

(1996-97) UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA (No. 4)
STUDENT SENATE MINUTES

MAY 15, 1997

The fourth meeting of the Student Senate for 1996-97 was convened in 25 Law Building, Minneapolis campus, on Thursday, May 15, 1997, at 11:30 a.m. Coordinate campuses were linked by telephone. Checking or signing the roll as present were 39 voting student members. Mr. Don Ness, Student Senate Chair, presided.

I. CAMPUS ASSEMBLY REPORTS

The Morris campus representative Heather Aagesen reported that the 1997-98 Student Body President will be Eric Bass and the student senators will be herself, Deanne Nordberg, and Justin Murphy. This year, she said students were involved with the implementation of the \$35.00 technology fee, the search for a new chancellor, and the change to semesters. Next year students will be focusing on lobbying for science facilities.

Lance Reimeier, UMC Student Body President, reported on the student lobby trip that took place since last Senate meeting and announced the 1997-98 UMC who are Mark Erickson, president, and Kyle Cochrane, vice president.

MSA representative Corey Donovan reported that MSA has been discussing advising reform, study space and professor evaluations. The Legislative Affairs Committee has looked into reauthorization of the Higher Education Act in coordination with the Student Legislative Coalition (SLC). Other topics of discussion include starting a varsity soccer team and renovation of Coffman Union. Elections have recently been completed and the new MSA president is Jigar Madia and the vice president is Bridgette Murphy.

GAPSA representative Tom Foster said that officer elections will be held the following week. GAPSA has recently revised its Web site and is currently dealing with its taxes. He then invited senators to attend GAPSA's spring social on May 19, at 4 p.m. on the Coffman Terrace.

Don Ness, Student Senate Chair, provided the UMD report. He announced that Abby Flottesch had been elected the new president. A unique situation has occurred at Duluth in regard to professor evaluations. Since the faculty are unionized, students must work on this matter through the faculty union rather than through campus governance.

II. STUDENT LEGISLATIVE COALITION REPORT

Corey Erts, Chair of the Student Legislative Coalition (SLC), reviewed the SLC actions for the year. During the fall there was a significant staff turnover, a new administrative assistant was hired, and the chief lobbyist resigned. The SLC also participated with the community colleges, state colleges, and private universities in a massive student voter registration drive in which over 10,000 students registered to vote. The SLC also participated in a U.S. Senate debate with Dean Barkley and Senator Wellstone. Intern selections were also held in the fall for the upcoming

legislative session. The legislative agenda was formulated during winter quarter. A Task Force Committee on Regent Selection was established and it interviewed all but one of the regent candidates. Some specific recommendations came from the Task Force and were passed on to the Legislature. Campus lobby days were also held at the Capitol. During spring quarter, visits were initiated with U.S. congressmen. The final budget figures for the University were approved by the House and are awaiting final approval by the Governor. Part the budget will hopefully be used to increase faculty and staff salaries as well as a women's hockey facility. Finally, she reported that the SLC is establishing a restructuring committee to address some of the inefficiencies within the organization to make it more student friendly.

III. ELECTION OF ACTING CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR OF THE STUDENT SENATE FOR 1997-98

Action

The Student Senate voted not to allow interim officers for the summer. Elections for permanent officers will be held at the first Student Senate meeting in the fall and the Student Senate Consultative Committee will act on behalf of the Student Senate until that time.

IV. STUDENT TASK FORCE ON PROFESSOR EVALUATIONS MISSION STATEMENT

Action

MOTION:

To approve the following Mission Statement on Professor Evaluations:

Mission Statement on Professor Evaluations

The University of Minnesota is committed to providing service, user friendliness, and a quality education to its students. The ability of students to access summary data of quarterly student evaluations will assist in the course registration process and will provide a great service to students. The evaluations will assist students in choosing courses with the highest quality professors and help students match the teaching styles of professors with their learning style. The ability of all students to access summative professor evaluations will occur by making the evaluations available in written and secured World Wide Web format. The expectation of internal mechanisms is to exclude teaching assistants as defined by job classifications.

DISCUSSION:

Mr. Don Ness introduced the Mission Statement noting that it had already been approved by the Student Assemblies at Duluth and Morris.

With little discussion, the Mission Statement was unanimously approved.

APPROVED

V. RESOLUTION ON STUDENT STUDY SPACE
Discussion

Resolution on Student Study Space

WHEREAS, student study space on campus is of vital concern to the academic environment at the University of Minnesota, and

WHEREAS, in the administration there is no central advocate for student study space and no one person is assigned responsibility for study space, and

WHEREAS, student study space faces deterioration or conversion every year, with little or no student input, and

WHEREAS, there is not a set mandate for a certain percentage of student study space in new or renovated University buildings, and

WHEREAS, student study space in the residence halls is unavailable for use due to overcrowding, and

WHEREAS, student study space has been made increasingly unavailable in food service operation areas, and

WHEREAS, there exists a need for incentives for departmental student study space, and

WHEREAS, increased personal computer use at the University will require an increase in both internet and ethernet jacks across campus,

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the University Senate advises the Administration to encourage ongoing examination of student study space on campus by explicitly identifying departments and/or individuals whose role it shall be to monitor the quantity, quality, ease of access and safety of student study space on campus in consultation with student representative bodies, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the University Senate advises that for each renovation of existing buildings and construction of new buildings, a certain percentage of space -- to be determined in consultation with the Senate Committee on Student Affairs and other appropriate student representative bodies -- should be dedicated for student study areas, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT Food Services be encouraged to make space available in food service operation areas as student study space during non-peak hours, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the University Senate advises the Administration to encourage departments and other units to preserve and/or add study space, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the University Senate advises that student study space on campus include ethernet access for personal computers in the near future.

DISCUSSION:

Jesse Berglund, Vice Chair of the Student Senate Consultative Committee, presented the Resolution which originated in the Student Affairs Committee and deals with the preservation of student study space on campus. Each campus is affected by this issue, he said, and the resolution recommends, among other things, that the administration identify someone to monitor student study space on campus and to consult with appropriate student groups on this issue.

VI. STUDENT SENATE CHAIR REPORT

Mr. Don Ness reflected on the more active role that the Student Senate and the Student Senate Consultative Committee have taken this year in regard to the presidential search and professor evaluations. Despite these accomplishments, he expressed some disappointment with his own performance and student governance in general. There are four key points he believes the Student Senate must improve upon to become an effective influential body. The first is to improve on the involvement of all appropriate campuses when an issue affects more than one campus. The second is that the Student Senate should serve as the student voice on University-wide student issues and no single campus assembly can or should speak for students as a whole. Third, communication among the campuses needs to be improved. Lastly, the coordinate campuses must have a stronger role in the Senate. In closing, Mr. Ness thanked students for their support and participation during the year.

VII. OLD BUSINESS

NONE

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

NONE

IX. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 12:20 p.m.

Martha Kvanbeck
Clerk of the Student Senate