

2010-11 UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

DECEMBER 2, 2010

STUDENT SENATE MINUTES: No. 2

The second meeting of the Student Senate for 2010-11 was convened in 25 Mondale Hall on Thursday, December 2, 2010, at 11:34 a.m. Coordinate campuses were linked by ITV. Checking or signing the roll as present were 30 student members. Chair Aaron Carlson presided.

1. COUNCIL OF ACADEMIC PROFESSIONALS AND ADMINISTRATORS UPDATE

For Information:

Council of Academic Professionals and Administrators (CAPA) represents the professional class of 5200 non-unionized employees at the University. This class was started in 1980 and CAPA was formed as an advisory committee to the President. Academic professionals (P&A) have skills between civil service employees and faculty in jobs such as teachers, researchers, advisors, counselors, and extension service workers. Most people stay in this classification or move to a faculty position. P&A employees have some of the same benefits as faculty, but work on annually renewable contracts.

CAPA meets from 9:00-11:00 am the third Friday of each month in 101 Walter Library and meetings are open to the public. CAPA consists of 40 representatives from campus units and colleges and has four committees: Benefits and Compensation, Representation and Governance, Professional Development and Recognition, and Communications.

Discussion:

Steven Pearthree, Vice Chair of the Council of Academic Professionals and Administrators (CAPA), said that he is the chair-elect for 2011-12. He said that CAPA's current issue is the realignment to a P&A Senate and revising its governance documents. This issue will be brought to the University Senate later today and he urged students to support the motion.

2. CIVIL SERVICE COMMITTEE UPDATE

For Information:

The Civil Service Committee (CSC) represents the approximately 5000 employees in this category which includes accountants, scientists, executive assistants, and administrators. The classification was started in 1945 with the passage of the civil service rules by the Regents. In 1984 PELRA was passed which allowed for the creation of a bargaining unit separate from civil service employees.

CSC is composed of fifteen members and several alternates. The committee elects a chair, vice chair, and treasurer each year, with the vice chair becoming next year's chair. Members are selected by a committee and appointed by the President to three-year terms. CSC meets the fourth Thursday of each month from 9:00 am-12:00 pm.

Discussion:

Frank Strahan, Chair of the Civil Service Committee (CSC), said that they are working on the move to a Civil Service Senate. This involves discussions with the Office of Human Resources as the Civil Service Employment Rules also need to be revised. For this reason, the civil service changes will not be presented at today's University Senate meeting but instead at a spring semester meeting. Other issues for the committee include the upcoming furlough, which will take three days of pay from civil service employees, and retention of civil service employees during University restructuring.

3. STUDENT SENATE/ STUDENT SENATE CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE CHAIR REPORT

Aaron Carlson, Student Senate and Student Senate Consultative Committee (SSCC) Chair, said he has been meeting with the Office of Student Affairs to solidify the student input process. He is proposing that a nominating committee be created between the Student Senate, MSA, and GAPSA as a way to select Twin Cities students for service on administrative committees and searches. He, along with other student governance leaders, had the opportunity to meet with Dr. Kaler prior to his appointment as president and he found him very amenable to the student governance process. For example, Dr. Kaler was a Student Representative to the Regents during his time at the University.

He is also working with Sarah Shook, the MSA President, on educational programs for new senators and committee members to work on the steep learning curve. He would these efforts to eliminate burn-out for continuing members as well as provide information to ambitious leaders.

Upcoming issues for SSCC include student release question follow-up, publishing a list of top instructors, excused absences for student senators, and a comprehensive safety overview for all the campuses. Upcoming events include the Regents meetings on December 9-10, the Student Advisory Committee meeting on December 16, and the Rally to Restore Affordability at the Capital on February 22.

4. ASSEMBLY/ASSOCIATION UPDATES

Due to technology issues, there were no reports provided at the meeting.

5. MINUTES FOR SEPTEMBER 30, 2010

MOTION:

To approve the Student Senate minutes, which are available on the Web at the following URL:

<http://www1.umn.edu/usenate/ssen/100930stu.html>

**STUART GOLDSTEIN, CLERK
UNIVERSITY SENATE**

DISCUSSION:

With no discussion a vote was taken and the motion was approved.

APPROVED

6. STATE BUDGET FORECAST AND LEGISLATIVE OUTLOOK

Discussion with Donna Peterson

Donna Peterson in University Relations presented a series of slides to set the context for the discussion. The slide showed the state budget which is set every two years. The University was supposed to receive \$702.6 million each year for two years but the allocation was reduced in the first year to \$623.4 million and to \$591.1 million in the second year. The University is starting this biennium with a base budget of \$642.2 million. The University's request this year is not for new funding but just to maintain the previous funding level.

