

Minutes*

Senate Consultative Committee

Thursday, October 20, 2005

3:00

238A Morrill Hall

Present: Jean Bauer (chair), Nancy Carpenter, Jacqueline Cottingham-Zierdt, Beth Emshoff, Dan Feeney, Megan Gunnar, Scott Lanyon, Judith Martin, Fred Morrison, Rick Orr, Jared Warren, Jennifer Windsor

Absent: Nicolas Allyn, Gary Balas, Matt Bowers, Josh Breyfogle, Barbara Elliot, Blake Hogan, Mary Jo Kane, Anthony Kouba, Will Kusch, Marvin Marshak, Terry Roe, John Sullivan, Timothy Tangen, Dion Turgeon, Margaret Wolff

[In these minutes: Establishing Communication Through Ombudsman or Suggestion Box]

Professor Bauer convened the meeting at 3 p.m.

1. Establishing Communication through Ombudsman or Suggestion Box

Professor Bauer said the committee had been charged with establishing a way of communication to somehow effect better service to the University. The idea of an ombudsman and/or suggestion box had been suggested. It was agreed that it would be presented to this committee to discuss how that might work. A discussion ensued about how this might be accomplished and what the goal was. It was suggested that the goal was that it would be a place where anyone could complain, contribute a suggestion, and raise concerns, as there was nothing in place to do so at the University. There were concerns among committee members that there would not be sufficient resources to address issues raised. It would also be difficult to ensure anonymity. Several committee members raised the concern that this was not the purview of the committee.

Professor Morrison suggested any issues or complaints raised through such a forum be forwarded to the appropriate party, and that the expectations be clearly conveyed to those making suggestions or raising issues. Professor Gunnar said that it struck her that there was no way on the website to discern who does what, so that people can raise issues with the appropriate parties. She said there needed to be ways and means to solve such problems. Professor Martin suggested that this was an issue that this should be addressed at the institutional level, not the Senate. Professor Bauer said she would write a letter to express the position of the committee.

Professor Bauer also asked the committee at what point an SCC meeting should be cancelled, pointing out that today's agenda was quite brief. The committee agreed that one day notice should be sufficient and the suggestion was raised to poll committee members to see what issues other bodies may have and if the meeting should take place.

Professor Bauer adjourned the meeting at 3:20 pm.

* 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 represents the views of, nor are they binding on, the Senate, the Administration, or the Board of Regents.

Mary Jo Pehl
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