

SOCIAL CONCERNS COMMITTEE  
MINUTES OF MEETING  
MARCH 11, 2002

[In these minutes: Welcome & Introductions, Approval of February 11, 2002 Minutes, Proxy Discussion & Voting, Mount Graham, WRC Code Discussion]

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

PRESENT: Robert Brown, Chair, Laura Hamilton, Karen Holtmeier, Jean Niemiec, Greg Schooler, Julie Sweitzer, Mark Pedelty, Cameron Brauer, Kari Lindeman, Aimee Martin, Brian Wiedenmeier

REGRETS: George French, Margaret Kuchenreuther, Judi Linder

ABSENT: Yvonne Redmond-Brown, Catherine Forseide-Hussain, John Jensen, John Beatty, Luis Ramos-Garcia, Patrick Buckle, Anne Decker, Andrew Pomroy

GUEST(S):

OTHER(S): Tom Ford, The Minnesota Daily, Joe Larsen, MPIRG, Deane Morrison, University News Service, Joel Helfrich

I). Professor Brown called the meeting to order, welcomed all present, and asked that everyone introduce themselves.

II). The Committee unanimously approved the amended February 11, 2002 minutes. The addition to the minutes is as follows: "A suggestion was proposed requiring the University to solicit input from affected groups before moving forward on projects that have implications for native people, environmental considerations, etc."

III). Committee members reviewed, discussed and voted the proxy resolutions. According to Greg Schooler of Asset Management, the Securities and Exchange Commission has determined that certain resolutions need not be voted on due to their "I-7" status. This means that if a resolution "relates to the conduct of the company's ordinary business" it is not necessary to have a resolution.

In the past, on rhetorical grounds, the Committee has generally approved the shareholders' resolutions unless a Committee member found reason not to do so. Whether or not these resolutions will ever pass, the Committee has believed it is important to put the University's moral voice behind each resolution.

A fair amount of discussion surrounded the Citicorp resolution “Linking Executive Pay to Social Criteria”. For example, a non-profit organization has put forth a suggestion of establishing a reasonable proportion of pay between highly paid executives and significantly lesser-paid employees e.g. bank tellers. According to Professor Brown, in the past, the Committee has followed the principle of not getting involved in telling a company how to run their business. A member stated that if the Committee votes in favor of the resolution it should make sure that the same principles are being applied throughout the University. Additionally, the greatest form of protest would be for the University not to buy the company’s stock if it doesn’t agree with how they run their business. The same member believes it is hypocritical for the University to reap the benefits of a company’s earnings growth and yet vote in favor of not paying the CEO that drove the growth. This member cautioned the Committee to be careful on voting this resolution. Alternatively, another member stated the Committee should consider the ultimate goal of the group putting forth this resolution. It is not necessarily their intention to try and micromanage the company but raise awareness of this issue.

Professor Brown put forth a motion to approve all the shareholder resolutions. A majority of Committee members voted to approve the resolutions and one voted to abstain. The rationale for abstaining was based on the belief that the member would have to do further research in order to fully understand the end result of voting for or against a particular resolution and this member does not feel comfortable voting for a resolution without thinking through all possible consequences.

Assignment of resolutions to be voted on at the April 15<sup>th</sup> meeting:

- AOL Time Warner – “Implement China Principles”                      Professor Pedelty
- AT & T - “Drop Sexual Orientation from EEO Policy”                      Brian Wiedenmeyer
- AT & T – “Employee Pension Plan”    Professor Brown
- Microsoft – Adopt Code of Conduct for China Operations” Kari Lindeman

IV). Professor Brown summarized the Mount Graham discussion from the February meeting:

- There are legitimate claims of science.
- The University has done due diligence within certain ways of behaving in regard to the legal aspect of the matter.
- Suspicion of information coming primarily from one source e.g. Mount Graham Coalition.
- The Committee received compelling testimony from indigenous peoples and Mount Graham representatives related to the fact that the land is spiritual and sacred. The act of associating with the telescope project was deeply offensive to these individuals.
- Based on information the Committee received it was difficult it was difficult to say which side was right and which side was wrong.

- Professor Brown agreed to write a position paper stating that the University should not associate with the LBT project on Mount Graham by virtue of the way the situation had been managed and the fact the University did not make its case.

The Committee once again discussed the Mount Graham issue at length. Based on additional information Professor Brown received he revised the original position paper. The new version states more clearly that what is at stake here is not historical, economic, scientific, legal or ethical reality but it is a question of how the University wants to be seen. Because the University did not make its case, the University has basically committed itself to a violation of Indian rights.

Professor Brown opened the floor to discussion to get the Committee's collective opinion on the paper and asked if they would like to see any changes made. Secondly, he asked for the Committee's opinion on what they should do with the paper.

A member asked Professor Brown to clarify the position in the paper. Is the paper saying the University will not participate because of the possible ramifications from the media or the University will not participate because it believes that interfering with something that is sacred to someone else is wrong. Professor Brown admitted taking a wishy-washy approach in the paper in order to give Professor Kuhi a voice in the text. Despite these attempts a member said, assuming it is good science, the question remains is it the right thing to do?

The Committee recommended taking a stronger stance that specifically states that Mount Graham is sacred space to not only the Apache but other native people that see it as a symbol of solidarity. Professor Brown will re-craft the discussion/recommendation section of the paper to reflect that based on information the Committee has received it believes Mount Graham is sacred space and regardless of any other circumstances it takes a position against violating such space. Once rewritten the paper will be e-mailed out to members for their vote.

Members recommended sending the position paper to the President along with a cover letter stating that this is the Committee's recommendation based on what was heard and researched on the Mount Graham issue. It was further recommended that the document be forwarded to the Senate for information only.

V). New Business: An MPIRG representative working on the Corporate Accountability Task Force, Joe Larsen, brought forward a few concerns concerning the University's version of the WRC Code:

- The WRC Code has stagnated at the University.
- Contradictory language was added to the Code that states all overtime must be voluntary and then the vague, opting out clause that stipulates "except in extraordinary business circumstances".

Basically the language in the 'Overtime Hours' section of the Code is contradictory and as the document moved from committee to committee language appears to have been added and altered.

Joe Larsen was invited back to the April 15<sup>th</sup> meeting to further discuss this matter. Professor Brown stated that if the draft is still on President Yudof's desk the Committee can decide if there are inconsistencies and either recommend approving the Code or ask that the language be changed. Renee Dempsey, Senate staff, will electronically distribute the University's version of the Code so members can review it prior to the April meeting.

Professor Pedelty recommended a book titled "Can We Put An End To Sweatshops" for members interested in learning more about this issue.

VI). With no further business, Professor Brown adjourned the meeting.

Renee Dempsey\  
University Senate