

Equity, Access, and Diversity Committee (EAD)
April 24, 2017
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 reflect the views of, nor are they binding on, the senate, the administration or the Board of Regents.

[In these minutes: Jewish Student Experience on Campus; Business & Community Economic Development; Discussion of Priorities for Next Year]

PRESENT: Jeremy Jenkins (chair), Solomon Gashaw, Tami Jauert, Naty Lopez, Minsoo Kim, Tina Marisam, Sarah Sexton, Teddie Potter, Keisha Varma, Deena Wassenberg, Marcella Windmuller-Campione,

REGRETS: Shakeer Abdullah, Ann Burkhart, Priscilla Flynn, Joseph Gerteis, Mina Kian, Cynthia Messer, Shailey Prasad

ABSENT: Jefrina Jayaraj, Jonathan Watkins, Ben Yawakie

GUESTS: Sharon Banks, project manager, Construction Management, Office for Business & Community Economic Development; Robert Harper, TGB program associate, Office for Business & Community Economic Development; Benjie Kaplan, executive director, Minnesota Hillel; Darryl Peal, executive director, Office for Business & Community Economic Development

OTHER: Nan Thurston

1. Jewish Student Experience on Campus

Chair Jeremy Jenkins called the meeting to order and introduced Benjie Kaplan, executive director, Minnesota Hillel. Kaplan thanked Jenkins for the invitation and said that Minnesota Hillel, located in Dinkytown across the street from Folwell Hall, is part of a national organization of about 550 nationwide. Minnesota Hillel is the only Hillel in Minnesota, and in 2017-18, it will expand to serve six other Minnesota campuses, including the University of Minnesota Duluth. The building houses a chapel, a space for community events, and has a kosher kitchen. Until the 80s, it offered a kosher dining hall for students. It is governed by a board of directors, as well as a student board. There are five staff members, including a rabbi, who put on about 85 programs per year. Kaplan said that there are around 1200 Jewish students on campus, and about 600 are connected with Hillel.

Teddie Potter asked about the availability of kosher food on campus, and Kaplan said that currently, there are not enough options for students who keep kosher on campus. He said he would be meeting in a few weeks with officials from M Dining in order to discuss options for addressing this issue. He said that on Friday nights, when Minnesota Hillel offers a kosher meal, there are usually around 100 students in attendance, as they know it is one time they can count

on having a kosher meal on campus. Tina Marisam asked what could be done to better support Jewish students. Kaplan said the food issue was a major one, and also said that many events are scheduled over Passover, which is a problem because many students leave campus to celebrate this holiday with their families. He gave the example of the Students for Justice in Palestine's Israeli Apartheid Week, which was during the same time as Passover. He said that there was a display outside of Coffman Union that used "Jews/Jewish" instead of "Israel/Israeli," but Jewish students were not able to respond because it was a holy week. He gave a further example of a student senate body at another university that passed a resolution during Passover to divest from Israel. This leaves the voices of Jewish students out of important conversations, he said. He added that Minnesota Hillel recognizes that Israel is a hot topic right now and that it is not perfect, but he expressed concern about blame being placed on one side of the conflict. He requested that if any anti-Israel resolutions or requests come before the committee, that the committee reach out to him to hear both sides.

Deena Wassenberg asked whether education was a part of Hillel's mission, and Kaplan said that Hillel's mission is to ensure that *every* student-- not just Jewish students-- has an understanding of Judaism.

Jenkins asked what kind of working relationship Minnesota Hillel has with the University. Kaplan responded that under former president Mark Yudof, the connection was quite close, but had fallen off. They are currently working to rebuild these relationships.

Kaplan added that Minnesota Hillel has a 20,000 square foot building including an event space, and is happy to be a resource for any group on campus. Minnesota Hillel wants to encourage collaboration and cross-group programming. Kaplan said he feels that competition for student service funding creates silos, and suggested that perhaps some student service funding could be allocated for collaboration between different groups.

Potter motioned that the committee draft a resolution in support of kosher dining options for students, and Jenkins offered to draft one and circulate it via email for a vote.

