

[In these minutes: Mitsubishi resolution, WRC, SOAR presentation]

SOCIAL CONCERNS COMMITTEE

MINUTES

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 6, 2000

3:00 - 4:30

300 MORRILL HALL

[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: George French (chair), Katherine Anderson, Robert Brown, Mike Davey, Selma de Ridder, Andrew Kuhlmann, Judi Linder, Geri Malandra, Wesley Matson, Annette McNamee, Jean Niemiec, Greg Schooler, Julie Sweitzer, Karly Turner.

REGRETS: Patricia Cavanaugh, Margaret Kuchenreuther.

ABSENT: John Beatty, Anthony Eliseuson, Catherine Forseide-Hussain, John Jensen, Luis Ramos-Garcia, Angelita Reyes, Mary Steinke.

GUESTS: Angela Hasnedl, Nancy Hoyt, Joe Janzen, Kate Petersen, Mark Rotenberg.

1. DISCUSSION WITH THE OFFICE OF THE GENERAL COUNSEL

Professor French introduced Mark Rotenberg and Nancy Hoyt from the Office of the General Counsel and noted that they would be briefing the committee on two topics, a Mitsubishi resolution and the WRC.

MITSUBISHI RESOLUTION

Mark Rotenberg noted that the Social Concerns Committee and then the University Senate have recently passed two resolutions, Mitsubishi on May 2, 1996 and Burma/Total Oil on May 14, 1998, which called for boycotts on products from these two companies.

In the summer of 2000, the Supreme Court ruled that mass boycotts are unconstitutional. Since that time the Office of the General Counsel has been looking into the reasons behind the ruling and whether the Supreme Court decision also voids the University boycotts. There are several distinctions between the University and Supreme Court cases, such as the difference between state/federal law and University law as well as the phrasing of the University's boycott.

A final decision will be forwarded in December to President Yudof, Professor Fred Morrison, chair of the Senate Consultative Committee, and Professor French. Most likely that boycott will not be entirely voided but may be slightly affected.

WRC

Mark Rotenberg reminded members that a task force was established last year to come to a decision on joining the FLA or the WRC. Following months of research and meetings, the task force, as well as this committee, voted to join the WRC. The University then sent several delegates to the WRC founding meeting in the spring.

The WRC is currently addressing several important issues to its continuation, such as their board chairman resigning and locating stable funding sources. The WRC also is working on ways to sensitize the community to workers' rights.

Nancy Hoyt made the following comments about the WRC:

- WRC governing board has 15 seats representing students, institutions, and labor organizations
- On October 5 the WRC was incorporated in Brooklyn, New York
- On October 26 the WRC bylaws were ratified
- Search is now being held for an executive director
- Insurance has been authorized but not yet obtained
- Working groups were formed over the summer

The University will need to develop its own Code of Conduct and disclosure principles. Bob Hicks, Director of Trademarks and Licensing, will be handling disclosure on new and current licensees.

Q: How will the University's Code of Conduct be developed? Will the WRC sample be used until one is developed?

A: There is no process outlined in the official letter from the WRC. Once the University decides what steps it needs to follow, it can be reported back to the committee.

Q: Who will be provided with the University's disclosure information?

A: Anyone will have access since this information is posted on the WRC web site.

Q: What will be the Social Concerns Committee's role be?

A: The committee should stay involved by watching the WRC's progress and receiving updates.

Q: The University conditionally joined the WRC. Will a decision be made to continue with or leave the WRC?

A: A recommendation will be made to the President after monitoring the progress throughout the year.

2. SOAR PRESENTATION

Kate Petersen and Joe Janzen from SOAR showed an undercover video from the Oregon Region Primate Research Center (ORPRC).

Following the video, Joe Janzen distributed a handout to the committee which included SOAR's proposal, groups which support these efforts, photos from research, and primate sanctuaries. He then noted that SOAR finally received some information from the University regarding its primate research.

Q: Are there rules and regulations that govern animal research?

A: There is a federal policy as well as a Board of Regents Policy on Animal Care and Usage.

Committee members then made the following comments:

- There are two issues: how animals are treated in research and what is appropriate research. Animal treatment is easy to agree on; appropriate research is the difficult issue.
- Is there enforcement of the rules?
- Information is needed from the University's side
- Premature for a debate to take place
- Generalizations across fields are hard
- Role of the committee should be to protect academic freedom while ensuring that good practices are being maintained here
- Review of the procedures and enforcement would be helpful

George French noted that the Senate Research Committee has concern about this topic and wants to be involved in the discussions. It was noted that all meetings are open to the public.

He stated that University representatives would be discussing this topic with the committee at the December meeting.

3. OTHER BUSINESS

Mike Davey said that he would like to work on the housing issue and asked if any other members would like to form a subcommittee on this topic. Robert Brown and Kate Anderson expressed interest. Mike Davey said that he would talk with Jan Morlock about the University's relationship with the community and get enrollment projections for next year.

With no further business, George French thanked all members for attending and adjourned the meeting.

Rebecca Hippert
University Senate