

Student Senate Consultative Committee (SSCC)
October 13, 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 represents the views of, nor are they binding on, the senate, the administration, or the Board of Regents.

[In these minutes: Discussion of Agenda Items and Task Forces; Student Senate Docket; SSCC Position Descriptions; Student Senate Retreat Absences]

PRESENT: Trish Palermo (chair), Fanda Yang, Maddie Schwartz, John Freude, Jonathan Borowsky, Taylor Cronen, Patrick English, Noelle Sjoquist

REGRETS: Zane Bloom, Katie Ledermann

ABSENT: None.

GUESTS: None.

OTHERS: Becky Hippert (University Senate Office)

Chair Trish Palermo welcomed the committee.

1. Updates from SSCC members – Palermo invited SSCC members to give an update on what their student government groups were currently working on.

Patrick English said that the Minnesota Student Association (MSA) recently passed a resolution statement asking the administration to create an undergraduate research journal for the Twin Cities campus, similar to journals at University of Minnesota Duluth and Mankato. MSA is hopeful that this will lead all University campuses to host a similar journal for undergraduate students. John Freude reported that Professional Student Government (PSG) was working on creation of a bike center on the West Bank campus. Currently, Freude said, PSG is looking into alternative funding sources for the center, and a suitable location, since they are limited by the location of plumbing in existing buildings. Taylor Cronen said that the Rochester Student Association (RSA) is currently filling representative spots in their organization. Noelle Sjoquist reported that the Crookston Student Association (CSA) combined their tabling event for the Student Senate with homecoming events, and this was a good approach with high turnout. Sjoquist noted that student mental health would be the main focus of CSA this year. Jonathan Borowsky said that the Council of Graduate Students (COGS) is working on better access to human resources employees who work with student employees, who have recently been moved to the West Bank Office Building; COGS would like to see some staff moved to Dinkytown. Additionally, Borowsky said, COGS is looking at the workloads for teaching assistants (as expectations seem inconsistent between colleges), student mental health issues, and revisions to the parental leave policy.

2. Discussion of SSCC/Student Senate priorities for the year – Palermo reviewed potential agenda items and SSCC priorities that had been brought forth by members.

Palermo said that the parental leave resolution, to be passed through COGS, would be on the November Student Senate docket for discussion and action. Borowsky said that he would check in with Veronica Postal, member, COGS, to ensure this is how they would like to move forward with the resolution.

Palermo provided an overview of work completed by the Campus Area Safety Task Force to date. Palermo noted that Ross Allanson, director, Parking and Transportation Services, would be invited to the Student Senate meeting to discuss partnering with the Student Senate Twin Cities Delegation to create a reduced-price after-hours parking option for students, so that students could park closer to their campus destinations, mitigating safety concerns. Palermo said that when she met with Allanson and other senior Parking and Transportation administrators, they seemed interested in partnering with the Student Senate on this issue. Palermo added that the task force is interested in working with Gopher Chauffeur to expand their hours, though this may be complex due to their funding through student fees.

Palermo then provided an overview of the issue of problem landlords on the Twin Cities campus. Specifically, Palermo said, since housing is in demand near campus, some landlords and management companies are thought to take advantage of students. The Off-Campus Housing Office keeps a list of landlords who have violated their office's off-campus housing policy, called the "De-list," Palermo said, and these companies are no longer able to participate in housing fairs or other campus activities. Palermo went on to say that there is interest in encouraging the University to create and host a "rate-your-landlord"-type website, where students on all campuses could provide feedback on their rental experiences. Palermo added that she will meet with someone in the Office of the General Counsel to see if there are any legal concerns with publishing the "De-list" more broadly, or with a student reviews website, before moving forward. Borowsky asked if this might be an issue more appropriate to student government groups, since it is program-based and the fixes may be more campus-specific. Palermo replied that since the issues are system-wide in many cases, she would like to see the Student Senate lead this effort.

Fanda Yang then introduced an issue he was interested in pursuing related to graduate student fees for those with tuition waivers. Yang said that he had contacted Scott Lanyon, vice provost and dean of graduate education, to begin the conversation; Yang has requested information about how fees are assessed, who is in charge of setting these fees, and how graduate students on tuition waivers receive communication about fees they are responsible for. Freude asked Yang what the goal of these conversations would be; is the goal to remove fees, improve communication with students, or something else? Yang replied that he was interested in exploring the possibility of professors/principal investigators paying the associated fees for their graduate students.

