

2004-05 UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

NOVEMBER 4, 2004

STUDENT SENATE MINUTES: No. 2

The second meeting of the Student Senate for 2004-05 was convened in 165 Peik Hall, Minneapolis campus, on Thursday, November 4, 2004, at 11:36 a.m. Coordinate campuses were linked by ITV. Checking or signing the roll as present were 32 voting student. Chair Nathan Wanderman presided.

1. MINUTES FOR SEPTEMBER 30, 2004

Action

MOTION:

To approve the Student Senate minutes, which are available on the Web at the following URLs. A simple majority is required for approval.

<http://www1.umn.edu/usenate/ssen/040930stu.html>

**STUART GOLDSTEIN, CLERK
UNIVERSITY SENATE/
TWIN CITIES CAMPUS ASSEMBLY**

DISCUSSION:

With no discussion, a vote was taken and the minutes were approved.

APPROVED

**2. STUDENT SENATE/ STUDENT SENATE
CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE CHAIR REPORT**

Nathan Wanderman, Student Senate Consultative Committee (SSCC) Chair, said that the committee has been discussing several items. First is the biennial funding request, which was discussed in detail by the President at the September 30 University Senate meeting. He noted that the University has added another \$58 million to its request due to an increase in enrollment, but what exactly the funding will be used for needs to be clarified for students.

He said that he is working with the Faculty Consultative Committee (FCC) Chair, Marvin Marshak, on housing policies to allow for more co-ed housing and late night bussing.

Nathan Wanderman said that he will be visiting the University of Wisconsin-Madison campus this weekend as part of a benchmarking trip. He plans to talk to their student government about how some things are done there as ways to improve processes here.

Lastly, SSCC is planning an intra-University student governance conference to take place spring semester. The goal of the conference would be to discuss common student issues and exchange ideas among the campuses.

3. ASSEMBLY/ASSOCIATION UPDATES

Crookston – Paul Christensen reported that CSA is looking at technology and athletic fees and a smoking ban around campus buildings. They are also planning the Winter Wonderland, which has campus decorating downtown Crookston. CSA is also involved in the new student center and is working for a new fitness center on campus.

Duluth – Tom Pielow said that Duluth is working on plans for its winter formal.

Morris – Nate Hilfiker said that there will be a student leaders network dinner on campus next Monday to connect the campus student groups. MCSA is looking at the student technology fee and considering a change to how students fee money is allocated. They have also completed a security walk on campus and are requesting that cameras be installed in some areas. Lastly, MCSA is discussing grade transferability within the University system and why it differs from grade transferability from outside the system.

4. GAPSA REPORT

Jamie Larson, GAPSA representative to SSCC, said that GAPSA has been working with MSA on its lobbying efforts and wants to have a more consistent presence at the state capitol this year. One function that GAPSA performs is a series of social events each semester for graduate and professional students. However, a policy change has arisen that will no longer allow student service fees dollars to be used to purchase alcohol for these events. Starting in December, attendees will need to personally purchase alcohol at the events.

5. STUDENT EVALUATIONS OF TEACHING UPDATE

Discussion

What's the deal with Teacher Evaluations?

The Minnesota Government Data Practices Act (Minnesota Statute 13.43) makes some information about employees public. Public information includes the following:

- **Information about the job;** Salary, pension, fringe benefits, contract fees, expense reimbursements, job title, job description, dates of employment, work location, work telephone, and payroll documents.
- **Information about the employee;** Education, training, previous work experience, city and county of residence, honors and awards, settlement agreements regarding

employment disputes, the existence and status of complaints against the employee, and disciplinary history.

Personnel information that does not fall in a "public" classification generally is private. Examples of private personnel information include performance reviews, teaching evaluations, and personal information such as family information, home address and phone number (unless you included them in the directory), race, and social security number.

Personal information can be released at the request of an employee pursuant to Minnesota Statute 13.05 Subdivision 4 (d):

- Private data may be used by and disseminated to any person or agency if the individual subject or subjects of the data have given their informed consent.
 - (7) Specific as to its expiration date which should be within a reasonable period of time, not to exceed one year

Note: This information gathered from the University of Minnesota General Counsel's Office website at <http://www.ogc.umn.edu/questions/viewfaq.cgi?id=882204158> and a conversation with Associate General Counsel Tracy Smith.

What now?