The next slide showed the historic actual funding and funding when adjusted for inflation. It showed that funding to the University has been flat or decreasing when inflation is taken into account. The third slide showed the trends for state funding and tuition and the fourth is the University's revenue allotment.

She said that the party leaders are known and the House and Senate Higher Education Committee Chairs have been selected. The House Chair is Bud Nornes and the Senate Chair is Michelle Fishbach. Bud Nornes is familiar with the University while Michelle Fishbach is new to the committee. Republicans are in a different positions this year in the Senate. Previously they were not in the majority but now they are chairing most of the committees. The governor has yet to be decided.

If the governor is sworn in in January, as is typical, the governor would present his budget in early February to the legislature. That budget is based on today's budget forecast, estimated at \$6.2 billion, calculated from state revenues and expenditures. The House and Senate leadership have said that they will not raise taxes which means that this deficit needs to be cut from the current budget, which amounts to a 17 percent cut. The state needs to balance the budget at the end of the biennium or face a government shutdown.

One of the big issues on the table is how will higher education be treated. This encompasses the University, MnSCU, and financial aid funding. Last year there was a huge deficit in the state financial aid program due to more use from students. In response, grant amounts were cut and this is a concern again this year.

Q: The University is different from MnSCU in terms of its mission and lobbying efforts. How can students help the University?

A: The University has a research and outreach mission that is distinct from MnSCU and provides a value to the state. She knows that legislators want to protect K-12 education and health care funding so how can the University compete against these entities. The state needs to invest in the University so that its high quality continues into the future. Decreases in state funding can not just be replaced with tuition or private funding. The question this year is not whether the University will be cut but how large the cut will be. The University needs to be better at talking about its economic contribution to the state. This is the reason that the President has asked for a study to be done on this topic. The message needs to be that investments at the University create jobs in the private sector. She encouraged students to provide a voice to state representatives, senators, and the Governor.

Q: When will the University see impacts of this budget deficit?

A: The Governor's budget will be released in early February. The University will then have a benchmark for where funding levels might be. Hearings will start at the legislature and then the House and Senate will produce bills in March. These bills will provide another indication of the

University's funding level. Conference committees will start to meet so that they are finished by mid-May. Between that time and the end of June, the University will set its annual budget.

Q: Are there some areas that the University predicts to be harder hit than others if there are budget cuts?

A: This question is best addressed to Vice President Pfutzenreuter or Senior Vice President Sullivan. Her job is just to lobby for full funding.

Q: How can students best identify with legislators?

A: Students are the ones having the experience at the University so they are the best advocates. Legislators should be provided with personal information such as why the student chose the University and what they chose to do while studying and after graduation. Legislators also need to hear from non-Minnesota residents since many times these students remain in the state after graduation which is a good sign for a state with an elderly population. Students can also talk about the impacts of recent cuts and why University funding is important. Many legislators have not had any direct experience with higher education since they were students. The most important thing is for students to be comfortable and talk about what they know.

Q: Do students in the Legislative Certificate Program (LCP) program work with her office?

A: Yes. They start working with her office in the fall and then throughout the session. They can be contacted if a student is needed at a hearing. They have been useful over the past few years to keep other students informed and provide a continuing student presence at the capital.

7. CLA 2015 REPORT Discussion with Co-Chair Christopher Uggen

Christopher Uggen, Professor of Sociology and co-chair of the CLA 2015 Committee, reviewed the report that is available at: <http://purl.umn.edu/96386>. He said that he is pleased to be meeting with this group of students after discussing the report with the CLA Student Board last night. He wants this to be a discussion to engage the student viewpoint.

The Provost asked each college to develop an internal Blue Ribbon Committee that would look inside the college. The University has been in a period of budget reductions, which have been made across-the-board. This is viewed as the path of least resistance and as being fair and legitimate. However, when done long-term, this process whittles away at the core and is not sustainable. The Provost's direction this time was to be strategic when making cuts but also to find ways to move forward on new investments.

A 30 person committee was formed which included one undergraduate student, one graduate student, staff, faculty, and members from the Dean's Office. Gary Oehlert, Associate Dean for Planning and Professor of Statistics, was his co-chair. Due to his position, Associate Dean Oehlert has a better handle on the various budget models at the University.

A report was issued in February 2010 to make recommendations for this year's budget. That process was very sensitizing since the effect from a three percent actually became an 8.05 percent cut. This was because the three percent cut was on the college's gross budget but the committee can only control about 30 percent of the total budget. Therefore many cuts had to come from a few vulnerable areas, such as graduate education and academic professional employees.

After the February report was released and a few town hall meetings were held, the committee went back to work on developing this latest document which has two parts. One is the internal self-examination and reconfiguration to deal with current cuts and make the college strong and a leader in 2015 when the recession has ended.

