Disabilities Issues Committee
March 27, 2019
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:** Discussion of Disability in 7.12s; Resolution on Professional Development on Best Practices for Disability Accommodations and Supporting Students with Disabilities; Use Cases for Diversity Data]

PRESENT: Benjamin Munson (chair), Kim Doberstein, Samantha Grover, Maki Isaka, Donna Johnson, Betsy Kerr, Muhammad Khalifa, Peggy Martin, Heather Peters, Jayanthi Sasisekaran

REGRETS: Bryce Christiaansen, Catherine Jacobson, Aida Miles, Gail Myers, Emily Norenberg, Lars Oddsson

ABSENT: Margaret Doom, Matthew Hoekstra

GUESTS: Rebecca Ropers, vice provost, Faculty and Academic Affairs; Peter Campion, doctoral student, College of Education and Human Development

1. **Discussion of Disability in 7.12s**
Professor Benjamin Munson, chair, called the meeting to order and welcomed Rebecca Ropers, vice provost, Faculty and Academic Affairs. Ropers thanked the committee for the invitation and introduced Peter Campion, a doctoral student in the College of Education and Human Development (CEHD). She said she had asked Campion to join her because he has been researching faculty members with disabilities and their engagement. She said that the memo she had sent out in December 2018 encouraging departments to think about their 7.12s had been in the making for over a year. She explained that her office receives, with some regularity, questions about 7.12s regarding what work is valued at the University and why; this is what prompted the memo. In response to an interest expressed by the committee, Ropers noted that it is important to think about how to make coursework can be more accessible to students with disabilities, and said that faculty members' efforts to make learning accessible are not always considered in promotion and tenure processes. This memo was an invitation for departments to think about that and other factors to consider adding to 7.12 statements.

Munson remarked that evaluating faculty in terms of teaching and learning is already tricky, because the main source of evaluation is the Student Rating of Teaching (SRT) survey, which is highly subjective and vulnerable to bias. Peer reviews are great, he said, but often too rare to contribute meaningfully to a faculty member's dossier. Ropers agreed, and added that the SRT is also not a very sensitive instrument; 83% of instructors are rated at 5.0 or higher, and 99.5% are 4.0 or higher. As for peer reviews, she said, not all units do them, and even in those that do, they are not always done well. Her office hopes to provide more institutional framework around peer

review to help people do them well, she said, but acknowledged that at this point they are highly variable. Teaching narratives are a good source of information about accessibility in teaching, continued Ropers, but if accessibility is not in their department's 7.12, people may not reference it in their narrative because they might not think people will care. She noted that in the past, there was an award for increasing accessibility in coursework, the Advancing Access Awards. Donna Johnson said that this award had been discontinued because they felt like they were giving out too many. Ropers said she thought these awards were a measure of real investment in increasing accessibility. Johnson asked whether the provost's office would be interested in cosponsoring the award, in order to elevate it. She said that if the Disability Resource Center (DRC) sponsors the award, it is less of a campus-wide award. Ropers expressed support for this idea and said she would look into it. Heather Peters noted that it would be great to have such awards on all campuses. Munson mentioned the Career Readiness Fellowship program in the College of Liberal Arts and the Writing Enriched Curriculum Liaisons, which are programs that acknowledge investment of time in a certain activity. He suggested that there could be something similar, like an Instructional Accessibility Fellowship.

Samantha Grover pointed out that accommodations in research labs should be considered, in addition to classrooms.

Peggy Martin asked what the committee could do to help. Ropers said that it would be very helpful for the committee to provide suggested language for 7.12s regarding accessibility in teaching/learning. Peters suggested that the committee could generate language for 7.12s pertaining to faculty with disabilities and their accommodations, as well.

Munson remarked that the implicit bias training that is mandatory for search committees is really good, but it does not address disability. Johnson said that was probably an oversight and promised to mention it to Stef Jarvi, director of education, Office for Equity and Diversity. Munson noted that the institutional diversity plan also focuses on race, ethnicity, and in some cases gender, and while hose things are very important, disability should not be overlooked. Representation in terms of disability, especially non-apparent, is important, he said.

Ropers thanked members for their work in this important area.

2. **Update on the Resolution on Professional Development on Best Practices for Disability Accommodations and Supporting Students with Disabilities**

Munson updated members on the progress of the Resolution on Professional Development on Best Practices for Disability Accommodations and Supporting Students with Disabilities, noting that it had been endorsed by the Senate Committee on Student Affairs, the Senate Committee on Faculty Affairs, the Senate Committee on Educational Policy, the Social Concerns Committee, and the Equity, Access, and Diversity Committee. He said that the Student Senate would discuss it at its meeting on April 4, 2019, and that he hoped to get to the Senate or Faculty Consultative Committee in preparation for the May 2, 2019 University Senate meeting. Ropers recommended sharing the resolution with deans before the senate meeting; Munson said he would try to do so. Martin suggested that Munson try to attend a meeting of the Academic Health Center deans.

3. Use Cases for Diversity Data

Next, Munson turned the floor over to Grover, who explained that she was on a committee that is working on piloting standard, user-friendly reporting dashboards using employee data in UM Analytics (a separate committee is working on reports with student data). This committee is looking for feedback on what types of reporting dashboard would be useful, she said, and asked for the Disabilities Issues Committee's input. Grover noted that she had asked if disability information could be included, but did not hear back. Data fields that could possibly be relevant include birth date, home location, sex, ethnicity, visa code, citizenship, veteran status, percent time, compensation, etc. These reports would be widely available to the University population. Munson said that if there is a binary yes or no disability field, it would be interesting to look at compensation for people with disabilities versus those without. Grover said that disability information is self-reported self reported; individuals can change their disability status in MyU. Martin remarked that people probably are not aware of that option. She also wondered how to delineate between normal aging and the point when it becomes a disability. Johnson said that self reported data may not be reliable, as not everyone who clicks the box for having a disability has one as defined under the law, and not everyone with a documented disability checks the box. Martin said, still, it would be good to know if there is a disparity. Grover said that such reports can be requested on an individual basis, but wondered whether they would be useful across the institution. Members felt that such data could be useful for many business purposes across the University. Martin added that the same type of information for all areas of diversity would be useful. Grover said she would bring this feedback to the committee.

Hearing no further business, Munson adjourned the meeting.

Amber Bathke
University Senate Office