

SENATE COMMITTEE ON STUDENT AFFAIRS
MINUTES OF MEETING
MARCH 4, 2009

[In these minutes: Alumni Association, TCF Bank Stadium]

[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 Wencl, chair, Nathan Pelzer, Kendre Turonie, Christiane Bartels, Jennifer Engler, Andy Howe, Curt Baker, Eric Brown, Silvia Canelon

REGRETS: Thomas Reynolds, Kim Roufs, Catherine Solheim, Olga Zakharenko

ABSENT: Thomas Bilder, Amelious Whyte, Megan Hayes, Hilary Ploeckelmann, Caroline Younts

OTHERS ATTENDING: Gabriele Schmiegel

GUESTS: Bruce Rader, Alumni Association; Lynn Holleran, Office of the President; Joel Maturi, Department of Intercollegiate Athletics, Phil Esten, Department of Intercollegiate Athletics – associate athletics director

I). Jeffrey Wencl called the meeting to order and welcomed all those present.

II). Jeffrey Wencl welcomed Bruce Rader, senior director of marketing and member, Alumni Association, to today's meeting. Mr. Rader thanked the committee for inviting him and asking him to provide an Alumni Association update.

Mr. Rader began by reporting that Margaret Carlson is the Alumni Association's CEO. Departments within the Alumni Association include Marketing and Membership, Communications, Outreach, and Finance. The Alumni Association was founded in 1904. Alumni associations across the country vary in terms of the direction in which they have evolved. The University's Alumni Association has stayed true over the years to its advocacy efforts, and its vision is to be the most influential body on campus for the purpose of serving its goal of making the University one of the top three public research universities in the world.

Mr. Rader went on to highlight the Alumni Association's 2009 goals. He noted that there exists a lot of confusion about what the Alumni Association is. Most people think the Alumni Association is the funding-raising body within the University. This, however, is not true. In reality, the University of Minnesota Foundation and the Minnesota Medical Foundation are the fund-raising entities for the University. The Alumni Association rather serves to provide an overarching University of Minnesota alumni relations

experience. From an advocacy perspective, the Alumni Association serves to rally alumni and friends of the University to contact their legislators on behalf of the University.

The Alumni Association is its own 501(c)(3), which is largely self-supporting, but yet interdependent with the University. The Alumni Association's executive committee is responsible for its day-to-day operations.

Beyond its advocacy and University promoter roles, the Alumni Association also provides benefits and services through membership, organizes events and programs, and provides communications. The benefits and services offered through the Alumni Association are with University of Minnesota related entities. Mr. Rader then shared examples of Alumni Association partnerships, and events.

Mr. Rader stated that Alumni Association membership means increasing alumni engagement in a way that is meaningful and establishing a lifelong relationship. To stay in touch with members, the Alumni Association conducts bi-monthly surveys. The Alumni Association's call to action is encouraging people to become a member and an ambassador for the University. As members promote the University, they are also promoting not only the value of their degree, but also current students and faculty. For more information about the Alumni Association, members were encouraged to visit their website at <http://www.minnesotalumni.org/s/1118/index.aspx>

At the conclusion of his presentation, Mr. Rader solicited questions and comments from members, which included:

- What percentage of graduating students become Alumni Association members, and how does this compare to peer institutions? Mr. Rader stated that the Alumni Association offers a free one-year membership to all graduating students. Typically 8% - 8½% of these people will renew their membership once their free subscription ends. Compared to other Big 10 institutions, the University is doing considerably better at retaining these numbers. Other Big 10 institutions report that, on average, 3½% of their students renew their memberships.
- In light of the challenging economic times, is membership decreasing? Mr. Rader acknowledged that times are difficult and that he has had conversations with colleagues at peer institutions who are reporting membership declines. The University, fortunately, has not seen the same type of decline, which Mr. Rader suspects may have to do with the fact that the University is located in a major metropolitan area. University of Minnesota alumni are unique in that 75% stay within a 2-hour drive of the Twin Cities metropolitan area.
- How does the Alumni Association stay connected with international students who have graduated? While international students are attending the University, the Alumni Association conducts a few events each year to connect with these students. The Alumni Association also has chapters in some foreign countries, e.g., China. There are also some very active members across the globe, e.g., Norway, Finland, England, and France.

- Does the Alumni Association publish an annual financial statement that indicates how it spent its money? While all of this information is publically available, noted Mr. Rader, the Alumni Association no longer publishes an annual report.
- What is the Alumni Association doing in terms of working with 1st year students to get them to start thinking about being members? The Alumni Association, stated Mr. Rader, works with Orientation and First Year Programs and the Parent Program to connect with incoming students. The Alumni Association also offers a discounted membership program for families, and a special student membership option.
- Does the Alumni Association have plans to expand its Mentor Program? Mr. Rader stated that the University has the largest mentor program in the country with over 2,500 students who participate every year. The Alumni Association would like to grow this program, which is very time intensive.

Mr. Wencil thanked Mr. Rader for his presentation.

III). Mr. Wencil introduced the next agenda item, a presentation on the new TCF Bank Stadium. Joel Maturi, director, Intercollegiate Athletics, stated that with the new stadium the University can expect a positive change in culture. The first game in the new stadium will take place on September 12th when the Gophers play the U.S. Air Force Academy. The new stadium has slightly over 50,000 seats, and at least 20% of these seats will be earmarked for the student body.

Of the 10,000 student seats, noted Mr. Esten, associate director – Intercollegiate Athletics, 8,000 tickets will be made available for current students, and 2,000 tickets will be made available for incoming students, e.g., freshmen, transfer students. Student leadership was consulted about the distribution process for student tickets, and this was their preferred method.

