

**2001-02 UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA**

**FEBRUARY 21, 2002**

**STUDENT SENATE MINUTES: No. 3**

The third meeting of the Student Senate for 2001-02 was convened in 25 Mondale Hall, Minneapolis campus, on Thursday, February 21, 2002, at 11:38 a.m. Coordinate campuses were linked by telephone. Checking or signing the roll as present were 35 voting student members and 1 nonmember. Chair Chris Frazier presided.

**1. MINUTES FOR DECEMBER 6, 2001**

**Action**

**MOTION:**

To approve the Student Senate minutes, which are available on the Web at the following URL. A simple majority is required for approval.

[http://www1.umn.edu/usenate/student\\_senate/011206stu.html](http://www1.umn.edu/usenate/student_senate/011206stu.html)

**CAROL WELLS, CLERK  
UNIVERSITY SENATE/TWIN CITIES CAMPUS ASSEMBLY**

**DISCUSSION:**

With no discussion, a vote was taken and the motion was approved.

**APPROVED**

**2. STUDENT SENATE CHAIR REPORT**

Chris Frazier, Chair of the Student Senate, noted that today's agenda would be reordered to accommodate guest speakers at the meeting. She then recognized new student senators Elizabeth Fontaine, Joel Tilleson, John Schneider, Andres Torres, Anthony Heryla, and Chris Kolasinski. She noted that senators should represent all students on all campuses and seek a broad student view for input into issues before the Student Senate. As the chair, she will continue to keep everyone informed via e-mail to disseminate information.

She said that in January, she and Shawn Lavelle, Student Senate Vice Chair, met with Provost Carl at the Rochester campus to discuss student governance at Rochester. Provost Carl explained that Rochester students are registered through the Twin Cities campus this year, and also through Duluth next year because of a new program being offered in Rochester. There are 362 current students at Rochester this year, 85% of which are graduate students and 15% are undergraduate students. She has informed MSA and GAPSA of these students so that they can be represented within both assemblies.

In the past two months, she has started a group called the University Student Leaders Forum (USLF), co-chaired by herself and Shawn Lavelle, and comprised of the student body presidents from each campus. The USLF provides an opportunity for the student body presidents to discuss issues, similarities, what works in each assembly, and increase communication between the organizations.

Another issue is the state budget shortfall and how it will affect the University. Chris Frazier said that she was asked to testify about MnLink and MnText systems which link state libraries and provide electronic journals. The Governor proposed a substantial cut in funds which would greatly affect the efficiency of the system and hurt faculty and graduate student research. The outcome, thus far, is that MnLink has only been cut \$822,000 and MnText will not be cut at all.

Next, Chris Frazier has created four special committees on the topics of financial aid advising, curricular civic engagement, full-time policy, and academic advising. Each committee will have a representative from each campus. The four committees were approved by the Student Senate Consultative Committee in January. Each committee will issue a report later this spring that will be disseminated to the committees, senators, and administrators.

Lastly, Chris Frazier said that she attends meetings of the Student Advisory Council (SAC), a committee from the Minnesota Higher Education Services Office (HESO). SAC focuses on financial aid and grants. A change will take place next year for grants. Instead of an average being calculated for each institution, HESO will individually calculate grants for each applicant.

### **3. STUDENT SENATE VICE CHAIR REPORT**

Shawn Lavelle, Vice Chair of the Student Senate, said that he looked at Student Senate attendance from the past years. He noticed that attendance is low at the beginning of the year, increases when new members are added, and then decreases again as the end of the year approaches. He reminded senators that it is imperative for them to attend all meetings since the Senate conducts much of its business in the spring, and the student voice needs to be heard at these meetings.

He then thanked all the senators who attend the Student Legislative Coalition's (SLC) Lobby Day. There was a lower turnout than in past years, but it was still an effective day for the University. He noted that SLC does more than Lobby Day, although that is the most public event. Tomorrow, several members of SLC will testify before the House Higher Education Finance Committee on behalf of University students.

One problem that exists is funding. In today's Minnesota Daily, it was reported that the Student Service Fees Committee recommended not funding SLC, even though funding is now provided through a refuseable/refundable fee so that no student has to pay it. SLC is the only lobbying organization for the students which can lobby at the state, and support for this organization is needed.

