I). Professor Born called the meeting to order and welcomed all those present.

II). The Committee unanimously approved the February 15, 2002 minutes.

III). Kathy Brown, Interim Associate Vice President of Multicultural Affairs, updated the Committee on a recent presentation to the Regents concerning the University’s ‘work life’ initiative. The presentation was the outcome of a teleconference that recommended studying issues related to ‘work life’ and suggestions based on the issues that have been identified. One recommendation was to look at what steps the University can take to forward ‘work life’ initiatives. In conjunction with the Office of Human Resources a report was issued and presented to the Board of Regents for information. The Regents seemed very interested and responsive to the concept.

There are 4 different approaches related to a ‘work life’ initiative:

1. Flexible work time
2. Leaves and other time off
3. Child care and elder care issues
4. Professional development opportunities
The report was presented to the Board of Regents on what the University is doing related to ‘work life’ issues on campus. Ms. Brown was pleased to announce the University is actually doing quite a bit already e.g. the University has an excellent child care facility, many departments offer flexible work hours, good leave policies are in place, the GLBT community now has the opportunity for domestic partner health care benefits and there is a good range of professional development offerings available, etc.

However, “emerging needs” remain in the following areas:

1. Demand for child care – system-wide the 17,000 employees across all four campuses have at least 3,600 children under age six. Numerous employees face child care issues e.g. cost, etc.
2. Elder care – 40% of the baby boomer generation on average are responsible for the care of an elderly family member. At this time the University has no resources to assist employees.
3. Leave issues – e.g. maternity leave for women faculty. Since the University moved to the semester system, the 6-week leave policy creates problems coordinating with the 15-week semester. Under the quarter system (10 weeks) women faculty typically took the entire quarter off.
4. Some departments are more progressive than others with respect to flexible work hours.

The University is looking to the creation of a ‘work life’ center that would bundle some of its current offerings and continue to investigate the “emerging needs” of its employee population.

Professor Born observed that the institution has a significant “graying faculty” population and that in many departments and colleges there is not an upcoming stream of replacement faculty. From an institutional resource perspective Professor Born commented it would be valuable to look into transitioning faculty that are approaching retirement age to try to keep them around and utilize their experience and knowledge until this gap can be bridged.

Research shows that ‘work life’ initiatives are good for employee retention and recruitment as well as employee morale and performance.

IV). Professor Born regretfully announced his resignation as chair of the Equity, Access and Diversity Committee. Professor Chomsky, Committee on Committees and EAD member, informed the Committee that a replacement has not yet been found. A student member, Dan Kelly, contacted Professor Born and expressed his interest in chairing the Committee. While technically Mr. Kelly, as a student, can chair a Senate committee, the concern was raised that he will be graduating soon and the position will be vacant again. Professor Chomsky mentioned that because the Committee is relatively new it would be wise to have a faculty member chair the Committee but the idea a student or staff member co-chairing the Committee is an option.
Eric Burgess from Crookston asked about the selection process for the chair. Professor Chomsky explained that the Committee on Committees makes the appointment rather than each Committee selecting its own chair. Committee on Committees is always open to suggestions. Professor Born suggested that Professor Chomsky contact Eric Burgess regarding his potential interest to serve as chair.

Rose Blixt mentioned some at one point Amy Lee and Randy Moore had expressed an interest in chairing the Committee. Professor Chomsky said she would check into this matter.

Don Cavalier asked about the number of vacancies on the Committee. Prince Amattoe, chair of Student Committee on Committees, acknowledged that student vacancies exist on the Committee and each campus has been repeatedly urged to submit their recommendations. Julie Sweitzer added that there appears to be a P&A vacancy as well. Professor Chomsky also mentioned that a couple of faculty members have not attended a meeting yet and that there is a rule that stipulates if a member misses three consecutive meetings they will receive a letter indicating they are being removed from the Committee. Don Cavalier informed Prince Amattoe of Crookston’s appointment to EAD, Kari Visness. Rose Blixt asked if announcements should be made in each of the colleges in an attempt to try to find additional members? Professor Chomsky indicated that Committee on Committees recently sent out an e-mail to all faculty asking who may be interested in serving on Senate Committees. Committee on Committees welcomes suggestions from any and all sources to fill Committee vacancies.