With that, Jenkins thanked Kaplan, and Kaplan departed.

2. Business & Community Economic Development

Next, Jenkins welcomed Sharon Banks, project manager, Construction Management; Robert Harper, TGB program associate; and Darryl Peal, executive director, Office for Business & Community Economic Development (OBCED). Peal thanked Jenkins for the invitation and explained that the mission the OBCED is to contribute to the economic growth, development and prosperity of Minnesota's urban communities. OBCED is a social enterprise whose purpose is to leverage the assets and resources of the University to create programs and services that provide innovative solutions to real-world social-economic problems that impact urban communities. He explained a number of initiatives:

- Community Health Initiative (CHI): CHI, in partnership with Medica, provides resources for community-based nonprofit organizations and businesses that impact public health, social services, medicine and medical technology. CHI addresses health disparities and

socioeconomic issues by supporting underrepresented communities and groups, such as people of color and University of Minnesota students. CHI addresses health disparities and socioeconomic issues through scholarships, student consulting projects, internships, and public health disparities research projects.

- The Technology Empowerment Center (TEC): The Technology Empowerment Center is an extension of OBCED and is located in the Robert J. Jones Urban Research Outreach-Engagement Center (UROC). TEC is a community outreach and resource center which is comprised of hotel office spaces, a business resource room, a computer refurbishing lab, and a computer lab where free computer classes are offered to the public. TEC focuses on closing the digital divide by providing access to computer technology and relevant software training by using content aimed at serving nonprofits, small businesses and vulnerable populations. TEC offers programs such as computer refurbishing and donation, computer literacy workshops, tech support and computer repair, and business development services. In October, 2016 the Technology Training Center (TTC) opened in the lower level of the Minneapolis Urban League. TTC has become the home of OBCED's CompTIA A+ Certification Training Program, an 8 week workforce development program. TTC has recently become the only Pearson Vue Authorized Testing Site located in North Minneapolis.
- The Junior Entrepreneurs of Minnesota (jEM): The jEM Summer Program was created in 2009 by OBCED to inspire youth from the urban Twin Cities to pursue entrepreneurship and develop a relationship with the University of Minnesota. The objectives of the jEM are to assist in the incubation of youth enterprise(s) in a supportive environment, inspire the next generation of leaders in the Twin Cities, foster and develop talented youth by leveraging University resources, promote a knowledge ecosystem that is reflective of the diversity of the students, connect small business communities with intellectually curious youth, and recruit aspiring high school students to the University of Minnesota.

Peal then discussed supplier diversity at the University, informing the committee that in November 1996, the Board of Regents adopted a policy governing University purchases from businesses owned and operated by underrepresented minorities, women, and disabled persons. OBCED was created to provide vision, leadership, monitoring and reporting. He then showed a number of graphs and charts that illustrated supplier diversity.

Banks encouraged members to contact OBCED to be connected to minority-owned suppliers and businesses for any University business needs. Harper added that even small contracts can make a difference for minority-owned businesses, as they add up and can also lead to repeat business. Peal informed members that for purchases or services under \$50,000, no Request for Proposal is necessary, so the vendor is completely at the discretion of the unit. Naty Lopez asked if a list of vendors was available, and Banks said that they have a list, but it is not exhaustive. She encouraged interested parties to call OBCED, who can assist in finding the right vendor.

Jenkins thanked Peal, Banks and Harper, and they left.

3. Discussion of Priorities for Next Year

Jenkins asked members what issues they were interested in addressing next year. Wassenberg said that the central fringe pool for unplanned/parental leaves, spearheaded by the Senate Research Committee (SRC) would be something to keep an eye on. She said she also liked Kaplan's idea about allocating some student service funding to cross-group programming. Other members expressed interested in looking at child care options, sharps container availability in restrooms, and transgender equity issues and healthcare needs.

Members thanked Jenkins for his leadership over the year. Jenkins thanked members for their service and adjourned the meeting.

Amber Bathke
University Senate Office