Lastly, Shawn Lavelle noted that he is chairing a committee on the full-time policy and will have a report for the Student Senate by April.

#### **4. STUDENT SENATE CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE CHAIR REPORT**

Khaled Dajani, Chair of the Student Senate Consultative Committee (SSCC), said that SSCC has been working on several issues this year. One issue it discussed was reciprocity, although there is not much that the committee can do. SLC will lobby at the legislature to retain reciprocity to find a balance between not forcing Minnesota students to pay more and losing Wisconsin students.

The Senate Consultative Committee (SCC) recently met to vote on exemptions to the Secrecy in Research Policy on behalf of the University Senate.

SSCC has been discussing the proposed withdrawal policy from the Educational Policy Committee (SCEP). The proposed policy would limit the number of withdrawals that a student could take during their academic career to three and would not let students withdraw after the third week of classes without signatures from their advisor and the professor. Each assembly has been asked to write a resolution on this issue for SCEP to review. Any proposal would be brought to the University Senate in March.

Khaled Dajani stated that Eric Kruse has left the University and a search is being conducted for a new Vice President for University Services. If anyone is interested, please submit a resume to SSCC, which will forward a candidate next week.

He noted that Anthony Heryla was recently elected as a new SSCC member from the Twin Cities.

Lastly, SSCC has explored tuition banding, which is being discussed by the Finance and Planning Committee (SCFP), in concert with the full-time policy. The proposal would increase per credit tuition costs for one to twelve credits, but would have a flat tuition price starting at 13 credits to provide an incentive to take more credits. The intent is to improve graduation rates. Many schools currently have flat tuition in place.

Chris Frazier noted that SCEP has created a motion to let each campus determine its own full-time policy.

#### **5. CAMPUS REPORTS**

**Crookston** – Matt McBlair reported that last year Crookston started a recycling program on campus. The county administrator recently notified Crookston that it cut its garbage waste disposal fee by 20% due to recycling.

**Duluth** – Nick Cecconi said that UMDSA is bringing its concerns on the withdrawal policy to the SSCC. Other campus issues include CLA technology fees and restructuring of the graphic design department. A highlight for the campus is that six female hockey players are in Salt Lake

City for the Olympics.

**Morris** – Reid LeBeau said that MCSA met Monday night to discuss a resolution stating that the full-time and withdrawal policies would best be dealt with at the campus level. The student fees process has also started and MCSA has not been given its full travel expense for Senate. MCSA will need to look for other ways to finance Senate travel or will need to conduct future Senate business by telephone.

**Graduate and Professional Student Association** – Chris Frazier noted that Phil Cole has resigned as GAPSAs president. Patrick Pederson was elected as the new president and Gretchen Haas was elected to fill Patrick’s previous position as Vice President. GAPSAs is working through the fees process, hoping to reverse a cut to the graduate and professional students social event fund.

**Minnesota Student Association** – Josh LaBau said that MSA issued a resolution on a registration queue system to be implemented next year which would allow students to register based on their total credits completed. Two resolutions were also passed denouncing the withdrawal policy and an election took place for a new SSCC member. Lastly, MSA week was a successful event this year.

**Council of Graduate Students** – Elizabeth Fontaine reported that COGS has established four working committees on employment and benefits, health care, housing, and academics. COGS is also conducting a survey from a sampling of graduate students to receive student satisfaction on issues such as pay, rent, food, and health care.

## **6. STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES TO THE REGENTS REPORT**

Venora Hung, Chair of the Student Representatives to the Regents, provided background on the representatives. She said that there are seven Student Representatives to the Regents, with one from each coordinate campus, two from MSA, one from GAPSAs, and one from the St. Paul Board of Colleges. Each representative is responsible for attending the monthly Regents meetings and sitting on one of the Regents committees. As chair, Venora Hung is responsible for organizing what meetings the student representatives attend and presenting a student comment to an agenda item at the Friday meetings.

In the past, the Student Representatives to the Regents have prepared comments on tuition, the capital budget request, and graduate and undergraduate advising. The most recent statement was on pre-design impact. The Representatives felt that with the turn-over for student leaders, it would be important for the administration to document a historical perspective on building plans for new student leaders to reduce repetitive issues and ideas.