V). Professor Born welcomed Vice President Jones to the meeting. He was asked to address two topics:

- Update the Committee on the search process for the Associate Vice Provost for Multi-Cultural and Academic Affairs, and the decision to make if an Associate Vice Provost slot.
- Provide the Committee with an understanding of the administration’s perspective on issues of Equity, Access and Diversity.

Addressing the first issue, Vice President Jones reported that the administration went through a lengthy consultation process with groups both inside and outside the institution before any changes were made to its administrative structure. The position vacated by Rusty Barcelo was not downgraded but rather the Office of Multi-Cultural and Student Affairs was restructured. The goal of this reorganization was to allow for issues of multiculturalism, diversity and student affairs to have a voice at the President’s Executive Council. Again, there was no attempt to downgrade the position but to provide an opportunity for issues to be brought to the table at the President’s Executive Council.

The rumor was probably fueled by the fact that the position will be titled associate vice provost rather than associate vice president. Because the office always reported to the Provost’s office the proper title for the position should be vice provost rather than vice
president. Additionally, a vice president’s title from the Provost’s perspective implies that someone has system-wide responsibilities. Under the new structure, Vice President Jones has assumed the system-wide responsibilities for Multi-Cultural, Academic and Student Affairs. However, Vice President Jones, via delegation of authority, has every intention of sub-delegating some of his system-wide responsibilities to the Associate Vice Provost for Multi-Cultural and Academic Affairs. Vice President Jones expects that whomever assumes this position will work closely with communities of color, the administration and the deans. The Committee agreed it will want to follow up to be sure the structure works effectively in this regard, and with respect to coordinate campuses.

Vice President Jones retained both his Vice President for Campus Life and Vice Provost for Faculty and Academic Personnel titles. The administration’s rationale behind this was because there is a large and growing effort to try to position both Multi-Cultural Affairs and Student Affairs closer to the academic mission of the institution to make sure these units stay visible.

Professor Born stated that the restructuring was perceived as a focus just on the Twin Cities campus and that there might be a loss of the multi-cultural perspective on the coordinate campuses. Vice President Jones reassured the Committee that this is not the case. As mentioned before, he plans to sub-delegate a significant amount of those responsibilities to the Associate Vice Provost For Multi-Cultural and Academic Affairs. The new Associate Vice Provost will interface not only with the Twin Cities campus but the coordinate campuses as well around the issues of diversity and multi-culturalism. The same approach will be taken with the Student Affairs position.

Professor Born asked how the search was progressing? Vice President Jones said the search committee was charged on December 11th to identify viable candidates for the position. Approximately 2.5 to 3 weeks ago he met with the Committee and out of approximately 38 applications the Committee conducted 4 confidential interviews. From the 4 interviews the Committee recommended 3 individuals be brought back to campus for public forum type interviews in April. Vice President Jones gave a brief bio on each of the 3 finalists:

1. Dr. Tom Colonnese
2. Dr. Sallye Cooke McKee
3. Dr. Niloufer Merchant

A press release with additional information on each candidate will be available soon. Vice President Jones encouraged Committee members to participate in the public forums. He went on to say that if time permits, his office could try to arrange for the Committee to meet with each of the candidates separately.

Prince Amattoe asked whether the coordinate campuses would be able to participate in the public forums? While ITV hook-up for the coordinate campuses is being considered, logistically the spaces that have been identified that could accommodate this type of technology are not conducive to a public forum setting. The search continues to try and
find a space that would permit a televised hook-up as well as accommodate a public forum.

