

SOCIAL CONCERNS COMMITTEE

Wednesday, October 1, 1997

238-A Morrill Hall

1:00 PM

In these minutes:

Committee Summary, Energy and Environment Policy, Subcommittee Representation, and Investment Proposals

MINUTES

Present: Eric Bauer (Chair), Lori Clark, Stephanie Lieberman, Claudia Wallace-Gardner, Robert Brown, George French, Arthur Geffen, Joel Nelson, Amy Mertl, Sheila Warness

Absent: Carla Maxwell Monacelli, Frank Wood, Barbara Nesheim, Jean Niemiec, Ellen Stewart, Clint Hewitt, Lisa Albrecht, Friedrich Srienc, Neta Jo Scarpari, John Felipe

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 reflect the views of, nor are they binding on, the Senate or Assembly, the Administration, or the Board of Regents.

The Social Concerns Committee met at 1:00 PM on Wednesday, October 1, 1997 in 238-A Morrill Hall on the East Bank of the University of Minnesota.

INTRODUCTIONS.

Professor Eric Bauer welcomed everyone to the Social Concerns Committee and introduced himself as Chair; everyone present also introduced themselves and their department affiliations. Professor Bauer distributed copies of the Senate Committee on Social Concerns Guidelines for Annual Review of Major Social Issues to all committee members present at the meeting and requested that they review it for additional information related to committee duties and responsibilities.

COMMITTEE SUMMARY.

Professor Bauer gave a comprehensive outline of the committee background and responsibilities, including the following:

- The committee was initially created as a subcommittee of the Regents until it separated from the Regents and became its own full-scale senate committee.
- The committee reviews University investment portfolios and stock and monitors University activities that have a social impact.

- It takes a strong stand on issues and responds to those that threaten the ethical community such as child labor, international labor policies, glass ceilings, abortion, nuclear arms, etc.
- The committee is made up of the following three focus groups which review shareholder proposals: (1) energy and environment; (2) national/political issues; (3) international/labor issues.
- More specifically, the committee addresses specific areas such as the University Culture Fair and Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender (GLBT) issues.
- It makes recommendations to the Senate for the University's response to social problems, including the initiation of resolutions that are forwarded to the Senate for action.

ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT POLICY.

Professor Bauer reported that a resolution was passed in May, 1997 and is now a Senate policy titled, "Energy and Environment Conservation Policy" (a copy was distributed to all members present at the meeting). He informed the committee that he is currently seeking information related to changing the Senate resolution to a Regents resolution and noted that he will report on the issue at the November meeting of the Social Concerns Committee.

SUBCOMMITTEES.

The four previous subcommittees of the Social Concerns Committee have been (1) Energy and Environment; (2) GLBT; (3) Cultural Fair; and (4) Community Drive. In the past, Professor Bauer noted that any social issues under consideration would be appointed to the committee most closely dealing with related issues. In other words, issues related to cultural awareness would be discussed by the Cultural Fair subcommittee, for example; this particular committee will continue to be chaired by George French. He noted that because the interest in cultural awareness is so strong at the other campuses, this subcommittee hopes to organize an all-university event which would be held on the Minneapolis campus, including art, foods, and speakers, etc; one committee member suggested an all day conference which would plan specific culture fair activities.

Although the organization of subcommittees has been based on historic trends, concern was raised that the subject areas are too narrow. It was suggested that the subcommittees encompass broader issues; for example, rather than a GLBT subcommittee, a committee titled Gender Issues might be more appropriate. Committee members were asked to submit to the Chair their skills and interests for future subcommittee organization at the November meeting.

REVIEW OF INVESTMENT PROPOSALS.

Sheila Warness from Asset Management reported that she initially reviews proposals that might be social concerns to the University. Ms. Warness then forwards those proposals to the Chair who identifies the issues and matches each social issue to the focus group previously designated to address that particular issue. The focus group meets to discuss the proposal to decide where the committee should stand on the issue, presents the proposal to the full committee for a vote, and finally the vote is forwarded to that particular company.

MISCELLANEOUS.

Although there is no formal liaison relationship currently set up with Social Concern Committees from other universities, we have initiated communications with other universities as issues were raised in the past, particularly those related to the Peace Blossom University, GLBT, ROTC, and alcohol usage.

Concern was raised that some members may have difficulties attending meeting dates as they are scheduled. It was noted that members will be asked for their availability by e-mail so that another date and time can be scheduled for those members who cannot attend the already scheduled meeting dates.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:15 PM.