Since we have no way of universally releasing the student section under this law, we have several other options:

- Pass a resolution encouraging teachers to release their survey results
- Ask Faculty Senate for support in a "Release the Student Release Section" campaign
- E-mail deans and ask them to ask faculty to release survey results
- Work to try to get the legislature to add faculty evaluation exemption to law

DISCUSSION:

Nathan Wanderman said under the current system instructors need to sign a release each semester to have their ten student evaluation questions released for posting on the web. As of last spring, only 20 percent actually provided this release. Therefore, he had wanted to mandate that these ten questions, which do not affect employment, be automatically released.

Nathan Wanderman spoke with Tracy Smith, Associate General Counsel, about this proposal. She informed him that according to Minnesota Statute 13.43, these questions are considered private data and cannot automatically be released.

He then asked whether instructors could just sign one waiver that would permit release until the instructor says otherwise. The response was that another Minnesota Statute, 13.05, states that a release can be for a period no more than one-year. This led him to revise the options of how to

proceed, which are listed on the handout. He asked if senators would want to see a resolution prepared for the next Student Senate meeting.

A senator said that senators should work to encourage instructor release within their own schools and programs and work to improve the questions.

Q: Has the University considered a student-run website for evaluation information?

A: While this has proven successful at some schools, it would likely be a full-time job for someone here.

A senator then said that he remembered a student-run site in the past, but it was not highly used.

Another senator said that Duluth has a third party website that has run smoothly for three years.

A senator then commented that the Director of Undergraduate Studies in departments should also be contacted to help with faculty releases.

Another senator then noted that the student release section should be general questions, not campus-specific, but that campuses should be allowed to add specific questions if needed.

6. INSTRUCTOR EDUCATION

Discussion

Center for Teaching and Learning Services

The University of Minnesota is one of the few schools with a teaching support program directly available to faculty and TAs. The Center for Teaching and Learning Services operates for the Twin Cities Campus and offers:

- Services
 - Small Group Instructional Diagnosis (SGID)
 - Teacher-requested student focus group designed to give feedback on teaching techniques and curriculum
 - Teaching consultations
 - Including “ask a quick teaching question”
 - Thank a teacher
 - Students can pass complements on to teachers
- Workshops
 - Teaching Enrichment Series
 - Online workshops
 - Customized workshops
- Programs
 - Preparing future teachers
 - Tutorial for doctoral students
 - Various current-teacher programs

- Various other resources are available at the web site:
<http://www1.umn.edu/ohr/teachlearn/tasuper/section4.html>

So, what does this have to do with me?

Right now, very little. The most you can do through this service is thank a teacher. However, the Center for Teaching and Learning Services should add the following to their program:

- A student complaint section where specific complaints can be compiled and forwarded to faculty along with suggestions for improvement
- An expansion of the program to other campuses
- A heightened awareness of the Center for Teaching and Learning Services
- A requirement for new TAs to take some course from the Center for Teaching and Learning Services

DISCUSSION:

Nathan Wanderman said he was surprised when he discovered that there is a program for faculty and teaching assistants that helps them learn how to teach. Unfortunately, the program is not mandatory and it appears that the people using the Center's resources are not the ones who need it. He suggested asking the Center to add some services, as outlined on the handout.

A senator noted that the last two items on the improvement list already exist and that all incoming teaching assistants have to go through some minimal training. Further training then depends on what the department will allow.

Another senator noted that some other graduate positions might include teaching responsibilities, but that only official teaching assistants are required to take the class. These classes also do not guarantee that someone will be a good instructor.

Another senator then said that her college offers a college-specific, semester long class, for teaching assistants.

Nathan Wanderman said that he is not sure of any other institution that offers this type of education, but that there are always ways to improve the program and to encourage more participation.

A senator then noted that Directors of Graduate Studies should be targeted to encourage their teaching assistants to take advantage of the Center's services.

7. ALCOHOL POLICY

Discussion

Tom Pielow noted that the SSCC formed an Alcohol Task Force last year to review current policies in place and make recommendations. The Task Force found that since the Regents' Policy allows each campus to set its own guidelines, discrepancies have arisen between the campuses. One example is that Morris and the Twin Cities allow alcohol possession by of-age students in the residence halls while Crookston and Duluth prohibit the practice. The Task Force also found that the penalties varied greatly by campus.

