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# The University Senate

FACULTY · STUDENT · P&A · CIVIL SERVICE

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## UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

### Senate Committee on Student Affairs (SCSA)

March 16, 2022

### 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 reflect the views of, nor are they binding on, the senate, the administration, or the Board of Regents.*

[**In these minutes:** University of Minnesota Duluth (UMD) - Student Affairs and Student Government Update; Student Engagement on the St. Paul Campus; Update on the Building Namings Policy (Board of Regents Policy: *Namings and Renaming*)]

**PRESENT:** Cody Mikl (chair), Liza Meredith, Marie Monter, Sarah Beraki, Paulina Uitdenbogerd, Lucia Morelos Quintero, Kendre Turonie

**REGRETS:** Madeline Squier, Gabrielle Raymond

**ABSENT:** Nathaniel Mills, Adrienne Conley, Abbie Amundsen, Achiri Fon-Achu, Justin Goetz, Fatuma-Duthi Hassan, Leah Higgins, Maura McGinnity, Brianna Murano, Frank Walsh, Heather McGinnis

**GUESTS:** Lisa Erwin, vice chancellor and dean of students, Student Life, University of Minnesota Duluth (UMD); Annie Counihan, student body president, University of Minnesota Duluth Student Association (UMDSA); Marissa Suiter, assistant director, Student Unions & Activities (SUA)

**OTHERS:** David Israels-Swenson, Megan Sweet

Chair Cody Mikl welcomed the committee, and members introduced themselves.

### **1. University of Minnesota Duluth (UMD) - Student Affairs and Student Government**

**Update** - Mikl introduced Lisa Erwin, vice chancellor and dean of students, Student Life, University of Minnesota Duluth (UMD), and Annie Counihan, student body president, University of Minnesota Duluth Student Association (UMDSA), to provide an update on student affairs and student government initiatives on the Duluth campus. Counihan presented a [slide deck](#) and highlights were as follows:

- UMDSA has worked on a number of topics and initiatives, including supporting the University's COVID-19 vaccine mandate, supporting students who contracted

COVID-19, and working with SEA Stem (Students for Equity and Accountability in the Sciences, Technology, Engineering, and Math) to combat hostile climates and gender bias in the STEM world.

- UMDSA expanded its partnership with Lyft for its Bulldog Lyft program. This program provides coupons for safe rides for students and currently has 877 active users.
- UMDSA has hosted several events, including Bulldog Lobby Day, Bulldog Welcome Week, Counseling Night, and Band Together for Mental Health. UMDSA also collaborated on a diversity and inclusion social mixer event.
- UMDSA advocated for student legal services, similar to the services on the Twin Cities campus. This would allow UMD students to have access to legal services to assist them with issues such as housing agreements. UMDSA has requested \$20,000 to start a pilot program next year and is awaiting approval from the Board of Regents.

Erwin continued the presentation and highlights were as follows:

- Part of the University's MPACT 2025 Strategic Plan is to address student wellbeing. Student health survey data has shown a sharp increase in diagnosed mental health conditions, including anxiety, depression, and panic attacks. More than half of the students who took the survey stated that they were unable to manage their stress over the past year.
- UMD offers several resources for student mental health. The campus has tried to embrace a broad view to support multiple dimensions of student wellbeing, including mind, body, purpose, community connection, environment, and finances.
- Facility maintenance has progressed on campus, including the addition of a new flow system for its pool. The campus has also updated some dining areas, including the new Grind spaces. Currently, a proposed new housing and dining facility is on pause. The delay was mostly caused by enrollment decline after the pandemic.
- UMD has been working on a Freedom of Expression website based on a project started on the Twin Cities campus. The website is meant to help navigate and clarify values around freedom of expression.

Mikl asked for further details of the "Get it Done" pilot program. Erwin said the concept came from the counseling center and it is envisioned as group work to finish tasks and handle other executive functions. Mikl applauded the program and said it can help students from feeling overwhelmed by so much work and understand how to utilize time management.

Sarah Beraki asked if the statistics associated with student mental health were aligned with other institutions. Erwin replied that the survey was performed by Boynton Health on the Twin Cities campus and the survey does take into account comparisons of 17 other college campuses. David Isreals-Swenson added that the figures are in line with other campuses, including Morris.

Liza Meredith asked about the demand for student counseling services. Erwin stated that the campus is keeping up relatively well with student demand for counseling services and there is good availability for emergency services. She noted that once a student is in the system and wishes to see a specific counselor, the wait times can become a bit longer.

Mikl asked how the campus was handling its balance between in-person and online engagement events and if students are preferring convenience or engagement. Erwin stated that her office is currently working to assess student preferences in this area while also working to accommodate a balance of flexible working arrangements for administrative employees.

**2. Student Engagement on the St. Paul Campus** - Mikl introduced Marissa Suiter, assistant director, Student Unions & Activities (SUA), who spoke about student engagement on the St. Paul campus. Suiter presented a [slide deck](#) and highlights were as follows:

- SUA supports multiple functions at the University, including 810 registered student groups. Groups can use the GopherLink service to find other groups and activities based on location, such as the St. Paul campus.
- Suiter listed a number of specific events happening in St. Paul at the Student Center and Bailey Hall. She emphasized that the Dairy Lab, which hosts ice cream, is very popular, along with other events co-sponsored by colleges and programs based on the campus.
- The Student Events and Entertainment team plans hundreds of free or low cost events for students. They have more than 320 events per year with 80,000 attendees. Events include celebrity speakers and comedians, concerts, and competitions.

Mikl commented about foot traffic and asked if there is a big difference between the student unions and other recreation facilities on the Twin Cities campuses. Suiter acknowledged that while she did not have specific numbers, traffic is different and much lower in St. Paul compared to Minneapolis. Therefore, she said, the offerings of programs and events are more proportional. Mikl commented that campus facilities usage is included in the [campus feasibility study](#). Suiter acknowledged that the St. Paul Student Center needs some help and updates as it is a challenging place to hold events. SUA is getting feedback from the board of governors and students as well.

Mikl asked if there was deflated engagement coming out of the pandemic and if there is a new demand for holding events in person. Suiter replied that it is difficult to assess that question as the campus saw a lot of hope for glimpses of normal activities in the fall, but the surge in the Omicron variant put a damper on many events. She noted that she is hearing a lot of excitement about the upcoming Spring Jam events.

**3. Update on the Building Namings Policy ([Board of Regents Policy: Namings and Renaming](#))** - Mikl provided a brief update on the Board of Regents Policy: Namings and Renaming and referenced a Minnesota [Daily](#) article. He wanted students to be aware of the progress being made after years of discussion about the possible renaming of buildings on campus due to questionable behaviors of University presidents and other contributors who have had their names attached to the buildings. He noted that there will now be a process to revisit each naming after 75 years.

Hearing no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Chris Kwapick  
University Senate Office