

Senate Committee on Student Affairs
Minutes of Meeting
November 3, 2004

[In these minutes: International Student and Scholar Services Update, Housing Update, Office of Student Affairs¹ Benchmarking Update, Student Services Fee Subcommittee – Request for Volunteers]

[These minutes reflect discussion and debate at a meeting of a committee of the University Senate or Twin Cities 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: Kristen Denzer, chair, Christina Trok, Gerald Rinehart, Kendre Turonie, Jean-Marie Del-Santo, Yasemin Kaygisiz, Carolyn Nayematsu, Kim Roufs, Janet Schottel, Alyssa Covelli, Maria McRae, Megan Thomas

REGRETS: Jennifer Wagner, Iraj Bashiri, Christine Ascheman, Matt Painschab,

ABSENT: Shannon Carry, Divya Raman, Michael Rhodes

OTHERS: Gabriele Schmiegel, Tina Falkner

I). Kristen Denzer called the meeting to order and asked those present to introduce themselves.

II). Kristen Denzer called on Associate Counselor Gabriele Schmiegel to provide a report on International Student and Scholar Services, a program within the Office of International Programs.

Handouts, which supplemented Ms. Schmiegel's presentation, were distributed. Ms. Schmiegel highlighted the following:

- In the wake of 9/11 and SEVIS (Student and Exchange Visitor Information System), the overall international student count has not been significantly affected.
- There has been, however, a significant drop in freshman and sophomore international student enrollment since 9/11 and SEVIS. In 2001, freshman international student enrollment was 147 and today enrollment stands at 56.
- It appears that freshman and sophomore international students are increasingly attending community colleges before transferring to the University. Current undergraduate tuition for undergraduate international students is over \$9,000 per semester.
- New international student arrival statistics have declined by approximately 400 despite the fact that the overall numbers have not gone down by that much. This can be explained by the following factors:
 - Students extending their stays to get advanced degrees.

- Students needing to extend their studies because they cannot find on-campus employment or do not qualify for an employment based visa.
- The six most prominent fields of study are:
 - Engineering
 - Business/Management
 - Health Professions/Health Sciences
 - Life Sciences
 - Social Services
 - Physical Services
- The most attended college is IT followed by CLA, Carlson School of Management and the College of Education.
- The most prominent countries of citizenship have not changed dramatically over the years; they include:
 - PR China
 - India
 - South Korea
 - Malaysia
 - Taiwan
 - Japan
 - Canada
- What does ISSS do?
 - Responsible for ensuring the University's compliance with immigration laws governing the enrollment of international students. ISSS does not consider itself an extension of USCIS (United States Citizenship and Immigration Services), U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, or the Department of Homeland Security.
 - Provides academic and personal counseling services e.g. adjustment to U.S. education system and expectations, values, financial concerns, career issues, etc. Because international students tend to view ISSS as an enforcer of immigration laws, it can be challenging to get these same students to seek out academic and personal counseling services from ISSS.
 - Provides intercultural training, programs and events to build connections between the U.S. and international campus communities e.g. Training for Global Understanding, International Friendship Group, Small World Coffee Hour, etc.
- ISSS is located in #190 Humphrey Center and the phone number is (612)626-7100.
- Nationwide 8,737 schools and exchange visitor programs have been certified to participate in SEVIS. Foreign students with an F or J visa cannot enroll in a school or exchange visitor program unless that school or exchange visitor program participates in SEVIS.
- As of July 2004, there are more than 770,000 students and exchange visitors that have been approved to study in the U.S. and whose data is being managed by SEVIS. Additionally, SEVIS maintains records on more than 100,000 dependents of students and exchange visitors.

- As of July 2004, there were 36,000 potential student violators of SEVIS regulations reported. Examples of violations include:
 - A school reporting a student as a ³no-show².
 - Expulsion.
 - Suspension.
 - Failure to maintain a full course load.
- The University was audited with respect to the interface between SEVIS and PeopleSoft. The auditors recommended improvements to this interface. Currently, there remains work to be done.
- Students are unconditionally responsible for maintaining their legal status.
- The impact of SEVIS for the most part has been larger for institutions than for students in terms of cost for software development, staff time to process documents, etc.
- Students and scholars coming to the U.S. after September 1, 2004 are required to pay a \$100 non-refundable SEVIS fee at the time of their visa application.
- Social Security regulations with respect to international students have recently changed. International students and scholars can no longer get a Social Security number unless they can prove they have employment. This regulation also impacts international students and scholars that have lost their Social Security card as they will not be reissued a replacement card or an individual taxpayer identification number despite the fact that they had a Social Security number in the past. In terms of getting utility bills set up, a driver's license/state identification card, bank accounts this can prove very challenging without a Social Security number or taxpayer identification number.

