

SCFP SUBCOMMITTEE ON TWIN CITIES FACILITIES AND SUPPORT
SERVICES (STCFSS)
MINUTES OF MEETING
FEBRUARY 21, 2006

[In these minutes: Public Art on Campus Program, Future Agenda Items]

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

PRESENT: Gary Jahn, chair for Calvin Alexander, Elizabeth Anderson, Steve Fitzgerald, Peggy Johnson, Denny Olsen, Laurie Scheich, Steve Spehn, Gary A. Davis, Gordon Girtz, Lyndel King, Patrice Morrow, Howard Towle, Jennifer Hannaford

REGRETS: Calvin Alexander, Lorelee Wederstrom, Brian Horgan, Rochell Heiden

ABSENT: George Wilcox

OTHER: Craig Amundsen, public art on campus coordinator

I). Professor Jahn called the meeting to order.

II). Members unanimously approved the November 15, 2005 and December 20, 2005 minutes.

III). Professor Jahn noted that today's main agenda item is to receive information concerning the University's public art program from Lyndel King, director and chief curator of the Frederick R. Weisman Art Museum, and Craig Amundsen, public art on campus coordinator.

Ms. King began by citing examples of public art on campus. She noted the University's formal Public Art on Campus Program started roughly 15 years ago, following passage of Minnesota's 1984 "Percent for Art" legislation. This legislation encourages state building projects with construction or renovation budgets of \$500,000 or more to add up to \$100,000 or one percent, whichever is less, of the total construction budget to purchase or commission original artwork. The \$100,000 cap can be an issue when attempting to commission or purchase a significant, quality piece of artwork, particularly for larger buildings.

At its inception, the University's public art program did not have designated staff, but rather was coordinated on a volunteer basis. It soon became apparent that there was too much work to effectively administer the program in such a manner, and designated staff was hired. Currently, Craig Amundsen coordinates the program.

The University's public art program is different than programs in other cities in that the University asks artists to reflect the intellectual life that occurs on campus in their artwork. This requirement can be quite challenging for artists.

Efforts are being taken to integrate the public arts more fully into the academic life of the University. Two approaches that are being discussed:

- Requiring artists to give a public presentation about their art. Currently, the University does not require this when an artist is commissioned.
- Initiating a program, which would, on a small scale, exhibit commissioned artists other work.

Additionally, Ms. King noted that prior to Shelly Willis' departure from the University, the former public art coordinator was able to have a public art minor approved by the Graduate School. Unfortunately, until the public art coordinator position is once again funded on a full-time basis, offering this minor will be on hold.

At this point, Ms. King turned the presentation over to Mr. Amundsen. He began by noting that the purpose of the Public Art on Campus Program is to enhance the campus environment. Public art includes not only freestanding pieces of artwork, but involves artists collaborating with architects and landscape architects in the creation of buildings, open spaces, gardens and plazas.

Mr. Amundsen stated that being a public artist is quite different than being a studio artist. In his opinion, he views public art as the place where design and art overlap. Public artists to a much greater degree than studio artists need to think about how their work will be experienced, viewed and used. Public artists need to be able to interact with the users of their project, and really engage these users.

The public arts program has many different projects in progress at any given time. Mr. Amundsen distributed a handout, which outlines the University's process for commissioning an artist for a project. He then walked committee members through this process. Ms. King added that in her experience the most successful selection processes have occurred when Public Art on Campus Committee members are actively involved in the process and take their responsibility seriously.

Committee members spent the remainder of the meeting discussing public art projects on campus, learning more about the program and process as well as challenges facing the program. Copies of the University's Public Art on Campus Program brochure were distributed to members and reference was made to the program's URL:

<http://www.weisman.umn.edu/public/public.html>.

Professor Jahn thanked Ms. King and Mr. Amundsen for their very informative presentation.

IV). In preparation for a report by Professor Alexander to the committee's parent committee, SCFP, Professor Jahn asked members their thoughts on items they would like

brought up. To help new members understand items that have been shared in the past, Professor Jahn cited examples.

Although members did not come up with any specific topics they would like reported back to SCFP, they did come up with topics they would like to learn more about such as:

- Gopher stadium.
- Light rail planning on campus.
- An update on the Campus Master Plan.

V). Hearing no further business, Professor Jahn adjourned the meeting.

Renee Dempsey
University Senate