

DISABILITIES ISSUES COMMITTEE  
MINUTES OF MEETING  
NOVEMBER 17, 2010  
Room 238A

In these minutes: [ services report; disabled student cultural center report; committee business; creation of subcommittees for assessment of disability issues/accommodation]

[These minutes reflect discussion and debate at a meeting of 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 or the Administration or the Board of Regents.]

PRESENT: Dale Branton (Chair), Donna Johnson, Lauren Olson, Mary Muwahid, Michael Silverman, Sherry Gray, Julia Robinson, Kimberly Simon, Carla Tabourne, Susan Rose, Joanna O'Connell

REGRETS: Miriam Krause, Mary Kennedy, Joanie Tool, Frank Symons, and Amber Mayer

ABSENT: Becca Gerken, Peggy Mann Rinehart, Rebecca Anderson

OTHERS ATTENDING: Victoria Nelson, Luka Krmpotich,

Professor Branton called the meeting to order, welcomed those present, and asked them to introduce themselves. He then asked Donna Johnson, Director of Disability Services (DS), to provide an update on the work of her office.

**Disability Services Report –**

- On September 16, 2010, at the annual DS scholarship luncheon 12 students received Buuck Scholarships, three students received Angela Brooke Warner Scholarships, two students received United Health Group Scholarships, and two students received Marshall Access Education (MAEF) Scholarships. Ms. Johnson noted that the United Health Group scholarship is a new award and will be continued next year.
- DS is partnering with the Medical School on a grant to increase awareness and create a welcoming and inclusive learning environment for all medical trainees including medical trainees with invisible disabilities (e.g., psychiatric disabilities, attention deficit disorder, and learning disabilities). On February 14 and 15, they are bringing in Dr. Michael Myers to speak to medical school faculty and trainees about working with physicians with invisible disabilities.
- DS/U Return and Employee Assistance Program/Human Resources are co-chairing the University's Employee Threat Assessment Team. Representatives from University Counseling and Consulting Services, Boynton Mental Health, University Police, Office of the General Counsel, and Equal Opportunity Affirmative Action are participating on the core team.

- On October 7, 2010 Disability Services hosted a meeting with DS providers at the coordinate campuses via ITV. The next meeting is scheduled for January 12. DS is assisting coordinate campuses in working together on disabilities issues.
- On November 8 and 9, 2010 DS hosted a team from Syracuse University. The purpose of the visit was to learn about the formation and structure of the Disabled Student Cultural Center (DSCC) and to promote collaboration between the University of Minnesota DS office and the Syracuse DS office.
- DS launched new computer-accommodations Web site – accessibility.umn.edu. Ms. Johnson noted this is a good resource for departments and programs that want to make their materials more accessible.
- In October, DS hosted three disability awareness month events in which more than 200 people participated:
  - October 11, 2010 – Access Achievement Awards given to:
    - Kathy Brown – Office of the President
    - Steve Carnes – Office of Information Technology
    - Mannix Clark – Housing and Residential Life
    - Michelle Driessen - Chemistry
    - Gordon Legge – Psychology
    - Lois Maturi – DS Scholarship Committee
    - Ruanne Pearson – Academic Support Services
    - Heidi Soneson – International Programs Office
  - October 18, 2010 – “Laughing at Our Differences” – Movie Night
  - October 28, 2010 – “Maximizing Your Potential” – speech by Matthew Sanford a motivational speaker with a disability.
- Finally, she noted that DS is working with over 1,700 students and the number of students seeking assistance from DS is growing. DS has insufficient space and is seeking a new location.

Professor Branton asked whether Michael Meyers program at the medical school was open to the whole Academic Health Center or just the medical school. Ms. Johnson stated that right now it is only available to the medical school.

Professor Michael Silverman asked if it would be possible to use person first identification for the Disabled Student Cultural Center. For example “students with disabilities.” Ms. Johnson noted that the founder of the DSCC wanted to “take back the language” of disabilities, and felt strongly about the name. The name was intentionally selected. Luka Krmpotich, program co-director for the DSCC, stated that changing the name might make the group’s focus less prominent or clear.

### **DSCC Report**

Mr. Krmpotich introduced himself and indicated that he is the program co-director for the DSCC. In this position, he organizes events and does networking and outreach work. He noted that there was a leadership change at the DSCC this fall and, therefore, there were fewer events. He stated that three new board members were recently elected. He then provided a summary of the DSCC’s fall events

- Lunch and learn the first Friday of every month

- October: Speaker from ACR Homes, a provider of housing for those with mental and physical disabilities
- November: a member of the Peace Corps chapter at the University of Minnesota addressed accommodations for students with disabilities who want to join the Peace Corps.
- December: Mike Keenan – a film maker with Asberger's Disorder who made the documentary *Autism the Wall*
- Movie days twice a month over the lunch hour to help people learn about disabilities
- Explore the Second Floor – an information event sponsored by student activities to bring awareness about the cultural centers located on the second floor of the Coffman Union.

Mr. Krmpotich also noted that the DSAC has developed a new logo.

