

Q: Do all AHC colleges charge comparable tuition?

A: No. Each college sets its own so some are higher and others are lower.

Q: Why is higher education being hit hard this fiscal year?

A: There is a change in the philosophy for funding education since the public can no longer see the direct relationship between higher education and community service. The view is now that higher education only benefits the students so then why should the public subsidize this education. The public also sees that the AHC educates students from a wide region, so many do not stay in Minnesota to practice.

2. ALCOHOL AND OTHER DRUG EDUCATION IN THE AHC

Several representatives from the PEERS group joined the meeting to discuss alcohol and drug education within the AHC curriculum. One representative said that PEERS attended a five day conference in Utah last year. The purpose was to talk about abuse and addiction within the health care community.

PEERS brought information back and is creating a proposal for each college to have part of the curriculum dedicated to abuse and addiction within the providers and recognizing signs within the patients. This is a larger problem than most people recognize and should be looked at from an interdisciplinary approach.

Another member said that there is a national campaign to provide a basic level of education across all programs. There are several constraints however, including accreditation and current program load.

Along with education through the curriculum, PEERS would also like to develop a support group, resource list, and web site. The main reason for this push is the high level of stress associated with AHC programs. Many times students start using drugs or alcohol, but do not realize when they have gone too far.

Q: How much curriculum time is being proposed?

A: PEERS is proposing 3-4 consecutive days of information in each program.

Q: Are undergraduates required to take any course on this topic?

A: A binge drinking course is offered for undergraduates.

A committee member said that a distinction needs to be made between private lives and University-sponsored activities. There also needs to be psychological input as to the right and wrong ways to approach someone who is abusing. Each discipline has a responsibility to promote healthy behavior.

Another member said that any education needs to be adaptable to fit into each program. Students also need to be taught to recognize abuse as something that is treatable and preventable.

A PEERS representative said that they are sponsoring a series of lunch hour seminars the week of April 21 and invited all members to attend.

Melissa Highman thanked PEERS for their presentation and asked that they keep the committee informed about their future progress.

3. OTHER BUSINESS

With no other business, Melissa Highman thanked the members for attending and adjourned the meeting.

Becky Hippert
University Senate