

Student Senate Consultative Committee (SSCC)
April 21, 2016
Minutes of the Meeting

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 reflects the views of, nor are they binding on, the Senate, the Administration or the Board of Regents.

[In these minutes: Student Conduct Code Policy; Student Mental Health Resolution; Reorganization of SSCC; Resolution to Implement System-Wide Bathroom and Locker Room Access; Academic Freedom Statement; Stipend for Chair and Vice Chair]

PRESENT: Rob Stewart (chair), Thomas Keller, Colin Wray, Mariah Slocum, Mack Liebl, Noelle Sjoquist, Patrick Duschane, Janet Mwanyika

REGRETS: Nicole Novitskaya, Gabbi Brandt

GUESTS: Megan Sweet, chief of staff, Office for Student Affairs (OSA); Laura Knudson, assistant vice provost, OSA; Denny Olsen, senior associate director, OSA; Jason Langworthy, board associate, Board of Regents (BOR); Jonathon Borowsky, COGS; Kristine Amanti, COGS

1: Student Conduct Code Policy: Rob Stewart, chair, welcomed committee members and then turned the discussion over to Megan Sweet, chief of staff, Office for Student Affairs (OSA); Laura Knudson, assistant vice provost, OSA; Jason Langworthy, board associate, Board of Regents (BOR); and Denny Olsen, senior associate director, OSA. Sweet stated that they have garnered feedback on the latest draft of the Conduct Code from various Senate committees, MSA, COGS, PSG, system campuses, and other campus groups. She stated that most individuals seemed to be okay with the changes. The definitions were drafted by the OGC and EEOA offices.

Proposed changes to the code included:

- Revisions to Section VI Disciplinary Offenses, Subdivision 8, broadening the term from “sexual assault” to encompass all types of sexual misconduct.
- Addition of specific definitions to types of sexual misconduct.
- Addition of specific steps to assure fair due process.
- A guiding principle assuring the right to peaceably assemble.
- Clarification of what an “authorized University official” means.
- Inclusion of the option for restorative justice practices.
- The opportunity to allow for interim suspension on rare occasions when that best serves the student’s interests.
- Inclusion of medical amnesty guidelines.

The committee had no comment on most of the changes to the code, which had previously been discussed, with the exception of medical amnesty. On this point, Stewart stated that the language does not match up with the spirit of medical amnesty. In his experience, any hint of discipline will prevent individuals from seeking help. The intent of medical amnesty, he said, places safety over concerns about breaking the law. The benefit does not outweigh the risk. Tommy Keller agreed, and stated that the University can make educational and therapeutic services available, but requiring them will deter individuals. Sweet replied that each case is evaluated individually, and the language does state “may.” She added that some students clearly need help. Stewart questioned the role of the University in requiring them to seek help. Knudson said the University has a duty to care for its students. Sweet added that the same feedback has been provided by other stakeholders, and their concerns were heard. They will be taken back to the system-wide group working on the Code.

2. Student Mental Health Resolution: Jonathon Borowsky, COGS, provided an overview of the proposed resolution, which asked University administration to make student mental health a priority. He stated that the nationwide trend is that more and more individuals are being diagnosed with mental health problems.

Borowsky thought it was important for SSCC to take action; he stated that he believes it would be valuable at the end of the year to make a commitment to the health of students prior to the summer planning period. It would also make it more likely that real thinking about real solutions happened.

Stewart said the committee had visited with President Kaler at the last SSCC meeting, and that Kaler had said it was a campus-specific issue. But Stewart agreed with the need for system-wide goals and then specific campus goals. How each campus provides for meeting those goals may be different, he added, but there is a need for a system-wide commitment for this.

SSCC agreed to bring the resolution to the May Senate meeting for a vote.

3. Reorganization of SSCC: Stewart returned to the discussion of proposed changes to the SSCC Committee charge and bylaws. Changes included minor adjustments to membership, with the goal of making the committee equally representative of the entire University system. The committee voted and unanimously approved changes to the charge. It will be presented to the full Senate at its May meeting.

4: Resolution to Implement System-Wide Bathroom and Locker Room Access: Stewart informed the committee that this effort was being voted on in multiple committees, including the Equity and Diversity Committee and the Social Concerns Committee. SSCC voted and unanimously endorsed the Resolution to Implement System-Wide Bathroom and Locker Room Access. It will be presented to the full Senate at its May meeting.

5. Academic Freedom Statement: Stewart invited the committee to further discuss the FCC's Academic Freedom statement and to come up with a narrative of student's concerns. He said that this could be a statement from SSCC that reflects the comments heard at the Senate discussion. The committee agreed to do so.

6. Stipend for Chair and Vice Chair: Stewart and Colin Wray, vice chair, left the room so that the committee could vote on whether to release stipends to the chair and vice chair. SSCC voted to disperse the stipends for both.

Hearing no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Patricia Straub
University Senate Office