

**Senate Committee on Educational Policy (SCEP)**  
**November 18, 2020**  
**Minutes of the Meeting**

*These minutes reflect discussion and debate at a meeting of a committee of the University of Minnesota Senate; none of the comments, conclusions or actions reported in these minutes represent the views of, nor are they binding on, the senate, the administration or the Board of Regents.*

[**In these minutes:** Introduction of New Members; Systemwide Strategic Plan Metrics; Diversity and Social Justice Theme; Educational Policy Update]

**PRESENT:** Thomas Chase (chair), Toni Abts, June Carbone, Dan Delaney, Stacy Doepner-Hove, Brett Heischmidt, Stephanie Huisman, Sara Hurley, Jennifer Goodnough, Nathan Gray-Garcia, Scott Lanyon, John LaVelle, Danya Leebaw, Robert McMaster, Robert Poch, Jennie Row, Katherine Scheil, Brian Sick, Rayan Tejada, Drew Vechell

**ABSENT:** Jacob Smiley

**GUESTS:** Rachel Croson, Executive Vice President and Provost; Kathryn Pearson, chair, Council on Liberal Education; Marlo Welshons, assistant to the provost, Office of the Executive Vice President and Provost

**OTHERS:** Deb Cran, senior assistant to the provost, Office of the Executive Vice President and Provost; Matthew Croft; academic affairs director, Minnesota Student Association; Etty DeVeaux, chief of staff, Graduate Education; Gunnar Frahm, vice chair, Student Senate/Student Senate Consultative Committee; Bill Haldeman, senior assistant to the president, Office of the President; Brianne Keeney, assistant to the president, Office of the President; Jessica Kuecker Grotjohn, assistant to the vice provost, Office of Undergraduate Education; Jennifer Reckner, director, Office of Undergraduate Education; Leslie Schiff, associate dean, University curriculum, Office of Undergraduate Education; Karen Starry, assistant to the vice provost, Graduate Education; Sue Van Voorhis, associate vice provost and University registrar, Office of Undergraduate Education

**1. Introduction of New Members**

Professor Thomas Chase, chair, called the meeting to order and called for a round of introductions. He welcomed two newly appointed student members, Nathan Gray-Garcia and Drew Vechell.

**2. Systemwide Strategic Plan Metrics**

Chase then turned the floor over to Executive Vice President and Provost Rachel Croson, who was present to seek the committee's feedback on [proposed metrics](#) for the Systemwide Strategic Plan. She noted in particular the goal of increasing the three-year graduation rate for students who enter with 60+ credits and are enrolled full-time, as a metric for the action item of establishing academic calendar flexibility to increase student engagement and year-round access.

Members offered the following input:

- With regard to three-year graduation rates, would 4+1 programs be included in that metric in some way (such as graduating in four years instead of five)?
- It would be important to track the demographics of students who are able to graduate in three years, as often those who come in with a lot of credits are from more privileged backgrounds. Croson acknowledged the truth in that, also noting that Pell-eligible students often are not able to receive federal financial aid for summer classes, which is another way to speed up time to degree to completion.
- With regard to the proposed target of ACT scores on the Twin Cities campus being in the interquartile range 27-32, how would that align with current discussions about test-optional admissions? ACT scores are also related to equity issues.
- Where can we capitalize on systemness with regard to three-year graduation rates? Can we reduce barriers to cross-campus enrollment via online courses?
- The retention rates in the Maroon and Gold measures did not take into account the composition of the Morris student body, and therefore the expected outputs were unrealistic.

Croson thanked members for their time, and noted that feedback would also be accepted via an [online form](#). The proposal is due to go before the Board of Regents at its meeting in December 2020.

### **3. Diversity and Social Justice Theme**

Chase then welcomed Professor Kathryn Pearson, chair, Council on Liberal Education (CLE). Pearson reminded members that she had visited with the committee previously in [July 2020](#) and had brought a proposal, initiated by the provost, to make the Diversity and Social Justice Liberal Education Theme mandatory for all students, revise the description to focus more on racial justice, and rename the requirement “Race, Power, and Justice in the U.S.” At that meeting, said Pearson, SCEP passed a motion to approve the proposal and empower CLE to complete additional consultation, especially with faculty of color; the current [proposal](#) was a result of that continued consultation. Pearson then opened the floor to questions and comments.

Nathan Gray-Garcia asked Pearson whether students or student leadership had been consulted on the proposal. Pearson said no, but reported that she had heard individually from students who were in strong support of such a move, even before discussions were initiated.

Rayan Tejada asked whether there were requirements on the method of teaching for such courses, and described an enlightening course he had taken that consisted of the instructor pairing up students from different backgrounds and instructing them to talk about their experiences, stereotypes, etc., in order to learn from each other. Pearson said that there would not be requirements as to the method of instruction, but that she anticipated many different types of courses being approved for the theme.

The committee then initiated a vote to approve the proposal to rename and revise the current Diversity and Social Justice theme to Race, Power, and Justice in the US, and make it required for all undergraduate students. With 16 in favor and one against, the motion carried.

Pearson thanked members for their time, noting that the proposal would be discussed at the next University Senate meeting on December 3, 2020, with a vote at a subsequent meeting.

#### **4. Educational Policy Update**

Marlo Welshons, assistant to the provost, Office of the Executive Vice President and Provost, directed the committee's attention to a [document](#) summarizing feedback on several educational policies that had been sent to the committee for electronic review. She asked if members had any further feedback on the policies; none was offered.

Scott Lanyon noted that there is currently no policy on micro-credentials that do not appear on transcripts, such as digital badges, and suggested that this could be a topic at a subsequent meeting. Members expressed support of this idea. While acknowledging that this may be more of an issue for graduate students at the moment, Croson remarked that it was likely to become an issue for the undergraduate population in the near future. Jennie Row commented that she had worked with graduate students, particularly first generation students, who did not realize they could list some of these accomplishments on their CV, and proposed that noting these experiences officially somehow might empower students to mention them in job applications. Jennifer Goodnough wondered if the Board of Regents may also want to weigh in on this issue.

Hearing no further discussion, Chase asked for a motion for adjournment. Matthew Croft, academic affairs director, Minnesota Student Association (MSA), who was attending as a guest, asked members if they had any feelings about the provost's decision not to follow [SCEP's recommendation](#) regarding the S/N grading issue. Chase said that he felt the provost had taken the committee's input into consideration in her deliberations, and thanked Croft for his comment. There was no further discussion on this issue. A motion to adjourn was made and seconded, and the meeting adjourned.

Amber Bathke  
University Senate Office