Mr. Maturi noted that the University must raise \$86 million towards the total cost of the stadium project, which has an estimated total cost of \$288 million. The student body is contributing \$13 million via a \$25 stadium fee. For doing this, students will be rewarded by way of low ticket prices, access to tickets, etc. President Bruininks made it clear from the onset that he did not want the stadium fundraising efforts to impact fundraising for other entities on campus. To date, \$81 million has been raised. The remaining \$5 million must be raised by August 2009.

The stadium, noted Mr. Maturi, is not only attractive, but a very functional facility that the University will be able to utilize on a daily basis. The stadium will also provide students with real advantages to enhance their university experience.

Mr. Maturi noted that he and Associate Vice President Laurie Scheich co-chair the Game Day Operations Committee. This committee, in turn, has given rise to several subcommittees that are looking at operational and tactical issues as it relates to the stadium. The goal of the Game Day Operations Committee is to think through and minimize any issues related to the stadium that may occur.

On August 22, 2009, there are plans to hold a “mock” game/scrimmage. This will be a time to see what works and what does not in terms of stadium operations. All ticket holders will be encouraged to attend this game.

Mr. Maturi also noted that the University will be selling parking in advance for as many season ticket holders as possible. At the same time season ticket holders choose their seats, they will be making their parking designation. The rationale for doing this is reduce traffic and confusion so that people will not be looking for parking, but will have a designated parking lot/ramp for all games.

Mr. Maturi solicited members’ questions and comments regarding the stadium. Lynn Holleran, Office of the President, reminded that committee that the University is still in the midst of the planning process for the new stadium, but great progress has been made. She added that aside from the 10,000 student seats, and the 3,000 seats that are held for visiting fans, the stadium is sold out. In addition, she noted that the Game Day Operations Committee and its subcommittees have gathered information from other universities for planning purposes. The concept of having people choose their parking ahead of time is one of the many logistical and operational ideas that was gleaned from this research.

Ms. Holleran stated that the University has made a decision to allow tailgating in surface parking lots. Tailgating will not be allowed in garages or ramps. The goal is to keep the tailgating areas safe and controlled.

Members’ questions and comments included:

- What is the University doing to reduce the environmental impact of having a stadium on campus? Mr. Esten stated that well before the University broke ground on the new stadium, it conducted an environmental impact study that looked at sustainability and the impact a stadium would have on the surrounding neighborhoods. The University wants the new stadium to be the most environmentally responsible major sports stadium in the country. To this end, the University is seeking LEED (Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design) certification for the stadium. From the stadium’s sophisticated storm water management system to the lights illuminating the field, the University is paying close attention to all aspects of how the stadium is constructed and how it will be run on game day. Facilities Management, added Ms. Holleran, has been thinking about giving people who park in the tailgating lots both a garbage bag and a recycling bag, which the University will collect.
- What is the likelihood that weather will impact attendance once the novelty of having a new stadium wears off? Mr. Maturi stated that in his opinion weather will not be the deciding factor for people when it comes to attending a game, but rather having a winning team will be critical. He added that the average temperature over the last 20 years for the 7 football games the Gophers play is 64 degrees.

- Will student seating be assigned or general admission? Mr. Esten stated that the University is anticipating having student seating be general admission. The University hopes that general admission seating for students will encourage students to show up early to get a better seat.
- Have there been any discussions about tying University programs and events to stadium attendance, e.g., mentorship day? Yes, stated Mr. Esten, some thought has been given to doing this. Homecoming will most likely be the most visible of these events when it comes to doing this type promotion. The University has hired a Homecoming Coordinator to market the event. He added that having Gopher football back on campus provides an opportunity for individual colleges to showcase what they are doing in terms of research, etc. Mr. Maturi noted that colleges and departments on campus have been informed about game dates, and the University encourages them to embrace the fact that 50,000 people will be coming to campus.
- What events are scheduled for homecoming? Ms. Holleran stated that a representative from the Office of the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost is working closely with the collegiate units about planning and ideas for homecoming. There will be a homecoming parade on Friday night. She added that there is a tentative schedule of homecoming events on the web.
- The stadium was built in such a way so that it can be expanded. What criteria will be used to determine when the stadium should be expanded? Mr. Maturi stated that expanding the stadium will come down to money. The University will need to make sure there is a commitment on the part of fans to support the team. The success of the football team will also play an important role when deciding to expand the stadium.
- Would the University let the Vikings move in for a short time (temporarily) when their lease at the Metrodome expires? Mr. Maturi stated that there would be many legislative matters that would need to be worked out if this were to happen. The University wants to be a good partner, and, as a result, would explore ways for doing the right thing if this scenario were to occur. Ms. Holleran stated that if this situation presented itself, a process for exploring the feasibility of temporarily allowing the Vikings to use the stadium would be put in motion, and, naturally an environmental review would need to be conducted.
- Can non-athletic events be scheduled in the stadium? If so, what is the process for doing so? Mr. Maturi stated that the Office of Intercollegiate Athletics will control the facility. There are plans to hire a marketing and service coordinator who will manage the facility. This person would be responsible for handling such requests noted Mr. Esten.
- What is the process for getting a hold of some of the group tickets that will be set aside for each game? Ms. Holleran stated that no final decisions have been made yet, but, in the interim, Mr. Esten will act as the point person for those tickets.

Mr. Wencil thanked Mr. Maturi, Ms. Holleran, and Mr. Esten for their presentation.

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

Renee Dempsey
University Senate