Questions/comments from members:

- ❖ How often does ISSS deal with an international student that is converting from a temporary visa to a permanent resident status? According to Ms. Schmiegel, this happens quite infrequently e.g. 1 – 2 times/month, but probably no more than 20 times per year.
- ❖ What constitutes a full course load for international students and whose definition of full course load is used? Immigration defines a full course load as 12 credits minimum for undergraduate students, 6 credits minimum for graduate students and anywhere between 6 – 12 credits for professional students, depending on the program.
- ❖ Do students understand the SEVIS rules? Ms. Schmiegel stated that ISSS strives to make international students aware of the SEVIS rules, however, this can prove challenging because these rules are not written clearly and even ISSS has a difficult time interpreting some of the regulations.
- ❖ Does ISSS offer legal assistance or referrals? Under certain circumstances ISSS will refer students to Student Legal Services or immigration attorneys. However, if the DSO (designated school official) or SEVIS accidentally makes a recordkeeping mistake oftentimes SEVIS is unwilling or unable to help correct the problem in a timely manner; and, in this situation, an immigration attorney would be of no use.
- ❖ What job classifications are international students and scholars allowed to hold?

- Ms. Schmiegel stated that the University or Immigration Services must authorize all off-campus employment for international students/scholars and the work must be directly related to their field of study. Although special arrangements for off-campus employment based on an unforeseen financial change are possible. Typically employment is limited to no more than 20 hours per week but full-time employment is allowed during break periods. International students/scholars are allowed to accept any part-time on-campus employment.
- ❖ Does the University charge an International Student and Scholar fee? Yes, because ISSS does not receive adequate financial support from central administration, ISSS charges a \$60 a year fee to international students and scholars on an F or J visa per semester and \$30 for summer registration.
 - ❖ Who determines the International Student Fee? According to Ms. Schmiegel, the Board of Regents approves the fee, and auditors help determine the fee.
 - ❖ Is there any student input in determining this fee? Ms. Schmiegel stated that to the best of her knowledge she is unaware of any student input in determining this fee.
 - ❖ A member recalled a lawsuit in New England that held an institution's SEVIS fee unconstitutional because it applied only to the international student population versus being assessed across the entire student population? Ms. Schmiegel stated that ISSS cannot charge students/scholars for producing documents related to SEVIS. The fee that is charged to international students at the University is considered an administration fee, not a fee to support SEVIS.
 - ❖ With the rising cost of tuition, have there been discussions about limiting tuition increases for international students/scholars to a set dollar amount versus a percentage? Ms. Schmiegel acknowledged the impact that the rapidly rising tuition hikes have had on international students/scholars. She added that it is extremely difficult for international students/scholars to take out loans for their education. To do so requires a U.S. resident/permanent resident co-signer with a good credit rating. The difference between resident full-time and non-resident full-time tuition is \$5,815.
 - ❖ A member requested Ms. Schmiegel describe ISSS's relationship with MISA. Ms. Schmiegel stated that ISSS cooperates with MISA in terms of programming e.g. Small World Coffee Hour, Culture Corps.

Ms. Denzer thanked Ms. Schmiegel for her presentation.

III). Housing Subcommittee members Kendre Turonie and Professor Janet Schottel provided members with additional housing information. At the September 2004 SCSA meeting, members requested Ms. Turonie and Professor Schottel collect the following information:

1. The percentage of undergraduate versus graduate/professional student housing units that exist at each of the institutions listed in the handout.
2. Additional family housing information.

Ms. Turonie cautioned members that not all the institutions responded to their requests for this information. Of the institutions that did respond, Ms. Turonie noted the following:

- There are several institutions that offer family housing similar to the University.
- The percentage of graduate/professional students housed in on-campus housing varies greatly from institution to institution.

