

2003-04 UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

MARCH 25, 2004

STUDENT SENATE MINUTES: No. 5

The fifth meeting of the Student Senate for 2003-04 was convened in the President's Room of Coffman Union, Minneapolis campus, on Thursday, March 25, 2004, at 11:30 a.m. Coordinate campuses were linked by telephone. Checking or signing the roll as present were 37 voting student members and one non-member. Chair Dan Weiske presided.

1. DISCUSSION WITH PRESIDENT BRUININKS

President Bruininks thanked the Student Senate for the opportunity to speak with them today. He said that he is looking forward to visiting both the Duluth and Morris campuses within the next 30-45 days. He will be in Morris for their Jazz Festival, and would like to see an annual event with participation from Duluth and the Twin Cities, along with Morris.

He said that he appreciates the hard work and dedication from student government this year, and applauded the high level of engagement from the students. Work on the University's capital request is taking place now to provide funding for renewal of buildings, technology, safety, and reduction of rental and utility costs. This request places most emphasis on renewal of buildings and only asks for a modest amount for new building projects. The Governor's recommendation was less than the University hoped for, but he would likely accommodate a more generous appropriation if the legislature recommends it.

President Bruininks said that he has been asked why the University did not request funds to be able to lower tuition instead of funding for buildings. His answer is that tuition funding cannot be requested during capital request years, and any funding received must be used for the project for which it was designated. He urged students to contact their legislators since their voices do matter.

The next budget proposal will be presented to the Regents in May, and it does include another double-digit tuition hike for students. President Bruininks continues to speak publicly about the rising cost of tuition on today's students and that raising funds for students is the highest priority for the University.

In August 2002, he submitted the lowest budget request in 10 years to the state, which included a 4.5 percent tuition increase for two years. When the University received its cut, a balanced approach was taken that included cutting budgets, freezing salaries, and increasing tuition.

In the next year, the University must be committed to keeping higher education accessible and affordable. One plan for next year is to devote over \$3 million of University dollars to scholarships and financial aid. An aggressive private fundraising campaign has also been launched, but this will likely benefit future generations of students more than students enrolled today. Within in the last few months, \$15 million has been raised, largely by offering matching gifts to donors. The hope is to get more people interested in giving, but also to educate people on

the rising cost of higher education.

President Bruininks stated that he has also been asked about alternatives to increasing tuition. There were alternatives, but they were not the right fix for the University. Because of the funding cut that the University received, 12-15 percent of the workforce would have needed to be eliminated. If the budget was balanced just by tuition, there would have been a 55 percent increase in a two-year period.

The University imposed a wage and salary freeze, asked employees to pay more for health benefits, cut budgets while protecting the investment to students, and reduced the workforce by 500-600 employees. He said that students need to get involved in discussions so that other people do not make decisions that have such an impact on the University. This will not be a first-rate institution if higher education is made a private benefit based on a student's ability to pay.

President Bruininks then addressed the proposed Twin Cities stadium, noting that it is the right project to pursue. Before the lease expires at the Metrodome, stadiums for professional teams will be built. The University has the worst revenue situation of any collegiate team in the Big Ten and it puts all other athletic programs at risk. The football program is also far removed from campus at its current location. Kids and families should be coming to campus for football games, since most contact with the general population occurs through athletic events, and they then learn about the work of the University.

An on-campus football stadium is more than a place to play. It is also a center for the community for large gatherings, the marching band, recreational sports, academic events, and conferences. The University cannot coexist with professional sports teams, but a stadium will not be built if it affects the academic or general athletic budgets. A decision will be made within 12 months, after talking to students about plans and the public about private donations.

Dan Weiske said that an all student email was sent requesting questions and topics for discussion. A few of the themes have already been addressed, but the Wisconsin reciprocity agreement, expansion at Duluth, and the bus strike were also mentioned by many students.

President Bruininks said that he sent a letter to the state of Minnesota to review the Wisconsin reciprocity agreement. Currently, a Wisconsin student attending the University pays \$1500 less per year. The agreement was originally set up to equalize tax revenues. However, today the University bares the brunt of these costs, without receiving any compensation. If a new agreement is negotiated, Wisconsin student would simply pay the in-state tuition rate. The approach would be phased-in for new students, increasing 25 percent over four years. The impact would not be much to a single student, but it would generate an additional \$5 million annually for the University.

He then responded to the Duluth expansion question, noting that the University is fighting for a recreational sport facility expansion funded in the capital request due to a 25-28 percent increase in enrollment over the last five years. The Duluth students are willing to fund one-third of the cost so the University will fight for this project.

He then stated that the bus strike is a problem that does not have a simple answer. Students have been given refunds and reduced parking costs. He is hoping for a settlement since the University and the region need a strong public transportation system for its students and employees.

Q: What is the University's vision for education in the future?

