

AHC F&P Meeting
Tuesday, March 3, 2009
4:30 ~ 6:00 p.m.
Children's Rehab Center, room 406

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

Present: Paul Olin (chair), John Connett, David Lee, Brian Van Ness

Regrets: Yusuf Abul-Hajji, Helen Hansen, Beth Nunnally

Chair Olin greeted the most recent committee member, Professor Van Ness, who represents the Basic Sciences, and updated him on the current issues that the committee has been discussing. He gave a brief description of the Health Care Savings Plan and explained to Van Ness the benefit of distributing money out of retirement funds and into another benefit pool because the President believes the University's benefits package may be a target of criticism and financial loss by the state.

Members talked about the possibilities of a University-wide mandatory unpaid furlough versus a two-week shut down with options of using vacation and compensation time. Professor Van Ness talked about his department and the discussions of layoffs or taking a 5% cut in pay to preserve jobs. Olin said that in a conversation with Beth Nunnally, he proposed that the finance and planning committee make suggestions as to what the furlough options might be and that Nunnally supported the idea. Professor Connett said that the furlough and shut down options were discussed at the last division heads meeting of his college but they did not do any suggestion brainstorming. He said that in the event that the University has a furlough or shut down, not all units would be able to shut down. Members agreed that a furlough or shut down would be better than layoffs.

Olin believes there are many departments that have been prudent with their finances and have reserves available. Members discussed pooling money reserves from various units that may have a reserve, to create an internal lending resource for more needy units. Olin thinks it could be beneficial for everyone that participates. He said that the legislature looks at various pools in individual units and is quite aware how much money a unit has, how long it has been there and every time it increases. He thinks by pooling funds and using them for the better financial health of a college, it could reduce the units possible vulnerability to losing those funds altogether. For those participating by submitting some of their funds, it would be with the understanding that the money would be paid back to that unit at some time and borrowers would need to complete a promissory note. The idea is in its infant stages, so there is no set plan at this point. Members discussed how it would be managed including a suggestion of having a committee responsible for implementation and disbursement but Connett thinks if a committee managed it, the individual contributors would lose personal control of their funds. Olin said that he will meet with Nunnally to review independent department reserves and discuss the possibility of moving forward with such an initiative.

Olin reported that there is discussion to move some Saturday classes to the St. Paul campus during game days once the Stadium begins operations. He said there was a mention by interested parties that contract parkers receive a 5% reduction in parking fees to compensate for losing their regular parking ramps during game days.

Olin said that department heads from Information Technology attended the last Senate Finance and Planning committee meeting to talk about future projects and how they would be funded. Members agreed that one of those projects should be to update classroom technology. There was discussion at the meeting about students being disgruntled at all of the extra fees they pay besides tuition. Members talked about the possibility of dropping fees and reverting to charging one tuition rate that would include associated fees. There was an idea suggested that individual schools be allowed to raise tuition for their own colleges but the idea was countered with the fact that a degree from the University does not come from the individual colleges, but from the University as a whole. It was noted that the graduate school can set their own fees and so Olin thinks there will be changes in this arena.

Chair Olin adjourned the meeting at 5:20 p.m.

Lisa Towry
University Senate Office