

STUDENT AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

Wednesday, April 15, 1998

238 Morrill Hall

3:30 PM

In these minutes: Discussion of Student Lawsuit

MINUTES

Present: Kathleen Peterson (Chair), Patrick Kroll, John Romano, Sabeen Altaf, Jesse Berglund, Katie Dudley, Laura Taken, June Nobbe, Phil Morgan, Ann Cieslak

Regrets: Maren Mahowald, Susan Daniels, Ted Labuza

Absent: Laura Langer, Jane Canney, Diane Wartchow, Thomas Haakenson, Brittany Leigh, Jeffrey Olson, Britta Ylikopsa

Guests: Steve Bosacker, Executive Director of the Board of Regents, and Tonya Moten Brown, Chief of Staff

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 Student Affairs Committee met at 3:30 PM on Wednesday, April 15, 1998 in 238 Morrill Hall on the East Bank of the University of Minnesota.

DISCUSSION OF STUDENT LAWSUIT.

Kathie Peterson, Chair, reported that she felt it was important that this additional meeting be scheduled to continue discussion about the student lawsuit against the Regents of the University of Minnesota. There was insufficient time left at the end of the last meeting and differing opinions among the members of the Student Affairs Committee as to whether and how it should respond to the lawsuit.

Committee members made the following points:

- Each case is decided on its own merit, so the University of Minnesota cannot predict the outcome of this particular court case based on other cases.
- The General Counsel's Office indicated that it is a good sign if the University received support from the various committees.
- The Student Affairs Committee represents all faculty, staff, and students. If opinions about this lawsuit are divided, how can the committee equally represent all of its constituents?

- The student services fee has guidelines dictating who gets funds. For example, SLC (Student Legislative Coalition) and MPIRG lobby, but students can choose to refuse to pay toward these organizations.
- MSA tabled the issue yesterday due to the absence of a quorum.
- There is a democratic process taking place and it should be allowed to run its course.
- The Student Affairs Committee should stay neutral and respect the process in order to avoid alienating anyone. If the lawsuit is well founded, then the students will prevail; if not, then the courts will determine that as well.
- The Student Affairs Committee could draft a general statement in support of the student's participation in the student fees process.
- There is no guarantee about the reaction of the Senate; even the Student Affairs Committee does not agree on which stand to take on this issue.
- The University of Wisconsin's non-allocable fees go toward basic services and the allocable fees go toward the development of student organizations. The University of Minnesota, on the other hand, combines both non-allocable and allocable fees and lets the student government decide on allocation.
- There are more students than administrators or faculty on the student fees committee on the Twin Cities campus; the student fees committee must have a majority of students.
- The Student Affairs Committee does not know enough about the intention of the plaintiffs to take a stand or draft a resolution at this point.

Members agreed that since the Student Affairs Committee itself appears to be divided on the issue, and since it cannot predict the Senate's reaction, and since more information is needed about the plaintiff's intentions, it will NOT formally respond to the student lawsuit at this time.

The meeting adjourned at 4:15 PM.