A senator noted that the Chancellor has the authority to grant alcohol exemptions in Duluth, but that this has never been done. More equity is needed among the campuses.

Another senator commented that a campus bar would reduce safety risks since most students would not need to drive and would provide additional revenues for general University funding.

Another senator noted that a campus bar would probably cost more than it makes because of the liability risk.

A senator then asked Nathan Wanderman to talk with the Madison students about operating their campus bar.

Nathan Wanderman asked if any senators wanted to serve on a task force to work on having a bar on campus.

While no senators volunteered for this task force, a senator noted that it might be more effective to work on equity in residence hall possession rather than a campus bar.

8. STUDENT LOBBYING EFFORT

Discussion with Mike Dean

Mike Dean, Coordinator for the Legislative Network, joined the meeting to discuss the upcoming legislative session and ways to increase student involvement. He noted that there was a great student voter turnout for the election, but now those same students need to pressure the legislature this session. Key items for the University are the bonding bill and biennial request at the state level and the reauthorization of the higher education act at the federal level.

He noted that there are several ways for students to help early in the process. First, students can ask friends and family members to contact legislators as well to support the University. Constituent meetings will also be held with new House members to educate them about the University and student participation is encouraged. Next, students can join the Legislative Network at: [http://support the U.umn.edu](http://support.theU.umn.edu).

Other events for spring semester will include the Legislative Briefing to be held on January 27 at 5:30 p.m. in McNamara Alumni Center. This is the kick-off event for the University. Student support will be vital to a successful Lobby Day this year on February 16. To increase attendance at this event, all representative groups, faculty, staff, students, alumni, are being encouraged to attend. This event is a great way for legislators to hear personal stories from students.

There are also two on-going functions next semester. The first is Thursdays at the Capitol which functions as a mini-lobby day and provides a constant University presence throughout the session, Colleges and campuses each sponsor one Thursday, and then arrange for 20-30 people to lobby on that date. The second on going event is Calling Nights to faculty, staff, students, and alumni who are not Legislative Network members but likely support the University request.

In conclusion he said that students have the power to affect the outcome in the legislature this session if they get involved, or they will get stuck with the results if they are not involved. He asked senators to encourage students to participate or email him at mpdean@umn.edu with any questions or concerns.

Q: What is the Federal Higher Education Act?

A: The act has two pieces. One is to regulate the total amount of financial aid available and the interest rate for payback. The second part involves policy decisions, such as the requirements for receiving federal grants.

Q: What is included in the additional \$58 million that University is requesting from the legislature?

A: No specifics have been disclosed yet, but the request is in response to the University enrolling additional students and needing additional funding to offset these costs.

Q: What are ways to engage students in the lobbying effort?

A: Many students do not know how to get involved and are not educated on the issues. Focus should be placed on younger students who have more to gain from receiving the full request.

Q: Are there statistics available about how the University's funding compare with other states?

A: It is hard to compare funding level because there are so many variables (i.e., state population and how the higher education system is organized).

Q: What methods can be used to reach students?

A: Campus emails, working through campus assemblies and associations, 'fireside chats' in the residence halls, posters, events in several locations, and offering food and beverages are some methods. Phone calls should not be used since it annoys many students.

A senator then suggested that each senator work with Mike Dean to schedule a time for him to meet with a group that they represent.

Nathan Wanderman noted that the Student Senate might increase its leverage potential in the later parts of the budget process if it shows that it was involved in recruiting student support. He asked for one volunteer from each assembly/association to be a key contact for the Student

Senate and Mike Dean. Volunteers were: Jamie Larson (GAPSA), Emily Cox (MSA), Nathan Hilfiker (MCSA), Paul Christensen (CSA), and Tom Pielow (UMDSA). He suggested that each assembly/association might sponsor an event for students. Mike Dean could provide resources for planning the event.

He then asked for a second set of volunteers to serve as a group to organize the Student Senate's own lobbying effort. Volunteers for this group included: Taquee Khaled, Ryan Lukas, Stephanie Hvinden, Tom Pielow, Sara Campbell, Nathan Hilfiker, and Jim Kanten.

Lastly, Mike Dean asked for student representatives to attend the Lobby Day Organizing Committee meeting on Friday, November 5 at 10 a.m. in 12 Morrill Hall.

9. OLD BUSINESS

NONE

10. NEW BUSINESS

NONE

11. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 12:44 p.m.

Rebecca Hippert
Abstractor