

[In these minutes: Updates, Discussion of student rating of teaching responses, December 4 Student Senate agenda]

STUDENT SENATE CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE (SSCC) MINUTES

NOVEMBER 20, 2008

[These minutes reflect discussion and debate at a committee of the University of Minnesota Senate; none of the comments, conclusions, or actions reported in these minutes represent the views of, nor are they binding on, the Senate the Administration, or the Board of Regents.]

PRESENT: Ryan Kennedy (chair), Katie Best, Joao Boavida, Jason Einertson, Missy Gettel, Kris Schwebler, Alicia Smith, Jeffrey Wencil.

ABSENT: Jeffrey Anderson, Marshall Johnson, Mariam Maiga.

1. CHAIRS' REPORT

Ryan Kennedy said that at today's Business and Rules Committee meeting there was a discussion of student release from class to attend Support the U Day. A broader discussion will be held at this afternoon's Senate Consultative Committee (SCC) meeting.

2. STUDENT ASSOCIATION/ASSEMBLY UPDATES

Katie Best reported that academic affairs is looking at student advising for the campus.

Jeffrey Wencil stated that technology fee allocation is being discussed since some units do not want students controlling how those fees are spent.

Jason Einertson said that he is serving on a stadium committee that is discussing making Homecoming a University-wide event. He asked if other campuses would want to participate. The reaction from SSCC members was that each campus already has their own Homecoming, so they would not want to participate in a Twin Cities event. He then said that the graduate and professional conference on campus went well, but budget issues affected attendance numbers. Lastly, discussions are taking place about how the Student Representatives to the Regents represent all students when there is only one graduate and professional representative and no Rochester representative at this time.

Alicia Smith said that MSA is working on Support the U Day and a spring student concern forum, and is discussing the feasibility of a proposed campus smoking ban.

3. UPDATE ON STUDENTS APPLYING FOR SENATE SEATS

Becky Hippert reported that selections were made to fill the remaining Twin Cities vacancies prior to the December 4 Student Senate meeting. Students had accepted the invitation. There are only four Twin Cities seats remaining open, all from colleges that received no applicants.

4. DISCUSSION OF STUDENT RATING OF TEACHING (SRT) RESPONSES

Tom Dohm from the Office of Measurement Services (OMS) joined the meeting to talk about the responses to the student release questions. He said that a new form was approved last year that changed the core and student release questions (SRQs). He then walked members through a handout on the results of the student release questions, noting that these figures do not include coordinate campus or Academic Health Center classes. 78.48 percent of students responded to the survey in spring 2008, with an almost 25 percent higher response rate to the paper form versus online.

He said that in addition to the SRT, OMS scores all bubble sheets for classes, conducts the performance reviews of deans each three years, and administers departmental surveys.

Q: Can the results be broken down by department?

A: Yes. They can be divided any way, except by professor since that would violate data privacy.

Q: Were there any professors or classes with problematic SRT results?

A: Departments would know this when receiving the results, but not students.

Q: Do faculty receive a student's GPA with the results?

A: No.

Q: If most faculty receive positive responses from students, why is the release rate so low?

A: Less than 50 faculty chose to release the SRQs from spring 2008. A release can be done in three ways: 1) just one course for the one semester, 2) all courses for one semester, or 3) all courses for all semesters. Since the form changed, all faculty have to be asked again to sign a release. Faculty can sign-off online or by paper, but many probably do not remember to do it when they are reviewing their results.

Q: Can release be an opt-out system versus opt-in?

A: No. The core questions are used for personnel decisions so they are considered private data. SRQs are not meant to be used by departments, but some do when making promotion and tenure decision, which is not part of the Senate policy.

Q: Why was the overall rating for the class removed?

A: This was a deliberate action to prevent departments from using the response from this one question in promotion and tenure decisions.

Q: Can faculty provide a release at any time?

A: Yes.

Tom Dohm asked the committee what they would like from these results. Other units use the results for faculty teaching awards. A list of the top 20 percent of faculty could also be released as long as the actual rating numbers were not included.

Members then made the following comments about the SRT:

- Students are irritated with the two written questions on the core section since the role of both parties is not included in the questions
- The Educational Policy Committee (SCEP) wanted the same number of questions on both sides of the form
- Students do not realize that there is a different purpose to questions on each side of the form
- SRQ responses are hard to find on the One-stop site
- There needs to be a central list of faculty who have agreed to release their responses
- Faculty incentive is needed

Tom Dohm said that OMS is working on a web portal for SRQs to have more control over the information being posted on the One-stop site.

In closing, members suggested that a resolution be brought to the December 4 Student Senate meeting.

5. DISCUSSION OF STUDENT SENATE/UNIVERSITY SENATE BYLAW AMENDMENT ON STUDENT SENATE ATTENDANCE

Two members of SSCC agreed to craft the amendment for approval at the December 4 Student Senate meeting.

6. DISCUSSION OF A TUITION RESOLUTION

A member of SSCC agreed to craft the resolution for approval at the December 4 Student Senate meeting.

7. DISCUSSION OF A TEXTBOOK RESOLUTION

A member of SSCC agreed to craft the resolution for approval at the December 4 Student Senate meeting.

8. APPROVAL OF THE DECEMBER 4 STUDENT SENATE AGENDA

The agenda was approved as amended.

9. OTHER BUSINESS

The committee approved Joao Boavida as the Finance and Planning Committee ex officio member on SSCC.

With no further business, Ryan Kennedy thanked all members for attending and adjourned the meeting.

Becky Hippert
University Senate