

**Student Senate Consultative Committee (SSCC)  
October 2, 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:** SSCC Updates; Debrief on Student Senate Retreat, including Further Discussion on Governing Documents; Update on Possible Change to 2020 Spring Break]

**PRESENT:** Briggs Tople (chair), Gunnar Frahm (vice chair), Sydney Bauer (ranking student senator), Aglěška Cohen-Rencountre, Jack Flom, Erika Swant, Manpreet Singh, Annie Counihan, Justin Goetz

**REGRETS:** Manpreet Singh

**ABSENT:** Jasmine Pryor

**GUESTS:** Rachel Croson, executive vice president and provost, University of Minnesota; Deb Cran, senior assistant, Office of the Executive Vice President and Provost

**OTHERS:** Megan Sweet

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

**1. SSCC Updates** - Tople opened the floor to SSCC members for updates from their respective campus student associations or constituencies and the responses were as follows:

- Annie Counihan, SSCC representative, University of Minnesota Duluth Student Association (UMDSA), shared that they recently appointed six freshman representatives to UMDSA and are currently taking nominations for vacant student senator seats. UMDSA President Neal Bhakta recently provided his agenda to the group for advocacy and action items and Counihan said that she could make those items available to the group. Finally, she emphasized that it is improper to refer to Duluth, Crookston, Morris, or Rochester as satellite campuses, which happened a few times at the Student Senate retreat.
- Erika Swant, SSCC representative, Professional Student Government (PSG), said that PSG is working to get more COVID-19 testing on campus, not just on the East Bank. Additionally, PSG is working on multiple task forces to address campus safety and institutional racism as well as some new funding resolutions aimed at addressing food insecurity during the pandemic.
- Aglěška Cohen-Rencountre, SSCC representative, Council of Graduate Students (COGS), stated that she was recently re-appointed to this position after a number of resignations and leadership realignment within COGS. The group is trying to focus primarily on the treatment of graduate students during the pandemic.

- Justin Goetz, ex-officio representative, Senate Committee on Student Affairs (SCSA), indicated that the committee had its first meeting of the year where they discussed the committee's charge and heard presentations regarding student mental health and changes to Title IX regulations.
- Jack Flom, SSCC representative, Minnesota Student Association (MSA), stated that MSA is working on a number issues, such as passing their budget and filling their vacant vice president position.
- Sydney Bauer, ranking student senator, Student Senate, stated that the September Student Senate newsletter was sent out this past week. Additionally, she is working with several other student senators on a statement regarding student mental health and is looking for additional co-authors from the system campuses. Finally, she sat in on a conversation with Dr. Cedric Alexander regarding the external public safety audit on the Twin Cities campus.
- Gunnar Frahm, vice chair, Student Senate, announced that the updated handbook was sent out in the newsletter and if others have further updates to please let him know. He also participated in a discussion about the possible creation of a Duluth delegation of the Student Senate, similar to the Twin Cities delegation. Finally, he attended a Senate Consultative Committee meeting and updated them about the happenings of the Student Senate.
- Tople said that he has been in a lot of meetings, including those related to the COVID-19 handling at the University, the audit being done by Dr. Alexander, and the working group focused on "Rename, Reclaim" and their work on anti-racist legislation.

## **2. Debrief on Student Senate Retreat, including Further Discussion on Governing**

**Documents** - Tople then opened the floor to discussions about the Student Senate retreat. Counihan stated that many productive conversations were had and one area that she is working on is dealing with advocacy around Title IX and sexual misconduct issues. It is her desire to possibly bring forward a letter to the president and/or the Minnesota Department on Higher Education around enforcement of state and federal laws on campuses.

Tople mentioned the fact that the special meeting of the Student Senate during the retreat did not finish its intended work but he committed to working with multiple stakeholders to address the unfinished work prior to the next regularly scheduled meeting in November.

Bauer further illustrated the framework of her mental health statement which would provide additional support for students during this asynchronous time of learning. Megan Sweet added that the University would be co-hosting a mental health summit in the month of October and she would provide further information at a later time.

Flom indicated that a number of campus safety and policing conversations were had regarding the campuses of Crookston, Duluth, and the Twin Cities. He stated that some initiatives could come forward from those involved. Counihan indicated that she would be willing to do further work, especially regarding police accountability.

**3. Update on Possible Change to 2020 Spring Break** - Tople introduced Rachel Croson, executive vice president and provost, University of Minnesota, and Deb Cran, senior assistant, Office of the Executive Vice President and Provost, to provide an update on a potential change to the scheduled 2020 spring break for the Twin Cities campus. Croson explained that the need to possibly change Spring Break is necessitated by the desire to cut down on student travel towards the end of the spring semester. This change would hopefully help to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. Each campus has the authority to change its own dates except for the Rochester campus due to joint accreditation terms with the Twin Cities campus. When asked by Tople how the change would impact graduate and professional programs, Croson replied that each of those schools already have control over their own calendars and can make changes if needed.

Croson further explained that if this change is to take place, it must be approved by a vote of the Faculty Senate. In order to have this vote taken at a special meeting of the University/Faculty Senate, Croson has been busy consulting with multiple stakeholder groups and committees to make sure they are in the loop. The current proposal is to move spring break to the week of April 5, 2021. Swant opined that while a mental health break is important for students, traveling for spring break and then coming back to campus would be irresponsible. Swant then asked how this recommended date was proposed. Croson replied that they have consulted with multiple experts, including the Health Emergency Response Office (HERO), Michael Osterholm, director, Center for Infectious Disease Research and Policy (CIDRAP), and the Minnesota Department of Health. Frahm stated that he understood the need for the change and appreciated Croson's consultation, but lamented at the fact that students do not have a vote in this decision.

Hearing no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Chris Kwapick  
University Senate Office