As Vice President of Campus Life and Vice Provost for Faculty and Academic Personnel, Robert Jones believes his portfolio of responsibilities is congruent with the philosophical view of how Student Affairs and Multi-Cultural Affairs need to be linked to the academic side of the institution. Professor Chomsky raised the concern that, while it may not be true, there is the perception that multi-cultural affairs and diversity issues have been downgraded at the University. For example, she said, if someone were to just look at the names and titles of the people present at the President’s Executive Council, what does not appear on the surface is multi-cultural and diversity issues. Because there is a lack of apparent visibility of diversity at the highest levels, Professor Chomsky recommended that the administration communicate its commitment to diversity. The absence of multi-cultural affairs could communicate the message to University employees that it’s ok not to think about diversity issues. Vice President Jones responded that just because multi-cultural and student affairs does not appear as part of his title, there will be no impact on his ability to do work involving these issues. He explained that a decision was made to incorporate both the multi-cultural piece and the student affairs piece in the context of campus climate/life that includes issues of multi-culturalism, diversity, student affairs and faculty affairs. It is Vice President Jones’ goal for those hired in the Multi-Cultural Affairs and Student Affairs positions that these positions parallel each other in terms of responsibility and day-to-day oversight of their operations. Vice President Jones is less concerned about structure and titles than what the institution is able to achieve. To conclude, Vice President Jones stated that the Office of Campus Life will go about its work in a way that will demonstrate that the new structure has not distracted from the issue of multi-culturalism but facilitated it.

Next, Vice President Jones addressed the topic of the administration’s perspective on issues of equity, access and diversity. According to Vice President Jones, the President and Provost remain committed to the issue of diversity. During this time of budget shortfalls, the administration will continue to invest in recruiting faculty and students of color and protect multi-cultural affairs and a co-diversity agenda as much as possible. On the student side, the administration is committed to provide resources to secure scholarships for minority students and to provide more programming funds to assist with retention efforts. There remains a very strong commitment to diversity at this institution and it is demonstrated by protecting and investing in its resources.

Vice President Jones mentioned that the administration will carefully monitor the new 13 credit minimum policy to make sure that it will not adversely impact students of color. Statistics do not support the notion that a 13 credit minimum policy will negatively impact students of color. The University’s programs and policies will continue to be structured so as not to hinder its diversity efforts. Undergraduate student representative, Amele Olufunke, asked the purpose of instituting a 13 credit minimum policy? VP Jones said the policy will be implemented in order to improve timely graduation rates. From a student perspective Amele voiced the concern that it is hard to average 13 credits and that if enforced many students will take courses they don’t really care about. Amele was
encouraged to contact Vice Provost Craig Swan for the rationale behind establishing a 13 credit minimum policy.

Prince Amattoe expressed a concern that there appears to be a disparity in how scholarships, especially presidential scholarships, are awarded to students who want to attend the University’s coordinate campuses. It is VP Jones’ understanding that once a student receives a scholarship they can choose to attend whichever campus they prefer. Kathy Brown, Interim Vice President of Multi-Cultural Affairs, concurred and is under the same impression as VP Jones. Ms. Brown volunteered to inquire about the scholarship award process and follow-up with Mr. Amattoe.

A Committee member asked VP Jones his impression of the role of the Equity, Access and Diversity Committee? VP Jones believes EAD exists to advise on policy issues and strategic issues. EAD has a responsibility to look at issues of diversity in a broad context. VP Jones sees EAD as a place where he should come and talk, for example, about the University’s Faculty Diversity Report every year. This Committee should offer a broad perspective on diversity issues that hopefully will facilitate the work that the University needs to carry out.

Professor Chomsky mentioned two topics for further discussion:

- An interest in hearing about the hiring numbers in the Faculty Diversity Report. Whereas 13% of the University’s faculty are of color, she asked the Committee to think about the reverse of that and the fact that 87% are white.
- Discussion involving curriculum transformation possibilities. There used to be programs that would facilitate faculty bringing more diversity into their teaching and classrooms.

Professor Chomsky asked VP Jones to comment on his views of the possible athletic department merger and how he sees that relating to the Committee’s role. In terms of timing the Committee needs to move forward in addressing this issue. VP Jones has not formulated an opinion one way or another on this issue. VP Jones acknowledges, however, that this is a monumental budgetary issue that the University needs to find some way to deal with. Merging the athletic departments will not solve all the financial problems but will address it in some way. VP Jones believes this is an issue that needs to continue to be debated and that a detailed analysis of the impact of implementing such a structural change needs to be conducted.

A member commented that faculty, students and staff cannot lose sight of the University’s goal which is to provide quality education.

VI). With no further business, Professor Born adjourned the meeting.

Renee Dempsey
University Senate