

SENATE COMMITTEE ON STUDENT AFFAIRS  
MINUTES OF MEETING  
MARCH 5, 2008

[In these minutes: Welcome Week Update]

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

PRESENT: Jeffrey Wencil, chair, Nathan Pelzer, Thomas Bilder, Kim Roufs, Catherine Solheim, Maureen Kunkler, Olga Zakharenko

REGRETS: Kendre Turonie, Amelious Whyte, Iraj Bashiri, Jean-Marie Del-Santo, Jennifer Engler, Curt Baker, Eric Brown, Megan Hayes, Hilary Ploeckelmann

ABSENT: Andy Howe, Ian McConnell, Caroline Younts

OTHERS ATTENDING: Gabriele Schmiegel

I). Jeffrey Wencil called the meeting to order.

II). Members unanimously approved the February 6, 2008 minutes.

III). Mr. Wencil welcomed Jenny Porter who was invited to provide information about Welcome Week. Ms. Porter introduced herself and noted that she was from Orientation and First Year Programs. She asked members go around the room and introduce themselves and share their affiliation to the University.

The goal of Orientation and First Year Programs is to help new students with their transition to the University. All new students will be required to attend a 2-day orientation. In addition, there will be a 1-day orientation for transfer and graduate students. Orientation and First Year Programs also coordinates parent orientation, which takes place in the summer. While Welcome Week will be strictly for first year students this year, discussions are taking place around expanding the program to include transfer students in the future. Ms. Porter provided members with the address for the Orientation and First Year Programs website, which is <http://www.ofyp.umn.edu/>

Ms. Porter noted that Welcome Week is a new initiative, which will be launched in the fall 2008. Welcome Week will be a new way to welcome students to campus, and is more or less a continuation of orientation.

Ms. Porter distributed a handout, which outlined the purpose, vision and mission of Welcome Week. She noted that Welcome Week is aimed at creating a purposeful and intentional experience for new students as they enter the University. The purpose of

Welcome Week is to have students identify as a member of the University community, and to understand the expectations that are associated with being a member of this community. The program is designed to provide opportunities to enhance student success, increase their satisfaction and retention levels, and improve graduation rates. The vision of Welcome Week is to help students navigate their transition to college, while providing opportunities for personal development and academic success.

The mission for Welcome Week is to engage the campus community in creating a meaningful University experience for first-year students that will:

- Build a sense of community by encouraging a first-year class identity, fostering institutional pride and having students take ownership and responsibility for their college experience.
- Assist student in their adjustment to the campus environment and campus life.
- Provide students with the opportunity to develop and maintain meaningful relationships.
- Give students the resources they need to navigate the campus.
- Create leadership opportunities for current students. It is expected that roughly 400 student leaders will be needed. To date, 737 people have applied to fill these positions.

A handout illustrating the Welcome Week planning and committee structure was distributed. The Welcome Week Advisory Committee makes all Welcome Week final decisions. Ms. Porter explained the role of the various committees that fall under the auspices of the Welcome Week Advisory Committee.

Next, Ms. Porter went on to walk committee members through the Welcome Week schedule. Copies of this detailed schedule were distributed to members. Schedule highlights include:

- Day 1 – Wednesday, August 27, 2008 – Move in, get settled, convocation and meet orientation group.
- Day 2 – Thursday, August 28, 2008 – College Day – Each college has a different plan for what they intend to do with their students. Later on Day 2, there will be de-stress activities, dinner and free time before the keynote speaker, Jermaine Davis. Following this evenings entertainment rotation there will be an opportunity for students to play, relax and hang out.
- Day 3, Friday, August 29, 2008 – University Day – This day is geared toward helping students learn the Twin Cities campus, East Bank, West Bank and St. Paul campuses. Different sessions will be held on each location. The University Honors Program will host a dinner for their students this evening. Later in the evening, there will be a pep rally and Gophers After Dark kick off sponsored by Intercollegiate Athletics and Student Unions and Activities.
- Day 4, 2008 – Saturday, August 30, 2008 – Community Day – This day will be spent exploring the community and attending the Gopher game. Late night activities include going to the Mall of America or the State Fair. (Late night on-campus activities may be planned in the event the game is late).

- Day 5, 2008 – Sunday, August 31, 2008 – Community Service Day – Students will have the opportunity to attend religious services followed by brunch/free time. Then, after a meeting with their small group, students will be given an opportunity to select a service project to participate in, e.g. Goodwill Enterprises. Greek Life. Students will not be required to participate in service projects. Orientation and First Year Programs intends to have 2,000 opportunities for off-campus projects, and have some on campus options available too. The goal is to send the message to students that service is important to the University. Later this evening there will be dinner, free time, residence hall receptions (all returning students will be back by this time), and runs to Target for supplies.
- Day 6, 2008 – Monday, September 1, 2008 – Prepare for Classes – A much more relaxed day, but students will still have opportunities for activities.

Questions/comments from members included:

- Will volunteers for convocation still be needed? Yes, Orientation and First Year Programs and Housing and Residential Life are working on coordinating volunteer opportunities for the entire week. Once completed, these opportunities will be posted on-line. A member suggested getting this information on-line and out to the University community as soon as possible so people can plan accordingly.
- How was the decision made to select Target as a sponsor vendor? Orientation and First Year Programs worked with the University Foundation and the Academic and Corporate Relations Center in terms of identifying a sponsor for Welcome Week.
- Will students be provided with any information on academic advising? Yes, that will take place on Day 2, College Day. Students will be given opportunities to meet with their advisors, and they will be told how to use their advisors.
- Impressive! This is a huge improvement over anything that has been done in previous years.
- Will there be any activities for non-traditional students? The goal is to have all first year students attend. Having said this, exceptions may be made for non-traditional students, and it is likely these students will be grouped together. The logistics in terms of assigning students to groups is still being looked at.
- Who is being used to transport students to various sites, e.g. Mall of America, Target? The University will contract for bus service. In addition, Metro Transit and the University's Connector will be used. Teaching students about Metro Transit is a goal of the project so they know how to use public transportation to get around the area.
- More opportunities should be created for faculty to interact with students. Faculty need to be visible to students, and not viewed as untouchables.
- Are first year students required to attend Welcome Week? Will there be any exceptions for students who, for example, may have a family vacation planned the week before Labor Day? Ms. Porter stated that there will be a fine balance between requiring attendance without having a tangible repercussions for non-attendance. Sending the message that this will be a fun opportunity and a great way to meet people will hopefully entice students to attend.

- Will information be given about other bookstores, e.g. Oak Street, besides the University Bookstore? Given that the Bookstore is a co-sponsor, the emphasis will be on purchasing books at the University Bookstore.
- UMD is also planning a week-long orientation as well.

Mr. Wencil thanked Ms. Porter for her presentation. Ms. Porter stated that Andy Howe, a member of SCSA, can keep the committee informed about this project.

IV). Renee Dempsey, Senate staff, reported that the University Police will attend the April meeting to provide information on what they are doing to protect students.

Mr. Wencil stated that he would like a representative from Parking and Transportation be invited to a future meeting to learn about light rail plans and developments.

V). Hearing no further business, Mr. Wencil adjourned the meeting.

Renee Dempsey  
University Senate