
The University Senate

FACULTY • STUDENT • P&A • CIVIL SERVICE

Meeting of:

The Student Senate

Thursday, October 24, 2024

1. Call to Order

Chair Taiwo Aremu called the meeting to order.

2. Confirmation of new members to vacant seats (Action) (11:30 a.m. - 11:45 a.m.)

The Student Senate Nominating Subcommittee met earlier in the semester to identify students to fill vacant Student Senate positions. The committee reviewed almost two hundred applications to select candidates. Nominated students were presented to the Student Senate for approval. The existing membership unanimously confirmed those appointed. Their terms began immediately and will run until the end of the academic year. The list of appointed students and the filled is included below.

- Brynn Hirsch, CLA, undergraduate
- Jacob Richter, CLA, undergraduate
- Leandro Idiarte, CLA, undergraduate
- Vanessa Jimenez Juarez, CLA, graduate
- Yudong Liang, CSE, graduate
- Brian Johnson, CSE, graduate
- Tsion Kebede, CEHD
- Jack Bellinger, CSOM, undergraduate
- Zebulon Shefa, CSOM, undergraduate
- Public Affairs, Hemangi Salunke
- Medical School, Christine Chau
- Nursing School, Michael Kong
- Pharmacy School, Yizheng Lin
- Public Health, Aishwarya Saravanan

3. Remarks from Board of Regents Member, Penny Wheeler

Board of Regents member Penny Wheeler joined the Student Senate to address the body and take questions. Wheeler introduced herself and shared about her perspective on the Board of Regents. The Regents are voted on by the legislature for six year terms. One of the seats includes a student representative. Wheeler emphasized that the student representative position will be open this coming year. Wheeler shared that the purpose of the Board of Regents is to provide direction to the University. Some of that direction involves reviewing and approving University wide policies. Wheeler mentioned the strong relationship with shared governance and the role our structure plays in helping to influence those policies. Wheeler expressed her gratitude for those willing to serve in shared governance and represent their student peers. Wheeler touched on some of the University priorities including developing a new strategic plan, employee retention, and system coordination.

Chase Krug asked Wheeler about closed sessions during Board of Regents meetings. Krug expressed his support for transparency and wanted to hear the reasoning and debate behind the Board's decisions. Wheeler acknowledged the importance of transparency and her interest in hearing more dialogue at the meetings. Wheeler mentioned that there are times when the Board must meet privately including for issues like litigation review.

4. Presentation from the Sexual Misconduct Prevention Program

Maggie Campe, Director of the Sexual Misconduct Prevention Program (SMPP) gave a presentation on the program. The program works to develop, coordinate, and evaluate methods for preventing sexual misconduct. The office was recently established in July of 2023 through an initiative in the President's office. SMPP is a system wide office. SMPP has several student-facing functions. They administer an advisory committee made up of undergraduate, graduate, and professional students. The committee works to identify what SMPP is succeeding in and what the office may want to address differently. SMPP conducts new student orientation online for the Twin Cities campus. They also offer training and programming for students that have been identified as higher risk. SMPP is preparing a survey to be administered in the spring of 2026. The last survey was completed in 2019 and was specific to the Twin Cities campus. The new survey will be for the entire University.

Campe also shared information about sexual misconduct training for employees. The first course was rolled out in the spring of 2018. There was a second rollout in the spring of 2021. SMPP will introduce a new course in May of 2025. The new course will help to define misconduct, identify University policies and resources, and increase employee skills to address and misconduct in the workplace.

Tina Marisam, Director of the Equal Opportunity Office and Title IX Coordinator, gave an overview of new Title IX regulations. Title IX is a federal law that prohibits sexual discrimination in education. The regulations set detailed rules for how educational institutions need to respond when sexual discrimination has been reported. The Biden administration started a comprehensive review of regulations starting in 2021. New regulations were released in the spring of 2024 to be implemented by the start of August this year. Marisam expressed support for the new regulations. Marisam explained the changes provided expanded rights, set new requirements on University response to discrimination, and increased the obligation for training on the applicable topics.

Marisam and her office worked quickly to amend University policies after the new regulations were released. This included addressing shared governance groups for information and feedback. Marisam shared that lawsuits quickly followed the new regulations and claimed they were unlawful. Courts have issued injunctions halting the regulations from being implemented. The University has amended its policies to comply with new changes, but it is currently still operating under the previous laws.