The focus was on student centrality by not just preserving the undergraduate experience but also to provide a signature program that will draw students to cutting edge programs, shape the next leaders, make better use of the alumni network and the community, and to look closely at requirements, majors, and communications to students. He looked at each department's website to see their public face and how they describe their programs. Even with a Ph.D., this process was confusing for him so he wondered how an incoming student would fare. The committee made over 60 recommendations of which 13 dealt with the undergraduate experience

The second part of the report dealt with the College in the broader context of the University and state. This part of the report introduces the concept of the controllable budget. Currently, 40 percent of the college's budget goes to taxes, 30 percent goes to tenure and tenure-track faculty, and the remaining 30 percent is what is affected by cuts.

In his view, CLA has done a good job insulating students from the brunt of past budget reductions but the committee's sense is that the college is stretched thin. For example, when planning courses, many classes are already at room capacity.

He, along with the other co-chair, are optimistic about the future in that moves can now be made so that the college is more nimble. They have asked departments to look at the tracks that they have students on and the requirements that are in place to see if they are best serving the student need. One example is senior projects. Great investments are made in staffing and organizing courses, but there are more interesting things that can be done in upper-level elective courses that will give students a more rich education in their areas of greatest interest in smaller classes.

Other examples are new degree programs and minors, more holistic courses offered in the sophomore year, reviewing student communications, and scheduling classes to meet student and classroom needs versus when faculty prefer to teach.

He said that he will not be involved in the implementation of the recommendations as this is the task for the Dean.

Q: The report suggests shifting to a more student-centered model, but the report also states that 30 percent of the budget goes towards tenured and tenure-track faculty. These faculty tend to do things a certain way and will continue in that manner. What are the committee's recommendations on shifting this thought to better the college?

A: Faculty are the group within the University who are the most resistant to change, but the situation is not hopeless. There are some faculty who are leading and these people need to be empowered. One reality is that the faculty ranks are not expected to grow; these numbers will likely decrease slightly. The college will need to support innovative technologies and generalize them for all faculty use. This will benefit all students. One area that is most promising is that faculty are involving more students directly in research. This is a comparative advantage for CLA as the University's vibrant research environment has direct benefits to students. This report is reality-based, is starting conversations among faculty, and will produce changes.

Q: When would administrative restructuring start?

A: This is the Dean's decision but it will be an on-going process. In the CLA research centers, the Dean is already moving towards some administrative consolidation. The report boldly

suggested an 8-10 percent cap on administrative costs per unit. To get there would take time for some units but the committee felt that this was a good goal. This data was put into the report since if the University and state are asking for transparency, then the College needs to be transparent as well. A concrete, prioritized plan will be released from the Dean in the spring. Taking more time will be changes in majors and minors as current students have a four-year degree guarantee.

Q: How will the utilization of information technology affect online and distance education resources?

A: This was the most controversial issue on the committee. The University is moving towards more technology usage and hybrid degree models, but they need to make sure that it is done correctly. Technology also has a high cost of investment and should not be introduced as a cost-savings measure. There is also the fear that it will dilute a traditional education. There is a terrific, innovative information technology group in CLA that will help with these efforts. Areas where these efforts are particularly controversial are language education. One committee that was suggested for reinstatement would deal with technology for the College.

Q: One part of the report showed the cost per student credit hour by department. Some of the departments can explain higher costs, such as Music and Theatre. Will more investigation be done as to the high costs associated with other departments such as History?

A: Including that chart was particularly controversial since it is just one metrics that can be used and it does not speak to the quality of education. The metric is important when talking about student centricity because those figures are driven by the number of students being served. Units that are not serving students appear to be more expensive. The question to be answered is how to direct resources to where they are most needed due to increased student usage. The committee did not want the report to state that small departments are inefficient but instead asked that all departments be looked at to see what they do and how they are distinct. Costs can be reduced by creative restructuring. It might be decided that independent departments might not be the best type of organization in tight budget times.

Q: If there is a decision to eliminate majors, will a study be done to assess student success post-graduation?

A: There is not great data on this topic. Job placement is part of success but it is not the defining feature. He believes that student interest is more important. There are currently 70 programs in the college and some only serve five or fewer students. These programs could be protected if there is a demonstrated record of success but most of this data is not longitudinal. For some CLA graduates, earning and employee rates are not great post-graduation but they usually improve in the second and third years.

Q: Did the report recommend influences in other parts of the University?

A: The Dean reached out to the other deans prior to the report's release and there were positive discussions. A focus on students is shared by the other colleges. The University will need to have greater cooperation across colleges and the system. It cannot continue to plan in isolation.

8. OLD BUSINESS

NONE

9. NEW BUSINESS

NONE

10. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 12:48 pm.

**Rebecca Hippert
Abstractor**