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STUDENT AFFAIRS COMMITTEE (SCSA)

MINUTES

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 5, 2000

2:30 - 4:00

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: Jesse Berglund (chair), Deborah Bang, Jane Canney, Percy Chaby, Jeremy Dressen, Terry Hietpas, David Lenander, John Romano, Cory Stingl, Jason Stingl.

REGRETS: Jean-Marie Del-Santo, Ted Labuza, Mark McCrory, Diane Wartchow, Donna Whitney.

ABSENT: Sabeen Altaf, Shane Naslund.

GUESTS: Ed Ehlinger, Tina Falkner, June Nobbe, Tracy Smith.

1. DISCUSSION OF THE STUDENT FEES DECISION

June Nobbe started by announcing that a ruling was recently made in the Wisconsin case before the Supreme Court. To explain the ruling's effect on the University, she turned to Tracy Smith, the University's representative from the General Counsel's Office.

Tracy Smith reviewed the Minnesota case, which involved five students suing the University regarding paying a mandatory fee to support groups whose ideological or political views are different from their own. The specific groups named in the lawsuit are the Queer Student Cultural Center, La Raza, and the University Young Women. The Minnesota judge decided to stay the case until a ruling was made by the Supreme Court.

In the Wisconsin case, the University lost at the state level before making an appeal to the Supreme Court. The recent decision was 9 - 0 in favor of Universities imposing mandatory fees and that this does not violate the First Amendment. The justices realized that freedom of speech is important at a university and that restrictions should not be placed on its educational value. Based on this decision, the University will be sending a letter to the clients' attorney to voluntarily dismiss the lawsuit or the judge will be asked to make this ruling.

The Supreme Court case did state that fees should be viewpoint neutral. This point is always advised to each fees committee, thereby ratifying practices that are currently in place. Student groups that challenge the non-neutral viewpoint, such as MPIRG and SLC, only receive voluntary funding. The Supreme Court ruling upheld mandatory funding of the Wisconsin PIRG as long as the lobbying effort is legitimate for the university.

Q: Are there doubts about the neutrality of the University's process?

A: The process is neutral on paper, but its actual application is harder. Any group can apply for funding, and then the fees committee just needs to make a rational decision as to allotment.

June Nobbe said that Toby Egan attended a Fall Semester meeting to discuss different funding options for the University should the decision be different. Because of the problems with the Fees Committee decision this year, Vice President Boston will be forming a task force to suggest changes in the process for next year.

Q: Was the decision unanimous?

A: There were six justices in the majority and 3 in the minority who felt that a ruling did not need to be made as to viewpoint neutral.

June Nobbe said that if the ruling had been decided against the university, it would have opened a Pandora's Box for all other methods of funding at all levels.

2. CAMPUS LIGHTING UPDATE

Percy Chaby stated that he met with a few people, but was looking forward to an upcoming meeting of the Campus Safety Committee. He mentioned that Cory Stingl, a SCSA member, and Andy Rorvig, a MSA presidential candidate, were both helping him with walkthroughs and an implementation schedule.

Jane Canney added that the campus blue lights were added 10 years ago after a walkthrough by the Campus Safety Committee.

3. DISCUSSION OF THE U-PASS RESOLUTION

Jesse Berglund said that the resolution was mentioned at the last meeting, but approval was withheld until a discussion could be held at this month's meeting. He then asked the committee for their opinions on the proposal and the resolution as stated.

Percy Chaby stated that the resolution was presented at three MSA meetings but has never been passed because the mandatory fee has no cap or incremental schedule, there is no exact implementation schedule, and the University is not sure if it will receive a federal grant. When these concerns have been expressed to Matt Clark, students are told that the fee will be assessed just like a technology fee, which does not make students feel any better considering how much students pay each semester in a technology fee. Students are also unclear if Metro Transit fees

will increase, if an increase will have students paying for lightrail, and if funding now means that students must support the system for many years in the future.

