

SENATE COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL CONCERNS
MINUTES OF MEETING
FEBRUARY 3, 2003

[In these minutes: Proxy Distribution, Divestment from Israel, Campus Sustainability, Energy Conservation and Efficiency, Ecowatch Presentation]

[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: Mark Pedelty, chair, Judi Linder, Ruth Taylor, Roger Beck, Yvonne Redmond-Brown, Albert Cooper, Sheri Huerd, Luis Ramos Garcia, Susan Von Bank, Greg Schooler, H. Jeanie Taylor, Susan Craddock, Kenneth Heller, Margaret Kuchenreuther, Ben Senauer, Joel Helfrich, Melissa Williams

REGRETS: Jennifer Oliphant, Jeffrey Crump, Julie Sweitzer

ABSENT: Karen Holtmeier

OTHER(S): Brian Wachutka, Susan Savanick, Bill Chose, Jerome Malmquist, Dana Donatucci, Andrew Phalen, Freya Thompson, Julie Jacob

I). Professor Pedelty called the meeting to order and asked that everyone present introduce themselves.

II). Professor Pedelty explained the proxy voting process to members. Committee members volunteered to research various proxies and report back their findings and voting recommendations at a future meeting.

III). **DIVESTMENT FROM ISRAEL:** Professor Pedelty announced that he will be meeting with Stuart Mason, Associate Vice President of Asset Management, to discuss the divestiture from Israel issue, and, in a broader context, strategies for responsible investing by the University. Professor Pedelty will report back to the committee next month the outcome of that meeting.

Melissa Williams distributed and highlighted portions of the Divestment Statement she prepared. Ms. Williams announced that she plans to bring forward a resolution at the March 3, 2003 meeting.

A member asked whether there are any Israeli groups that support the movement to divest from Israel. If so, a list of these groups and their statements were requested. Also, if there are any Palestinian groups that oppose the divestiture from Israel movement this information was requested as well. Ms. Williams agreed to try to collect this information for committee members.

IV). **CAMPUS SUSTAINABILITY:** Professor Pedelty introduced Suzanne Savanick, Coordinator of the Sustainable Campus Initiative (SCI). The Sustainable Campus Initiative is an ad hoc committee that has been in existence for almost two years. The mission of the committee is to improve the environment on campus and increase environmental teaching opportunities. Presently, SCI is working on two main projects:

1. Sarita Wetland Restoration Project.
2. Environmental Assessment Project formerly known as the Ecological Footprint Project.

Descriptions of these projects can be found at the SCI website: www.cnr.umn.edu/sci.

On April 23, 2003 there will be a Campus Sustainability Summit. Professor David Orr, Chair of the Environmental Studies Program at Oberlin College will be presenting. Topics that will be covered at the summit include: environmental policy, operations, academic and civic engagement issues.

Professor Pedelty on behalf of the Social Concerns Committee offered the committee's support and endorsement of SCI's projects.

V). **ENERGY CONSERVATION AND EFFICIENCY:** Representatives from Facilities Management updated members on what FM is doing in terms of energy conservation and efficiency. Referring to the 1997 University Senate resolution recommending an energy and environment conservation policy, FM has accomplished the following in terms of energy:

- Since 1992 the University has curtailed energy use on campus by approximately 20%. Clearly, energy use per gross square foot (weather normalized) is being driven down. Methods used to reduce energy consumption include:
 - Initiated retrofit programs on existing buildings to drive energy use down.
 - Continued participation in EPA's 'Green Lights' and 'Energy Star Buildings' as well as Demand Side Management programs.
 - Evaluate energy and environmental costs of renovation versus rebuilding.
- Installed centralized cooling systems.
- Reduced energy use in other University operations through investment and purchasing decisions by introduction of new energy technologies and creating an Energy Investment Fund to help implement funding for energy-saving programs.
- Burn only 70% natural gas in the steam plant on the Mississippi River.
- Maximized steam plant efficiency by including cogeneration of electricity in steam plant operations.
- In the process of trying to get permission from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency to do a test burn of oat hulls.

Other presentation and discussion highlights:

- Presently, the University of Minnesota Twin Cities campus does not purchase any 'green power'. It is extremely expensive to purchase 'green power'.
- A member asked whether construction efficiency is a priority for new construction. It was noted that construction efficiency is very important. The University has developed a set of construction standards, which the architectural community must comply with. Problems arise when buildings are not constructed properly even though they have been designed correctly.
- Is energy consumption considered when deciding which buildings are remodeled? Programs drive which buildings get on the capital list.
- Most of the energy intensive buildings are south of Washington Avenue.

Recycling presentation highlights:

- The University's recycling program has been operational since 1984 in its present form.
- The program has evolved over the years and collects between 15 – 20 different types of materials.
- Approximately 1/3 of the University's waste is being recovered through recycling.
- The University generates about 8,000 tons of solid waste per year.
- Unfortunately, there are a number of materials the University has been unable to target in its recycling program.
- A growing waste-stream in the 1990s and early 21st century are electronics. This is a growing waste challenge for the University, because the bulk of these components are costly to dispose of. Batteries and lead solder are a couple examples of problematic materials imbedded in electronic equipment, both inherently hazardous waste. The University contracts for its waste disposal with the state. To protect the University from a liability standpoint and because of the University's environmental ethic, it limits the markets where it will send its electronic waste. No electronic/hazardous waste is sent out of North America at this time. This is a very expensive limitation to put on its contracts and this is being re-evaluated. By limiting where it sends this waste the University is paying an .08 - .09 cents per pound premium. The University is considering various means to recover the cost of disposal in the purchase process of electronic equipment but no reasonable solution has been determined. Currently, the University produces approximately 1/2 million pounds of electronic waste per year.
- A member asked what has been done to educate people about the proper use of the 'quad system'. It was noted that more emphasis has been placed on the infrastructure of the University's recycling program versus promotion. When new buildings are put 'on-line' orientation sessions are conducted on the use of the 'quad system'.
- A member suggested that custodians gently remind people by leaving a flyer if they notice that someone consistently throws recyclable materials in the garbage.

VI). ECOWATCH CAMPAIGN UPDATE: Ecowatch President Brian Wachutka provided the committee with background information on Ecowatch. One of the campaigns that Ecowatch is working on is called 'Demand Recycled'. As part of this campaign, Ecowatch is asking for a policy at the University requiring departments to purchase 30% recycled paper. Additionally, Ecowatch is campaigning for each lab and library to have double-sided copy machines as another means of paper conservation.

Presently, the University purchases approximately 420,000 reams of paper per year; one third of which has no recycle content. As part of the Ecowatch campaign, departments are being contacted and asked to purchase recycled paper, which is actually cheaper than non-recycled paper. Response from departments has been very positive. Ecowatch has collected 1,500 signatures from the University community in support of this campaign.

VII). Hearing no further business, Professor Pedelty adjourned the meeting.

Renee Dempsey
University Senate