Venora Hung also said that the Student Representatives to the Regents have a web site which contains the final report to the Regents from last April and the semi-annual report from December. The issues contained within the December report include campus safety, tuition, advising, affordable housing, diversity, and graduation and retention rates. She asked students to provide the representatives with input on any of these issues, or any other issues that students

have at each campus. Lastly, she invited students to attend the next Regents meetings on March 7 and 8.

## **7. DISCUSSION WITH STUDENT REGENT LAKEESHA RANSOM**

Regent Lakeesha Ransom explained that she is one of the 12 members on the Board of Regents. Last year, there were five open seats. She was appointed by the Governor over the summer to fill the one Regent position that must be filled by a student who is currently enrolled at the time of appointment. Other seats on the Board are either at-large for the state or by congressional district, but do not require that the person applying be a student.

She noted that some people confuse her position with the Student Representatives to the Regents. Unlike the representatives, she represents the interests of the state at-large, not just students. She has a voting position within the Board and serves on ad hoc committees on athletics and outreach.

The purpose of the Regents is to be the official governing body of the University. While the administration handles most of the day-to-day details, the Regents focus on the strategic direction for the University. An example of this is the open forums that the Regents sponsored to get community input on innovative solutions to the athletics issues.

To become a Regent, she completed a formal application and then, when selected as a semi-finalist, interviewed with a committee of 30 members. 13 people, including herself, were then forwarded to the legislative phase, during which time candidates lobby for themselves in front of the legislature. The final step is usually legislative approval, but this last year the five seats were filled by an appointment from the Governor. Typically, the term is for six years, but because of the Governor's appointment, the legislature could overturn the decision and appoint other people during this session.

Lakeesha Ransom stated that upcoming issues for the Board include athletics in relation to University resources and the telescope project at Mount Graham. Many times the Regents are asked to make choices that are not based on right and wrong, but to look at which choice will best further the University's mission. If students have input on these issues, or anything else before the Board, they can write or call the Regents directly, but the best method is to direct concerns to the Student Representatives to the Regents.

Q: What questions did the legislature ask you and what were your responses?

A: The legislature asked why she wanted to be a Regent. Her response was that she was qualified for the position. She completed her undergraduate degree at Southwest State University and has worked for the Higher Education Services Office. She is now a graduate student on the Twin Cities campus. These three experiences have given her multiple perspectives to connect with the various constituencies in the state. Outside the University, she has worked for the United Nations in Vienna with a policy-making body.

Q: What is the Regents' vision for the University for the next 20 years?

A: One key issue is to re-conceptualize what higher education means. Another is the integration of technology into the overall mission of the University to provide education to the entire state, while maintaining processes that currently work to deliver education. The Regents are committed to maintaining a high quality, affordable education for the University. This concept is increasingly challenging given the current financial situation. The Regents need to find a balance between an affordable education and attracting and retaining high quality faculty through high salaries.

Q: How much influence does faculty and student input have on Regental decisions?

A: It is essential that students contact the Regents and the legislature to voice their opinions. Regarding finances, the University can only work with what it receives from the legislature. Unless students hold their legislators accountable and voice their concerns, student issues may not have the same priority at the state. If students only become involved once the University receives its allocation, students have already missed an important opportunity to be heard. Students need to be involved in the entire process.

Q: Have the Regents discussed ways to retain top Minnesota high school graduates?

A: For the University, it is important to attract the best students, which in turns benefits the state as a whole.

Q: What is the correct balance between high admissions standards and maintaining accessibility to the University?

A: The Regents have had discussions on finding equilibrium between high standards and maintaining access to the public at large. The University cannot model many other institutions because they are not public, land-grant institutions. A delicate balance needs to be reached.

Q: During the budget cuts last year, the Governor mentioned that the University is not on-par with the University of Wisconsin system. What has the University done in the past year to address this concern and raise its rankings?

A: College rankings are a delicate issue since many times they do not compare similar institutions, which can skew the findings. In a recent University of Florida study, the University ranked within the top two public institutions in the country.

Q: The state appears to have a two tier system with the University and MnSCU. Have the Regents looked at duplication of services between the two systems?