A member requested institutions be asked what percentage on their international student body is housed on-campus versus off-campus.

Ms. Turonie noted that while the University does not compare well to other Big 10 institutions, this, in large part, can be attributed to the fact that the University is an urban campus. However, when compared to other urban schools, the University is quite comparable in terms of the on-campus housing it offers its undergraduate, graduate and professional students.

Vice Provost Rinehart proposed the Committee continue its discussions on whether the University should offer more on-campus housing. What would it mean if the University were able to house more of its students? It appears that Housing and Residential Life (HRL) is operating within the paradigm that the University has enough student housing. Would it be good for the University to offer more on-campus housing opportunities? Naturally there are a lot of unanswered questions around this question e.g. financing, etc. Just because the University is an urban campus it should not use this as an excuse for bad behavior. Ms. Turonie added that there is definitely a strong interest in graduate and professional student housing at the University because of the extremely long waiting lists to get into the Como Terrace Coop and Commonwealth. Members went on to briefly discuss how the possible AHC expansion could affect student housing in the super block. Mr. Turonie referred members to the on-line AHC report at: <http://www.ahc.umn.edu/> for more information.

A member asked for an update on whether HRL has implemented its plan to de-list property owners that do not satisfy HRL's listing requirements. Ms. Turonie explained that HRL has implemented its new listing policy, which allows for three different ways in which a property owner can be de-listed:

1. If there are repeated complaints with Student Legal Services against a particular property owner.
2. If a property owner has 3 or more tenant initiated inspection complaints that are unresolved.
3. If a property owner or management company falsifies their listing application with HRL.

Once a de-listing occurs it is in effect for 12 months. After this 12-month period, the property owner can reapply assuming all the issues have been resolved.

Questions/comments from members:

- Have any property owners have been de-listed yet? Ms. Turonie noted that 3 property owners were de-listed in August when the policy went into effect.
- How do students know their rights as tenants? Ms. Turonie explained that the Office of Student Affairs in conjunction with Student Legal Services and HRL spend quite a bit of time educating students on their rights by holding workshops, referring students to city/municipality resources, etc.

- What is the status of the MSA on-line survey of students living in off-campus housing? Ms. Turonie reported that the survey results would be released in about a month or so.
- A member requested Ms. Turonie update the Committee on various events that took place this fall in collaboration with the neighborhoods around campus. Ms. Turonie highlighted the following:
 - A partnership with PANOLINIC/Marcy Holmes Neighborhood and the University and Minnesota Police Departments ³We Light up the Night².
 - September 18 the Southeast Como Neighborhood hosted the Como Cookout.
 - Movies in the Park.
 - Bagel give-away.

IV). Kristen Denzer reported on the Office of Student Affairs¹ Benchmarking trip to Michigan State in October and highlighted the following:

- In Ms. Denzer's opinion, a major difference between the University of Minnesota and Michigan State are their student fee models. Ms. Denzer believes the University should explore the feasibility of using the Michigan State model.
- The on-campus stadium was very convenient.

V). Kristen Denzer asked for 2 Faculty/P&A volunteers to serve on the Student Services Fee Subcommittee. Renee Dempsey, Senate staff, explained that the Subcommittee generally meets one to two times per year to review the Student Services Fee reports from the various campuses. Additionally, it was noted that June Nobbe, Director of Student Development & Leadership Programs, will be bringing forward at the fall 2004 meeting, proposed changes to the Board of Regent's Student Services Fee policy. Ms. Dempsey noted that the time commitment required for service on this Subcommittee is minimal.

Professor Jean Marie Del-Santo volunteered. Renee Dempsey was charged with emailing Faculty and P&A SCSA members to recruit a second volunteer.

VI). Other business: A member asked if there have been decisions made around assessing students a fee for the proposed stadium. Vice Provost Rinehart stated that until this matter goes before the Board of Regents in November to be put on the 2006 capital plan, it is unlikely there will be any discussions around charging students a fee. The administration is also waiting to see if a donor will come forward for this project.

VII). Hearing no further business, Kristen Denzer adjourned the meeting.

Renee Dempsey
University Senate