A: Some parts of the vision have been described in depth during the inaugural address and this year's State of the University Address. The short answer is that the University campuses need to be the gold standard for higher education in the state in terms of education, research, and connection to the general public. The theme for his administration is Advancing Knowledge: A Partner for the Public Good. The University needs to remain focused on public issues and connect to societal needs.

For academic investments, areas that are already strong need to remain at that level. There are also eight interdisciplinary academic priorities: renewable energy and the environment, healthy foods/healthy lives, brain vitality throughout the lifespan, translational research and human health, investment in arts and humanities, the future of children in society, and law, ethics, and public policy in the environment and the life sciences.

Students, however, need to remain the top priority by keeping higher education accessible and affordable. Students also have to be able to make progress towards graduation and leave committed to the University and satisfied with their experiences. More discussions need to take place with students about the long-term vision and investment strategy and how to remain committed to its public purpose.

Q: Is there any plan for doctoral and masters students at the coordinate campuses to help with research?

A: Each campus needs to pursue its mission and develop research in these areas. Duluth is now a growing presence in this area. While it is not in the best interest of the coordinate campuses to add graduate programs, more work can be done to build academic partnerships with other campuses, as well as internships with state institutions.

Q: How much more can tuition increase? At what point does the University look at potential cuts in faculty and staff positions to maintain its affordability?

A: The University has a service and productivity initiative to better use resources, be more efficient, and offer better service. Since August 2002, millions have been saved just by how the University buys products. These budgets will remove 650 FTEs within the next two years, but by losing institutional memory and human resource capacity. Fiscal stewardship is a priority and it cannot afford to wait two or three years for implementation. Over time, 15 percent of the University's current operating budget can be reallocated for other purposes, such as tuition increases. The University cannot just have its hand out, but must be responsible managers at the same time.

2. MINUTES FOR FEBRUARY 26, 2004

Action

MOTION:

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

<http://www1.umn.edu/usenate/ssen/040226stu.html>

**STUART GOLDSTEIN, CLERK
UNIVERSITY SENATE/
TWIN CITIES CAMPUS ASSEMBLY**

DISCUSSION:

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

APPROVED

3. STUDENT SENATE/ STUDENT SENATE CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE CHAIR REPORT

Dan Weiske, Student Senate Chair, said that at the next Student Senate Consultative Committee (SSCC) meeting, assessment of advising will be discussed. He reminded senators to file and run for a Senate seat for next year. If anyone will be in the Senate for 2004-05, they can talk to him about the Chair position, which will be elected at the April Student Senate meeting. Additionally, the Student Affairs Committee Chair should be named within the next few weeks..

4. ALCOHOL TASK FORCE REPORT

Charles Stech said that the task force has finished for this year and a final report will be supplied at the next meeting.

5. ASSEMBLY/ASSOCIATION UPDATES

Crookston – Kyle Rollness reported that convocation was held yesterday and the campus assembly meets on Friday. At this meeting, smoke-free residence halls will be considered. CSA elections are starting and snow is starting to melt.

Duluth – Charles Stech said that CLA will be initiating a \$1000 required laptop for freshmen next year which UMDSA is trying to fight. The campus has also been lobbying for its buildings.

Morris – Sara Kloek stated that MCSA is proposing a student emergency fund, which will be

voted on within the next few weeks. The campus assembly meets next week and will be voting on a campus mascot policy that would not allow regular season games to be scheduled against other institutions with derogatory mascot names. Off-campus parking permits are being discussed with the city. Elections will be held next week.

Graduate and Professional Student Association – Jeremy Steil stated that GAPSA will be holding elections for next year’s executive positions. The Council of Graduate Students will also be discussing Duluth representation, although there has been a mixed response. A resolution has also been proposed on the student service fees process calling for more graduate student representation on the committee that decides GAPSA’s fees.

Minnesota Student Association – Scott LeBlanc said that MSA just held a UDS forum and is working on a memorial in Van Cleve Park to the students who died house fire this year. Residence hall security issues are also being discussed.

6. STUDENT HOUSING Discussion and Action

MOTION:

To approve the following resolution:

Housing Inquiry

Whereas as a primary provider of housing for its students, the University of Minnesota should be concerned with meeting the housing needs of all its students, and

Whereas the Senate Committee on Student Affairs has been investigating on-campus housing at the University of Minnesota, and

Whereas the results of said investigation suggest that current on-campus University housing and near-campus private housing do not adequately provide for the housing needs of the University’s diverse population, and

Whereas a principal cause of this problem is the lack of alternative housing options provided by the University of Minnesota or in the surrounding community; therefore, be it

Resolved that the Senate Committee on Student Affairs initiate an inquiry into the feasibility of alternative models of University-facilitated housing, and be it further

Resolved that this inquiry will include, but not limit itself to, the needs of graduate students and married students at all campuses, and be it further

Resolved that this inquiry will include, but not limit itself to, the investigation of co-op partnerships and private partnerships, and be it further

Resolved that the Senate Committee on Student Affairs conduct this inquiry in consultation with

Housing and Residence Life, and be it further

Resolved that the Senate Committee on Student Affairs will report the findings of this inquiry to the Student Senate by the final meeting of the Student Senate during the Spring 2005 academic term.