Dannah Nephew asked about the arguments that were being made against the regulations to hold them up in legal proceedings. Marisam explained that the main issue is the implementation of the new protected classes under the regulations. States that have brought cases against the regulations are claiming the Department of Education did not have the legal authority to expand the protected classes to sexual and gender orientation.

Remi Faust asked about the differences in sexual misconduct training across campuses. Campe clarified that sexual misconduct prevention training is the same across campuses. Other campuses may choose to opt into additional trainings beyond the prevention training. That decision is left to the different campuses.

5. Presentation from the Core Curriculum 2025 Committee (12:30 - 12:50 p.m.)

Will Durfee and Deena Wassenberg [presented information](#) from the Core Curriculum 2025 Committee. The proposal from the committee affects all undergraduate students at the Twin Cities campus. This proposal addresses the general education requirements for students. Currently, students are required to take courses in seven core areas, several courses on contemporary themes, and satisfy a writing requirement. Durfee notes that the curriculum requirements were sufficient when they were developed, but the requirements may lack the ability for students to take agency and develop a curriculum that is meaningful to them. The new curriculum will help to address this and provide a connection between courses.

Durfee explained the proposal includes different contemporary focus areas. Students will be required to choose one and then take three courses within that area. The focus areas are intended

for students to learn about a specific topic through multiple lenses. There will be a foundations component. There are six broad areas where students will need to take a course in each foundation. Students will still have a writing component to satisfy. Additionally, there will be a one credit course to introduce students to the curriculum and another course to help students synthesize what they learned through general education.

6. Old Business

There was no old business.

7. New Business

Chase Krug introduced two items of new business to be considered. The motion to consider the items received a second from Justin Ho. The motion passed. Krug made a second motion to move the new business items to follow item five on the agenda. Dannah Nephew raised a point of order on the motion. Aremu overruled the motion to adjust the agenda.

After item 5, Krug made a successful motion (second from Christine Chau) to table the assembly/association updates and the Student Senate Chair report to move the new business discussion ahead in the agenda.

Krug's new business item included a [Letter to President Cunningham on Upcoming GLU-UE Strike Authorization Vote](#). Krug made a motion to vote on the letter as written. Ethan Fiegel seconded the motion and the body approved the motion. The body began discussion on the letter. Christine Chau expressed support for the motion emphasizing the importance of the letter. Hailee Eidelbes also expressed support for the letter as long as any potential demonstrations from the strike stay peaceful. Discussion ended and the body voted on the letter. The letter was passed by the body.

Krug's other item of new business was a [Resolution Censuring the University of Minnesota Police Department Regarding the Improper Detainment of a Minnesota Daily Reporter](#). Krug made a motion to approve the resolution and Fiegel seconded the motion. The body began discussion on the resolution. Aaron Mays expressed opposition to the resolution. Mays pointed out that the University of Minnesota Police Department (UMPD) has already issued an explanation and apology for the arrest of the student. Krug spoke in favor of the resolution and clarified that the main point of the resolution is to censure the UMPD and put on record that the Student Senate was opposed to the actions taken. Discussion ended and the body voted to approve the resolution.

8. Assembly/Association Updates

Sam Schmall gave the report from the Duluth student government. Schmall shared that the body is almost to capacity after recent appointments. Schmall said this was the largest the body has been since before the covid pandemic. The body has also met with the Chancellor at Duluth to talk about basic needs on their campus.

Krug provided an update from the Council of Graduate Students. They were meeting later that evening to approve their advocacy platform. They would then move into committees afterwards.

Roscoe Torbenson gave an update from the Twin Cities Undergraduate Student Government. Torbenson talked about initiatives to boost voter turnout on campus and a goal to enhance sustainability efforts at the University.

Dannah Nephew provided an update from the Professional Student Government. They are currently working on finding a new secretary for communications. PSG is also working alongside USG to help with advocacy on sustainability initiatives.

9. Student Senate/Student Senate Consultative Committee Chair Report

Aremu provided his report. Aremu emphasized the communication sent out earlier in the week about the attendance policy. Aremu encouraged members to read through the communication and the attendance policy. Those with questions should reach out to Aremu or John Lof. Aremu also talked about Student Senate leadership conducting Senate meetings remotely from each campus over the spring. Several leaders would travel to a system campus to join senators from that campus. Aremu encouraged new senators to ask questions and reach out to leadership if they needed assistance and to complete the provided training over canvas.

10. Adjournment (1:30 p.m.)

Hearing no other business, Aremu adjourned the meeting.

John Lof
University Senate Office