Q: What has Matt Clark been doing in respect to the U-Pass?

A: Not much was done while he was running for MSA President. A report from a joint MSA-MPIRG survey stated that 67% of students are willing to pay for this system. The proposal will be presented at the President's Executive Council meeting tomorrow.

Q: How can the President commit to a proposal without definite costs?

A: A schedule has been worked out for the first two years. The problem is whether the University must invest beyond the first two years, which is the period covered by the grant, and what increase would be needed to continue.

Q: Is this a mandatory fee?

A: Yes, but a user fee would be needed to purchase a U-Pass.

Jesse Berglund stated that the plan is to have all students buy-in to the system, as well as faculty and staff who would be offered the pass at a different rate.

Q: Would there be a mandatory fee for faculty and staff?

A: No which is why their U-Pass fee would be different.

The committee then made the following comments regarding the resolution:

- Resolution should be acted on by the Senate, but there is not time before it is presented to the President
- Committee should support proposal but with limits
- Proposal should not be implemented unless the University receives a grant
- U-Pass is good public policy for the University
- There should be a cap on the mandatory fee
- Resolution presented at April Senate meeting; Business and Rules can decide whether for information or action

The committee then decided to edit the resolution, to support the concept of the U-Pass proposal. A motion was made and approved to change the resolution to an action item, and then the resolution was approved.

4. OSD UPDATE

OSD RESTRUCTURING

Jane Canney reported that the decision has been made for a Vice President and not a Vice

Provost. The Vice President would report to the Executive Vice President and Provost (EVPP), with a dotted line to the President, and have a position on the President's Executive Committee. An interim Vice President, appointed from the faculty, will be effective July 1.

Q: What will this position be Vice President of?

A: The office title has not been decided yet since the composition of reporting units is still undecided. Athletics now reports to Tonya Brown. Campus life units, such the Campus Involvement Center, University Counseling and Career Services, and Boynton, will likely remain. Housing and Food Services will remain together and report to Operations, ROTC will report to Vice Provost Swan, and Communications and Publications will report to Institutional Relations.

Q: Is the title, Dean of Student, still being discussed?

A: No since it was considered an inappropriate title for an institution of this size.

Q: What is the difference between a Vice President and a Vice Provost?

A: A Vice Provost reports to the EVPP and serves on a campus level while a Vice President has system-wide responsibilities.

Q: When will a decision be made?

A: A decision will be needed soon to have new people in place by July 1.

STUDENT FEES COMMITTEE

Jane Canney said that that several fees committee decisions were appealed to the administration this year. For MPIRG, the administration recommended the same funding level as last year, but noted that MPIRG created obstructions to this year's process. DEF grant money was returned to MSA, but no additional funds were allocated to MSA above the recommended \$15,000. Africana Student Cultural Center had its funding level restored to last year's level, but it was noted that the group needs to comply with deadlines in the future.

5. CAMPUS UPDATES

MSA - Percy Chaby reported that elections were recently completed and last year's Vice President, Matt Clark, was elected this year's President. Elections for other officers will be held next Tuesday.

MORRIS - Jeremy Dressen reported that Samuel Schuman was named the permanent Chancellor after having served in an interim capacity. Science Classroom renovation Phase II moved up to number 4, from 10, on the legislator's priority list. Enrollment increased in 1999-00 after a decrease the previous year. Lastly, Jazz Fest is this weekend on campus.

There were no reports from GAPSA or Crookston.

6. OTHER BUSINESS

Jesse Berglund announced that a Forum on Sweatshops will be held on campus next week and the committee is one of the co-sponsors of the event.

Jane Canney announced that this is Graduate and Professional Student Appreciation week, so be sure to thank these students.

Tina Falkner reminded students that Gradfest is being held in the Fieldhouse for all graduating students.

With no further business, Jesse Berglund thanked all members for attending and adjourned the meeting at 3:38 p.m.

Becky Hippert
University Senate