Approved by Senate Committee on Student Affairs March 24, 2004

DISCUSSION:

Adam VanWagner, Chair of the Student Affairs Committee, stated that this committee has been looking at the housing issue this year. A questionnaire was sent to each campus housing director, and then a discussion was held with the Twin Cities Housing Director. The committee feels that the issues needs more investigation, especially for alternative housing such as coops and married student housing.

Q: What do coops do on campus?

A: There are two Twin Cities coops that provide inexpensive housing close to campus for married and single family students. There is currently a waiting list of almost 750 students for the coops.

Q: Does the resolution just ask for University-owned housing to be discussed?

A: No. The resolution calls for the investigation of private and public partnerships, since University-owned housing is safe but not always affordable. The resolution is not meant to limit what is discussed.

Q: Is there a University-wide housing initiative?

A: No, since there is a separate office and director on each campus to deal with individual needs.

A senator made a friendly motion to add “international students, transgender students, and students with children” after married students in the second “resolved” clause.

Adam VanWagner agreed to consider international students and students with children as a friendly amendment, but did not want to include transgender students since it is a limiting term. He noted that the resolution already states, “will include, but not limit itself to” which would cover transgender students.

The senator agreed to amend his resolution to remove transgender students.

A senator then said that Duluth is developing a comprehensive housing plan, and since the administration does not participate, students have been asked for input by the city.

APPROVED

7. SENATOR OBLIGATIONS TO COMMITTEES AND STUDENT ASSEMBLIES

Discussion

Dan Weiske said that the issue of senator obligations to committees and student assemblies was raised by the Student Senate Consultative Committee (SSCC). Since the heart of Senate work takes place in the committees, and most senators are not committee members, there was a discussion about strengthening the communication link between these groups and requiring committee service. SSCC also discussed offering senators the option to serve either on a campus assembly or a Senate committee. The committee would like senators' opinions on this topic.

A senator said that his campus is also discussing this topic and the large time commitment that it takes to be part of a campus assembly. He believes that senators should only serve the Senate and not the campus assembly.

Another senator noted that senators are elected by college on the Twin Cities campus, which creates one reporting link. These same students also need to report to the Senate and the campus assembly. Committee service is therefore not a priority, however, it seems logical for the students who are voting to approve policies to be the same ones at the initial discussions. The question is where a senator's time will be spent.

A senator then commented that senators are required to serve on MCSA, but this is not always enforced. These students also serve on campus assembly committees, so there should not be a problem with requiring every senator to serve on at least one Senate committee.

Another senator stated that senators should be encouraged to serve on a committee, but it should not be mandated. An added benefit might be for Faculty Senate members to recognize students from committee service. He noted that committee service allows students to work with faculty and administrators.

A senator stated that senators should be given priority when applying for committee positions that they are interested in.

A senator then proposed that all senators be reserved a spot on Senate committees, but that service is not mandatory. If senators are required to serve on a committee, it could decrease attendance and lead to more uninterested members who only attend because of filling an obligation.

A senator then said that it is important to require senators to serve on committees to decrease the number of students who run for the Senate to join a campus assembly. If senators are not required to do anything more than attend six meetings per year, then what problems is the Senate addressing?

A senator noted that if senators are not part of the campus assemblies, then the election process might need to change, which might destroy the connection between the two bodies.

A senator stated that the senators from Crookston are the CSA president and vice president, so requiring extra committee service would be a hindrance to students running for these positions.

Another senator said that proxies for the campus assemblies might alleviate some problems with fulfilling all obligations.

Dan Weiske then asked for a straw vote if SSCC should continue to explore this issue. The vote was majority in favor of further discussion.

8. OLD BUSINESS

NONE

9. NEW BUSINESS

A senator stated that GAPSA is discussing meeting with the Student Affairs Committee Fees Subcommittee, as well as administrators, to discuss the process.

Q: What is the actual issue with the process this year?

A: There have been questions raised about the integrity of the process and the students groups being treated unfairly depending on their political beliefs.

Adam VanWagner, Chair of the Subcommittee, said that there is a discussion to have the subcommittee be aware of itself earlier in the year. Any resolutions or issues can be forwarded to him, but public hearings will not be held and the subcommittee does not go looking for issues. He also noted that the subcommittee only deals with process issues, not performance of advisors.

Scott LeBlanc then asked that comments be emailed to him regarding the current questions on faculty evaluations.

10. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 1:03 p.m.

Rebecca Hippert
Abstractor