

Student Senate Consultative Committee (SSCC)
August 21, 2020
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:** Beyond Renaming Discussion; Agenda Planning for Student Senate Retreat and Special Student Senate Meeting - Saturday, September 19, 2020; Review of Governing Documents]

PRESENT: Briggs Tople (chair), Gunnar Frahm (vice chair), Sydney Bauer (ranking student senator), Jack Flom, Annie Counihan, Josh Lesser

REGRETS: Manpreet Singh

ABSENT: Jasmine Pryor

GUESTS: Laura Leppink and Paige Mitchell, members, Rename, Reclaim Working Group

OTHERS: Vickie Courtney, Bri Keeney, Erik Dussault

Chair Briggs Tople welcomed the committee, and members introduced themselves.

1. Beyond Renaming Discussion - Tople introduced Laura Leppink and Paige Mitchell, members, Rename, Reclaim Working Group, to provide an overview of the work they have done on the Twin Cities campus regarding social justice, including their efforts to rename certain buildings on campus and address systemic racism in University policies and practices.

Mitchell began the presentation by providing a slide deck of the history of the group. She said the project that the group is currently working on is called “Beyond Naming.” The project represents the desire to do further work on campus to address systemic racism, other than the possible renaming of certain campus buildings. The group is working to build coalitions aimed at research and the investigation of racist policies and practices within the University system structure. Mitchell stated that Beyond Naming’s mission is threefold:

1. Aim to secure the funding and backing to fully research, acknowledge, and understand the University of Minnesota’s institutional past.
2. Aim to reckon with and move beyond these harmful legacies that continue to be perpetuated today and to lay the foundation for a more equitable, diverse, and welcoming future.
3. Aim to uplift historical stories of hope, resilience, and joy in the face of marginalization.

Leppink then described the values of the project which includes accountability and autonomy, community, and transparency in every aspect of the work. Some initiatives that the group is undertaking include the following:

1. Working on an education initiative with the Preservation Alliance of Minnesota Reimagined (AKA RETHOS) to provide classes on community hands-on preservation as well as grants to support this work.
2. A summer 2020 research initiative across the University to create a public history project to create inclusive, accessible, and expansive narratives and fostering relationships with multiple departments and centers.
3. Creating a website and digital archive in order to promote transparency, current initiatives, and fundraising efforts while showcasing many digital humanities projects.

Mitchell continued by stating that the group is looking into becoming a non-profit organization, which includes the possibility of entering into a cooperative agreement with the University.

Tople thanked Leppink and Mitchell for their presentation and introduced the idea of forming a task force of the Student Senate to work with the Beyond Naming group to research and review all current policies at the University to assess if the policies could lead to practices of racism or marginalization. Tople presented the committee with a [draft charge](#) for what the task force could look like and opened the floor for discussion.

Leppink emphasized that the task force should not do redundant work that previous task forces have done when it comes to building renamings and could focus on issues beyond racism, such as ableism. Jack Flom agreed that he is supportive of the task force and thought the emphasis on anti-marginalization is important. Tople appreciated those comments and added that the task force would work with the Diversity Community of Practice's Equity Lens Policy Review Committee (ELPRC) to make sure work isn't done twice.

Gunnar Frahm suggested that the membership be as wide open as possible to allow for multiple voices to be heard. He also asked how the student government associations would be included with this initiative. Tople replied that he will welcome all applications to be a part of the task force and that members do not necessarily need to be student senators.

Tople moved to adopt the charge. Hearing no further discussion, a vote was taken and the motion prevailed.

2. Agenda Planning for Student Senate Retreat and Special Student Senate Meeting - Saturday, September 19, 2020 - Tople then led a discussion regarding the planning of the Student Senate retreat scheduled for September 19, 2020. He provided an overview of the [agenda](#) and asked SSCC members for their feedback. Chris Kwapick, senate associate, University Senate Office, provided some context regarding what the retreat has included in past years and emphasized that even though the retreat will be conducted online, there will still be a number of activities, including questions and answer sessions with President Joan Gabel and Regent Mike Kenya. Tople added that it was also his desire to hold a brief special meeting of the Student

Senate during the retreat in order to handle a few items of business, including possible revisions of the Student Senate Constitution, Bylaws, and Rules, in order to hit the ground running.

Flom made the suggestion to move the special meeting to earlier in the retreat, around lunchtime, so that senators would not be too tired or disengaged by the end of the retreat. Tople and others agreed with that suggestion. Kwapick added that a survey will be sent prior to the retreat to all student senators to gauge their areas of interest for this upcoming year so that SSCC members can lead small group discussions on the most popular topics during the retreat. Tople stated that topics will be collected prior to the next SSCC meeting where individual SSCC members can volunteer for their desired areas of interest.

3. Review of Governing Documents - Tople then led a discussion regarding some proposed changes to the Student Senate governing documents, including the Constitution, Bylaws, Rules, and Student Senate Handbook. Frahm stated that he has been working on updating the [handbook](#) to make sure that it accurately reflects the Student Senate's governing documents and is better equipped to onboard new members. Frahm gave a brief overview of the changes and asked members to provide any further input prior to the next SSCC meeting.

Flom asked if the proposed changes fixed the issues that were raised in the spring regarding officer elections. Frahm replied that those fixes were incorporated in the spring by the previous SSCC membership.

Tople then gave an overview of [proposed changes to the Constitution, Bylaws, and Rules](#) that he and other SSCC members had submitted. Some highlights of the proposed changes include:

- Adding a Duluth graduate student as an ex officio nonvoting member to the Student Senate.
- Requiring the chair, vice chair, and ranking student senator be from different campus government associations.
- Adding new duties for officers, especially the ranking student senator.
- Allowing for more control by the SSCC when a campus student association recommends removal of a student senator.
- Technical and typographical updates and corrections.

Tople indicated that he intends to send this document out to the Student Senate to garner further feedback prior to a possible vote at the special meeting of the Student Senate at the retreat in September. Counihan commented that the membership and charge of the Senate Committee on Student Affairs (SCSA) could use some more diversity and focus more on the diversity of each campus. She further added that she would work with senate staff on clarifying what these changes should look like.

Hearing no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Chris Kwapick
University Senate Office