Professor Branton asked what percentage of students participate in the DSAC. Mr. Krmpotich stated that participation has been a challenge, but he is not sure what the cause is. He noted the large size of the campus and that some students with disabilities do not want to be associated with the group. Professor Carla Tabourne noted that a better question might be the percentage of student participation in comparison to other groups. She further noted that participation might be dependent in part on whether current events bring attention to the group. Mr. Krmpotich stated he is looking into using social media such as Face Book to create awareness of the DSAC. He mentioned that the DSAC has a list serve and interested committee members could be added to it. Professor Branton inquired if the committee could assist the DSAC in growing its membership. Professor Julia Robinson suggested a representative from the DSAC could speak to the large lecture classes like psychology in order to bring more participants to the DSAC. Professor Branton asked if the DSAC would remain a viable organization despite its difficulties with the board and participation, and Mr. Krmpotich assured him that it would.

### **Chair's Report**

Professor Branton reported on the Committee Chairs Meeting and on his meeting with the EAD Committee. He stated that at the Committee Chairs meeting, he raised the Committee's concern about the breadth of the committee's charge and whether the committee is qualified to carry out the legal oversight functions set out in the charge. Professor Branton indicated he did not receive a clear answer to his questions, but was reassured that the committee could consider issues as they arise rather than taking on a broad oversight role.

At his meeting with the EAD Committee, Professor Branton shared the concept of disability as a diversity issue, and indicated his willingness to work collaboratively with the EAD Committee. He noted, however, that there are not currently any projects requiring direct collaboration between the committees.

Professor Joanna O'Connell, the chair of Committee on Committees, informed the Disabilities Committee that the FCC had formed an ad hoc committee to review the Senate committee structure to see if there were any redundancies or gaps. The ad hoc

group discussed the organization and operation of several committees, and proposed the merger of the Disabilities and EAD committees. Professor O'Connell noted she has been member of both committees and does not see the two committees as redundant.

Professor O'Connell also expressed frustration with the process used for reviewing the committees and stated that she would be meeting with the FCC and the ad hoc committee. She asked Professor Branton to draft a letter about the scope of the Disabilities committee and the reasons for not combining it with EAD. Committee discussion followed regarding the importance of taking an active advisory role in the governance process, and of helping others to understand that the issues of disability and diversity impact everyone.

Next, Professor Branton briefly informed the committee about the two resolutions the EAD is bringing to the Senate: The Resolution Supporting the Workgroup on Academic Civility the Resolution on Equity During Budget Cuts. The Academic Civility resolution seeks administrative support for the vision and strategies that have emerged from the Work Group and are posted on the Student Conflict Resolution Center website. The Equity During Budget Cuts resolution states that if salary reductions are needed in the future, the Senate should advocate for reductions on a progressive scale. These resolutions will be e-mailed to the committee for information.

### **Creation of Subcommittees**

Professor Branton reminded the committee of its discussion in September about assessing whether the University of Minnesota is meeting the needs of those who are disabled. He indicated the committee had identified several sources for this information: the Pulse Survey, the Office of Equal Opportunity, and Disability Services. He also suggested the committee could design its own survey. Professor Branton volunteered to begin the process of gathering this information. Sherry Gray suggested establishing a subcommittee to do this work. Professor Tabourne asked what information the committee hoped to achieve through its assessment. Professor Branton responded that the committee would like to answer questions such as whether there are groups of disabled individuals who are dissuaded from seeking assistance? And how many faculty members with hidden disabilities are unwilling to seek accommodation and whether departments are willing to provide accommodation? Kimberly Simon noted that sometimes there is a gap in getting disabilities services information to employees. This is particularly true for part-time and trades people. Professor Branton stated the committee should also determine what orientation employees receive and what educational materials are available. Ms. Simon commented that there is not a mandatory template of information provided at the new employee orientation and that supervisor training is optional. Therefore, many employees cannot receive information about disabilities services and available accommodations. She noted further, there is too much permissiveness in whether individuals participate in training programs, and this produces gaps in the disabilities information that is disseminated. Ms. Johnson interjected that DS needs assistance from the committee in finding ways to get information to faculty and to help them understand their role in addressing disabilities issues. Professor Branton indicated he would like to find out what the problems are and produce a report with recommendations. Lauren Olsen asked how the committee would obtain the data to

produce a report, and noted the difficulties in obtaining student participation in surveys. There was further discussion about the difficulty in admitting to disabilities, the role of self-advocacy, and the provision of services.

Professor Branton summarized the two issues the committee should address:

1. Finding out who is not being served, and
2. What education about disabilities is available and required, and how is it being delivered.

Professor Tabourne commented that the information on disabilities is available, but the problem is in requiring individuals to utilize the information. The committee had further discussion on the formulation of the issues it would like to form subcommittees to address and concluded that they should look at:

1. Who is being served and to what extent they are being served,
2. What materials regarding disabilities are available and how well are they being used, and
3. What policies are in place to insure delivery of materials and services.

Ms. Johnson indicated she could help the committee compile information about the disabilities training received by both students and employees. But, she stated there is other information DS does not have. It would be useful to have a subcommittee gather information on whether departments have handbooks or policies on disabilities that they share with the faculty. Professor Tabourne suggested asking the deans for this information. Ms. Simon suggested having a student subcommittee and an employee subcommittee and looking at the issues from the perspective of access to information. Professor Branton stated he would consider the committees input on establishing the subcommittees. He would formalize a proposal and e-mail it to the committee.

Hearing no further business, Professor Branton adjourned the meeting.

Dawn Zugay  
University Senate Office