A: The Regents are working with the MnSCU Board of Trustees on duplication of and complimenting services at each institution.

Q: Do you have a reaction to the state discussing a change in the reciprocity system? Can the Regents affect the reciprocity decision?

A: There are conflicting opinions on this subject. From the onset, it appears unjust that Minnesota students pay more than Wisconsin students to attend the University, but she needs to do more research in this area. As for the Regents, they will set policies and tuition based on the outcome from the legislature.

A senator commented that many Wisconsin students do not realize that they pay less than Minnesota students and would likely be in favor of paying the same tuition rate, but would recommend that reciprocity not be ended since it would greatly affect students who live close to the border.

In closing, Lakeesha Ransom said that she enjoyed the opportunity to talk with the Student Senate and reminded students to use their voice to influence issues that affect students and the University.

## **8. OLD BUSINESS**

**NONE**

## **9. NEW BUSINESS**

Chris Frazier provided an opportunity for senators to discuss the proposed policies on withdrawals, tuition banding, and the 13-credit minimum.

Crookston commented that CSA is supportive of requiring signatures prior to withdrawing from a class, but did not support the limit on the total number of withdrawals. Regarding the full-time policy, CSA supports allowing each campus to make its own policy.

Q: What is the rationale behind the withdrawal policy?

A: The rationale has two parts. First, it would force students to interact more with their advisors and instructors. Secondly, limiting the total number of withdrawals would improve graduation rates and increase communication between students and their advisors. To compliment this proposal, the Educational Policy Committee (SCEP) has approved a policy to have faculty issue mid-term alerts in 1XXX-level classes during the sixth week to students who are receiving a D, F, or N grade.

Morris noted that the campus currently only allows students to have one withdrawal on their transcript, so the campus is in favor of allowing any decision on withdrawals to be made at the campus level.

A senator, who serves on the Social Concerns Committee, said that the committee is looking into the University investing in a telescope project at Mount Graham in Arizona. The committee will be issuing a position statement and would appreciate any student input on this subject.

One senator noted that if the University does not join the project, there are other institutions waiting to take the University's place, so it serves no purpose to not participate.

Another senator said that professors are already working with the telescope and their work should not be disrupted.

A senator said that the Mount Graham facility has plans to expand, which the University would be party to if it continues its connection with the telescope.

Q: What stake does the University have in the project?

A: The University has a 5% interest in the project.

Q: What are some of the long-term benefits and downfalls to joining this project?

A: Benefits of the project are that Mount Graham is a perfect site for astronomy research and the University's portion has been covered by a donation. Downfalls include Native American protests because the site is on their holy land and the environmental impact on the red squirrel. It is an ethical question for the University since the initial facility already exists. Another consideration is that there are plans for more building on the site, which the University's fee would partially fund.

Q: Did the University know the history of the land usage before it joined the project?

A: There are conflicting reports. The Astronomy Department thought that the construction was approved by the Native Americans, but have now discovered that only some tribes approved the construction.

A senator noted that some Native American students at the University are leaving because of this issue.

Q: What is the environmental impact on the red squirrel?

A: There is a small population of red squirrels remaining in this area, and they live on Mount Graham. Some environmentalists believe that this construction will infringe on the red squirrels' habitat, while others counter that the red squirrels in question do not live on the part of Mount Graham under construction and that the population decline is part of natural fluctuations.

Q: What is the decision before the University?

A: The University can decide to withdraw from the project since no payment has been made, but there is a question whether the donation will be withdrawn as well.

A senator then commented that there are two bills before the legislature regarding stadium funding. The Gopher/Viking bill was dismissed in committee but the plan is to bring it to the Senate floor for discussion. \$150 million would be provided by the NFL and \$350 million would

need to be provided by the state or the University. This cost does not include parking ramps, the expense for which would be covered by the University. The proposed site for the stadium would be the commuter parking lots on Huron Street. Concerned students should write to their legislators.

A senator then stated that a new housing complex is being built next to campus and is being advertised as student housing, although the University has no investment in the project. The complex includes many amenities which makes the monthly rent far outside the budget of college students.

## **10. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 1:12 p.m.

**Rebecca Hippert**  
**Abstractor**