

[In these minutes: WRC progress, Update on Mitsubishi Boycott, Discussion with Members of SOAR]

## **SOCIAL CONCERNS COMMITTEE**

### **MINUTES**

**THURSDAY, OCTOBER 2, 2000**

**3:00 - 4:30**

**229 NOLTE**

[These minutes reflect discussion and debate at a meeting of a committee of the University of Minnesota Senate or Twin Cities Campus Assembly; none of the comments, conclusions, or actions reported in these minutes represent the view of, nor are they binding on the Senate or Assembly, the Administration, or the Board of Regents.]

**PRESENT:** George French (chair), Katherine Anderson, Patricia Cavanaugh, Andrew Kuhlmann, Judi Linder, Geri Malandra, Annette McNamee, Julie Sweitzer.

**REGRETS:** Mike Davey, Anthony Eliseuson, Catherine Forseide-Hussain, John Jensen, Margaret Kuchenreuther, Jean Niemiec.

**ABSENT:** John Beatty, Robert Brown, Selma de Ridder, Wesley Matson, Luis Ramos-Garcia, Angelita Reyes, Greg Schooler, Mary Steinke.

**GUESTS:** Angela Hasnedl, Joe Janzen, Katherine Peterson.

### **1. WRC PROGRESS**

Professor French noted that he had called Mark Rotenberg regarding the continuance of the Sweatshop Task Force and whether the Social Concerns Committee should also be monitoring the progress. Arrangements were made for a conference call later this week, so any information from that meeting will be sent by e-mail to the committee. He then asked Angela Hasnedl to provide a further update on the WRC.

Angela Hasnedl said that the WRC is meeting today and will have a working group report to forward. Projects still to be completed include a Code of Conduct, Factory Disclosure, and the internal WRC structure. She noted that the WRC Board was recently changed so that each group, students, Universities, and NGO's, only has five representatives instead of six. The WRC is also looking into involving students in the monitoring process abroad. There is still no date as to when factory disclosure will be operational, although test runs will be completed this winter. Many operational issues are contingent on the naming of an executive director.

Q: Last spring there were many students involved with this issue, but students seem to have quieted down since then. Are there any formal ways to involve students?

A: Information is always available for interested students. Students will also need to be involved in the process for creating a Code of Conduct. For factory disclosure, the General Counsel will need to work with the companies for this information. The WRC just reports what it finds in the factories. It is then the University's responsibility to decide if factories are meeting its standards from the Code of Conduct and conduct internal monitoring.

Q: Were you involved in the process last year?

A: I attended the founding conference.

Q: Are university students active in this area?

A: Yes by involvement in the University Coalition for Labor Rights.

Q: Is there suggested language for the Code of Conduct?

A: It is available on the web at: [www.workersrights.org](http://www.workersrights.org)

Q: Have any institutions codified their Code of Conduct?

A: Many institutions did before joining. The University is different because it does not have this in place. From what happened at other institutions though, this may make it easier for the University. Other institutions spent too much time working on this statement, whereas the University could just take the sample and modify it for our own needs.

A committee member noted that the follow-up mechanism is not clear since there were no standards set regarding the conditional membership. This question should be asked of Mark Rotenberg, as well as the status of dues payment. If the WRC is going to have a strong administrative structure, will the institutions be obligated to pay for it.

## **2. UPDATE ON THE MITSUBISHI BOYCOTT**

Professor French informed members that the committee passed a Mitsubishi boycott several years ago because of the problems that the company was creating in the environment. The committee was supposed to review this boycott annually, but this was never done.

This summer, two departments in the Institute of Technology approached Professor French. Two pieces of equipment had broke, which they were trying to replace with used machines, but since the machines were from the Mitsubishi family, the purchase orders were refused. Because the review had never taken place, Professor French approved the two purchases without lifting the boycott.

At the same time, the Supreme Court also ruled that boycotts are not legitimate in public institutions. Therefore, before the committee can make a decision on this issue, the General Counsel is determining if this ruling applies to the University. When a decision is reached, information will be reported to the committee.

### 3. DISCUSSION WITH MEMBERS OF SOAR

Joe Janzen, SOAR member, started by distributing a packet of information to the committee and saying while SOAR is against all animal research, it has decided to focus on primate research because they are the most like humans and there are fewer experiments, involving only 90 animals, at the University.

There is one researcher at the University, Marilyn Carroll, who has had extra attention. She currently has 34 Rhesus monkeys in her lab and has \$6 million from the NIH to conduct research on the effects of drug addiction. Her work does not seem to shed any new light on this topic, but was approved by the University's research board. He then noted that two-thirds of the University's research board members are animal experiments themselves, including Marilyn Carroll.

Kate Peterson stated that there has been opposition to primate research at schools with small primate departments, such as Berkeley. Even at primate institutions that are renowned, such as the Oregon Regional Primate Research Center (ORPRC), practices are less than perfect. In a recent report, it stated that primate conditions were horrible but that inspectors only reported minor offenses so that the center continued to operate.

Joe Janzen and Kate Peterson also made the following comments:

- Research monkeys are all housed separately although they are social animals.
- SOAR would like to see a three to five year phase-out of primate research during which time no new primate experiments would be approved
- University would need to draw up a plan outlining how this phase-out would work
- There are sanctuaries for primates across the country
- Non-human research is not applicable to humans since there are distinct differences

Q: What was the stimulus for the letters against Marilyn Carroll's work?

A: Information on her work was sent by SOAR to other doctors from across the country, who then responded with their opinions on her protocol.

Q: Who appoints the research board?

A: Richard Bianco who is also an animal researcher.

Q: What is Marilyn Carroll's department?

A: Psychiatry and Neuroscience.

Q: Has SOAR talked to her?

A: She will not talk with SOAR.

Q: What is her response to these allegations?

A: She feels that the research is necessary since primates are a good model for human drug addiction. There is no evidence however that drugs have the same effects on humans and primates.

Q: Is research open to the public?

A: Not usually.

Q: Where are the monkeys housed?

A: In Diehl Hall.

Q: What are the USDA requirements?

A: There is an Animal Plant Care and Use Committee and then the University's board to ensure standards are being adhered to. Inspectors also conduct site visits, but there are only 73 inspectors for 10,000 research centers.

Q: What has been the department's response to this situation?

A: The Academic Health Center and Richard Bianco respond that they support Marilyn Carroll, but they refuse to talk to opposing doctors.

The committee made the following remarks:

- What jurisdiction does this committee have in this situation?
- Recommendation could be forwarded to the President and Board of Regents
- Marilyn Carroll could be contacted to see if she wants to talk with the committee about this issue
- Committee should not focus on one researcher but the issue of animal research instead
- University practices need to be looked at
- Information could be collected from other institutions
- The committee should also hear the other side of the story
- Both sides are passionate about this issue so reasonable conversations are hard; maybe this committee can be a neutral group for discussion to take place
- Committee needs to hear all viewpoints and work from the top down
- Should focus be limited to primate research?
- Seminar format, with one view at a time, spread over a few months, might be the best approach
- Invite people from outside sciences who can shed light on the moral issues
- Research Committee should also be informed

#### **4. OTHER BUSINESS**

With no further business, Professor French thanked members for attending and adjourned the meeting.

Rebecca Hippert  
University Senate