Palermo provided an update to the committee on discussions with administrators and other groups on expanding the *Administrative Policy on Makeup Work for Legitimate Absences* to include Student Senate and University Senate meetings. Palermo said that she has to date met

with Karen Hanson, executive vice president and provost, Scott Lanyon, vice provost and dean for graduate education, Bob McMaster, vice provost and dean for undergraduate education, and Suzanne Bardouche, assistant vice provost for undergraduate education; they were supportive of this addition. Palermo then presented the request to the Senate Committee on Educational Policy (SCEP) at their October 8, 2016, meeting, at which time it was suggested that the student representatives to the Board of Regents be included in this request. Palermo said that she would keep the committee apprised on the progress of this request; SCEP will need to vote on the addition, after which it will go to the Policy Advisory Committee (PAC) for review and vote.

Palermo advised the committee that she, Yang, and Maddie Schwartz have been in discussions with the University Senate Office about requesting space in Coffman Memorial Union for use by SSCC representatives and student senators on the Twin Cities campus. Patrick English asked where they were requesting this space; Palermo replied they would request space on the third floor.

Palermo provided an overview of an issue she would like to pursue regarding University Dining Services (UDS) and their use of Aramark as a vendor (Twin Cities campus only). Specifically, Palermo said, there have been issues raised about food quality, sustainability, lack of religious options, and concerning business practices by Aramark. Palermo said that in the Office of Higher Education committee that she sits on (the Student Advisory Committee), student leaders from other institutions in Minnesota also voiced similar concerns about Aramark and were interested in collaborating on statements to their institutions. Borowsky asked if Palermo had discussed this issue with the chair of the Social Concerns committee, as they may also be interested. Palermo said that she would touch base with Mark Pedelty, chair, Social Concerns Committee.

Yang then provided an overview of potential task forces in which senators had indicated interest. Currently, Yang said, there are ten proposed: student mental health, public relations, diversity and inclusion, tuition (encouraging students to become involved with Support the U Day), organics recycling, graduate student fees, student safety, sexual harassment, Aramark/ UDS, and disability accessibility. Some task forces, Yang said, do not have chairs, as no one has volunteered. English suggested removing those task forces without leaders, since this may indicate a lack of real interest on behalf of senators; for other task forces, specifically student mental health and public relations, he suggested SSCC charge them as permanent subcommittees rather than task forces. Additionally, since MSA has a sustainability committee, English said that the SSCC may want to consider which task forces have the potential to complicate and confuse efforts of other groups. Yang said that he was not supportive of removing any task forces, as he did not want to tell student senators that their issue would not be pursued. Also, Yang said, some task forces may be charged as formal subcommittees later on; this will depend on their work and scope this year. Borowsky said that he agreed with Yang; SSCC should review and approve concrete proposals from these task forces before removing any from consideration.

3. Student Senate Docket – Palermo reviewed her proposed November 2016 Student Senate docket with the committee. Currently, the docket includes: updates from SSCC representatives, summaries of proposed task forces, a vote on the proposed changes to the parental leave policy (in partnership with COGS), a vote on the statement outlining pollinator best practices for each campus, discussion with Parking and Transportation Services Director Ross Allanson regarding

creation of after-hours parking program for students, an overview of “Report to Your Dean,” and a vote on the creation of an undergraduate research journal for the Twin Cities campus (in partnership with MSA).

As time for this agenda item had run out, Palermo said that she would send the proposed docket to committee members for an email vote.

4. SSCC position descriptions – Palermo suggested that SSCC members discuss recently-created position descriptions for the chair, vice chair, and at-large representative, and the creation of a general SSCC member position description to provide clarity to roles and responsibilities.

Borowsky said that he was opposed to the creation of a general SSCC representative position description, as SSCC members represent their respective student government groups, and not the SSCC or the Student Senate as a whole. Borowsky added that since all SSCC representatives are new to their roles, the committee should wait to discuss this until the end of the year when it is more clear how the group works together. Yang said that he was not in favor of tabling the discussion until the end of the year, because the position descriptions would help to guide the committee’s work. Borowsky asked Palermo to describe the goal of the position description; is it more aspirational, or does it list official requirements of these roles? Specifically, Borowsky had concerns regarding the operational responsibilities listed, as they may present a conflict with members’ responsibilities to their respective student government groups.

As time for this agenda item had run out, Palermo said that she would move this discussion to a future SSCC meeting, and suggested an additional meeting be scheduled in two weeks to deal with internal business issues. The committee voted to schedule an additional meeting, with one abstention.

5. Student Senate Retreat absences – Palermo said that she would like members to vote on whether or not to count the Student Senate Retreat as an official Student Senate absence, since it had been communicated to senators that attendance was mandatory; since there are so few Student Senate meetings, Palermo said, she would like seats to be taken by active senators.

Borowsky said that he was not in favor of the proposal, as significant issues important to the student body are the primary reason for senator involvement. The retreat mainly dealt with orientation and internal business, Borowsky said.

The vote to count Student Senate Retreat absences as official Student Senate absences passed, with one member voting against the motion.

Hearing no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Barbara Irish
University Senate Office