

Social Concerns Committee
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:** Energy Plant Update; Working Group Report on the Council of Graduate Students' Sanctuary Campus Resolution; Update on Equal Opportunity and Title IX Education Resolution; Immigration Response Team; Other Business]

PRESENT: Mark Pedelty (chair), Randy Croce, Abigail Dayton, Laura Duckett, Prashant Earath, David Fuhs, Zan Gao, Nicholas Goldsmith, Deborah Hendricks, Derek Kiewatt, Gabriella Kraus, Alex LaValley, Kendra Okposo, Sarah Sexton, Molly Schwartz, Megan Sweet

REGRETS: Daniel Kelliher, Leah Peterson, Rachel Schurmann

ABSENT: Alex Oftelie, Boris Volkov

GUESTS: Marissa Hill-Dongre, director, Immigration Response Team; Ingrid Nuttall, incoming chair, Social Concerns Committee; Shane Stennes, director, Sustainability

1. Energy Plant Update

Chair Mark Pedelty welcomed Shane Stennes, director, Sustainability, whom he had invited to give an update on the energy plants. Stennes thanked Pedelty and began by giving some background information. He said that the Regents Policy: [Sustainability and Energy Efficiency](#) which was adopted in 2004, established guiding principles of balancing environmental, economic, and social issues, as well as the needs of today and the needs of the future. In 2008, the University signed [Second Nature's Climate Leadership Commitment](#), pledging to reduce carbon emissions from the Twin Cities Campus 50% by the end of 2020 through the implementation of combined heat and power and extensive energy efficiency initiatives. The Morris campus has pledged to reduce its carbon emission by 100% by 2020, and the other system campuses have committed to dates in between 2020 and 2050. Between 2008 and 2015, the Twin Cities campus has reduced its emissions by 16%.

Stennes explained that 50% of the Twin Cities campus' emissions come from electricity purchased from Xcel Energy. The two steam plants account for about 30% of emissions, and the rest is from miscellaneous sources such as air travel, commuting, etc. In order to produce steam for heat, the steam plants burn 94% natural gas, about 5% coal, and less than 1% fuel oil. The reason that the plants maintain solid fuels is that during high-demand seasons, the University may be asked to switch to other fuels, in order to preserve natural gas for residences and facilities without other heat sources.

In order to reduce emissions, the Combined Heat and Power Plant (CHPP) was brought online in spring 2017. The CHPP will produce 22 megawatts of electricity which equates to 45% of campus needs. In addition, the steam generation will be used for heating up buildings, generating hot water, and for various “processed loads,” such as sterilization of medical equipment. On average, 85% of annual steam demand will come from the CHPP. The project will provide a reliable source of heat and electricity while also reducing emissions. The University has also purchased [community solar garden subscriptions](#) and is planning to enroll in Xcel Energy’s wind-solar pilot program, [Renewable*Connect](#). Stennes added that the Morris wind turbines produce more electricity than the campus uses on an annual basis. The remaining power is sold to Ottertail County, which reduces electricity produced by fossil fuels. Finally, the University is exploring options to increase the number of onsite solar panels. The University is also participating in the [Minnesota Sustainable Growth Coalition](#), which aims to promote a sustainable, circular economy within the state.

Pedelty asked what people can do to speed up this process, and Stennes recommended lobbying with the Public Utilities Commission and the Minnesota State Legislature, expressing the importance of these initiatives to the Board of Regents, and planning ahead for sustainability to ensure that new buildings and renovations that happen now do not get in the way of the 2050 carbon neutrality goal.

David Fuhs commented that he was happy to see charging stations in some of the University parking ramps. Stennes said that there are 34 of these spots total.

With no further discussion, Pedelty thanked Stennes and Stennes left.

2. Working Group Report on the Council of Graduate Students’ Sanctuary Campus Resolution

Deborah Hendricks, Gabriella Kraus, Abigail Dayton, and Sarah Sexton, members of the subcommittee formed to look at the Council of Graduate Students’ (COGS) resolution on designating the University a sanctuary campus, gave a report on their findings. They recommended that the Social Concerns committee draft its own resolution, with an eye toward proactivity rather than reactivity. Hendricks circulated a [Model Campus Safe Zone Resolution](#) from the National Immigration Law Center by email and suggested that the committee consider a similar approach. As this was the last meeting for the year, the subcommittee offered to draft a statement to send to the full committee for an electronic vote.

3. Update on Equal Opportunity and Title IX Education Resolution

Randy Croce reported that the Student Senate and the P&A Consultative Committee had suggested minor edits to the Equal Opportunity and Title IX Education Resolution. He and Kendra Okposo had incorporated these suggestions into the draft, and presented this draft for action. The committee voted to approve these changes. Croce said that the resolution was on the docket for the University Senate meeting on May 4, 2017.

4. Immigration Response Team

Pedely introduced Marissa Hill-Dongre, director of the new Immigration Response Team. Hill-Dongre thanked Pedely and said that she had worked at International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS) for the past eight years, and that before that she practiced immigration law at a non-profit. She then introduced Holly Ziemer, who does communications for the Immigration Response Team.

Hill-Dongre explained that the mission of the Immigration Response Team is to act as a referral and information hub in order to ensure that all faculty, staff, and students who are affected by immigration policy changes have access to resources and support. The team provides outreach to the greater University community on the impact of executive orders and other policy changes, immigration regulations, and issues connected with DACA and immigration status. As the team is relatively new, they are currently meeting with stakeholders and working to identify gaps in services.

Fuhs asked whether people can get state IDs without legal status, and Hill-Dongre said that currently they cannot. She said there was a bill in the Minnesota legislature which would introduce an option for people to get IDs without disclosing their immigration status.

Pedely asked how students find out about the Immigration Response Team, and Hill-Dongre said that they are currently working to get the word out to current students.

5. Other Business

Croce provided an update on the Senate Research Committee (SRC)'s letter to the administration proposing that the University institute a central fringe pool to cover unplanned leaves-- mostly parental leave. He said that the SRC is working with the administration to move this forward. He also reported on the P&A Senate's parental leave parity resolution, which advocates for six weeks of paid leave for every new parent. Goldsmith pointed out that there is still gender-specific language in the policy, which should be addressed. Laura Duckett said that as a maternal/family health practitioner, she is grateful for the progress that has been made, but can attest that six weeks is still inadequate, and that the long-term goal should be at least three months.

Members thanked Pedely for his leadership as chair over the past year. Pedely thanked members for their service and adjourned the meeting.

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University Senate Office