

EQUITY, ACCESS & DIVERSITY  
MINUTES OF MEETING  
MARCH 23, 2009

[In these minutes: Proposed Reduction in Hours of the Child Care Center, Health Care Savings Plan, Graduate School Dissolution, Proposed Cuts to Regents Scholarship Program]

[These minutes reflect discussion and debate at a meeting of a committee of the University of Minnesota Senate or Twin Cities Assembly; none of the comments, conclusions or actions reported in these minutes represent the views of, nor are they binding on, the Senate or Assembly, the Administration or the Board of Regents.]

PRESENT: Benjamin Munson, chair, Vicente Garces, MJ Gilbert, Susan Cable, Richard Graff, Keith Horvath, Katie Ballering, Manjari Govada

REGRETS: Shannon McGoffin, Kimberly Boyd, Diane Katsiaticas, Raul Marreto-Fente, Lauren Beach

ABSENT: Peg Lonnnquist, Anne Phibbs, Patrick Troup, Joel Eisinger, Andrei Diuchin, Erum Siddiqui

I). Professor Munson called the meeting to order and welcomed all those present.

II). Professor Munson announced that the minutes from the February 16<sup>th</sup> meeting would be circulated via email for approval.

III). Professor Munson reported receiving an email following the February 16, 2009 meeting from Professor Naomi Scheman about the University's decision to reduce the hours of the Child Care Center (CCC). As a cost saving measure, the University has decided to close CCC at 5:15 p.m. rather than 6:00 p.m. This change, noted Professor Munson, has significant diversity implications for working parents at the University. Professor Munson then called on Professor Graff to provide the committee with any additional information he has regarding this change. Would a letter from EAD indicating the diversity impact on working parents at the University be useful asked Professor Munson?

Professor Graff began by stating that The Minnesota Daily recently ran an article about the proposed changes for the Child Care Center (<http://www.mndaily.com/2009/03/10/u-parents-brace-potential-child-care-center-cuts>). Parents with children enrolled in the CCC were caught off-guard when they received a letter indicating that the hours of operation for the CCC would be reduced from 6:00 p.m. to 5:15 p.m. and that CCC fees would be increasing. The letter was signed by Ann Edgerton, director, CCC, and Interim Dean of the College of Education and Human Development (CEHD) Jean Quam. This action, naturally, caused an immediate uproar among many parents. Responses and organization of parent meetings to discuss the changes were arranged via a parent's e-list.

From these communications it is apparent that the change in hours alone, noted Professor Graff, would cause serious hardships for many parents. He added that it was not until after the decision to reduce CCC's hours was made that a review of the sign in and sign out sheets was conducted. This review indicated that a majority of parents pick up their child/ren between 5:15 – 6:00 p.m. as opposed to dropping them off between 7:15 – 8:00 a.m. In Professor Graff's view, there was no consultation with the Parent Consultation Committee about these changes.

Given the uproar by parents, a decision has been made to postpone any changes until the end of the term. Many parents voiced dismay about how the proposed CCC changes were managed.

A meeting with Ann Edgerton and Interim Dean Quam and parents has been scheduled within the next week or two. In advance of that a parent-generated survey is being conducted in an attempt to learn about best hours for parents, etc.

Would it be useful for EAD to draft a letter given that the proposed change in hours for CCC has implications for the climate of diversity on campus asked Professor Munson? Professor Graff stated that the change in hours has issues for both access and diversity, and a letter would be worthwhile. Another member stated that she felt that Dean Quam would be responsive to these issues.

Professor Graff went on to note that a likely driver behind these CCC changes has to do with the financial health of CEHD, which subsidizes CCC at about 12% of its operating budget. This, however, does not excuse how these changes were broached.

Professor Munson stated that a letter from EAD would be drafted that calls attention to the implications that reducing the CCC hours has on the University climate in terms of access and diversity on campus. The letter will also make the committee available for consultation on the proposed changes for CCC. Furthermore, the letter will ask that this issue be looked at not only in budgetary terms, but, fundamentally, in terms of access and diversity. Professor Graff added that to go a bit further, the letter should contain language about the making decisions process and the importance of involving stakeholders.

IV). Professor Munson reported on the outcome of the Health Care Savings Plan (HCSP), which recently went to the Faculty Senate for action for a second time. He noted that the initial HCSP proposal that was approved by the Faculty Senate on May 1, 2008 recommended that the University adopt a HCSP for faculty that would take 0.5% of the 2.5% faculty contribution to the Faculty Retirement Plan and put it in a HCSP.

Then, at the February 5, 2009 Faculty Senate meeting, noted Professor Munson, a revised HCSP proposal was presented, which recommended that the University redirect 2% of the 13% it currently contributes to the Faculty Retirement Plan (FRP) for faculty in a HCSP. This revised motion was voted down.

An issue with the HCSP is that this account cannot be accessed by same sex domestic partners (SSDP). Therefore, the HCSP creates an inequity between married couples and SSDPs (SSDPs are ineligible to use health-care savings plan money on a tax-free basis, unlike spouses of married couples). Professor Munson stated that an outcome of the May 1, 2008 Faculty Senate recommendation was that there would be consultation with relevant committees. He noted that there was no consultation with this committee or the Social Concerns Committee about this issue. The University needs to be reminded that there is a reason that Senate committees exist, and part of that reason is for consultation purposes. The Senate Committee on Equity, Access, and Diversity (EAD) has a vested interest in issues of equity, access, and diversity. Clearly, the HCSP is an issue related to equity, access, and diversity.

Professor Munson reported that at the February 5, 2009 meeting he addressed the Faculty Senate, and stated that a HCSP would create an inequity between two types of families that the University strives to recognize as equal. Approving a HCSP would further divide faculty who has already had to shoulder a fair amount of divisiveness. If there are plans to bring the HCSP back to the Faculty Senate in the future, it seems obvious that EAD should be consulted with prior to doing so.

A member asked who brought this motion to the Faculty Senate. Renee Dempsey, Senate staff, reported that the Senate Committee on Faculty Affairs (SCFA) and the Senate Committee on Finance and Planning (SCFP) brought the motion to the floor with the support of the Faculty Consultative Committee (FCC).

A member noted that the Teamsters were the first to negotiate a HCSP in their contract. Since that time, additional employee groups at the University have voted to approve a HCSP. Professor Munson stated that while a HCSP is a good way to pay for post employment health care expenses, it simply creates an inequity.

A member wanted to know why, if the University can offer domestic partner benefits, it is problematic when it comes to a HCSP. Professor Munson stated that Federal law dictates the use of a HCSP, and because the Federal government does not recognize SSDP marriages, it does not allow SSDPs to access the money in these accounts.

V). Professor Munson stated that the University has decided to dissolve the Graduate School. Hence, the various aspects of graduate education will be delegated to the Office of Equity and Diversity (OED) and the individual colleges that house graduate programs. While this is a very big issue, this committee needs to pay attention to how issues related to diversity and graduate education are to be treated in the new organizational structure.

Professor Munson stated that while he does not serve on the Implementation Committee

on the restructuring of graduate education at the University, he does serve on the Graduate School Executive Committee. Based on what he has heard, it appears that a major focus of the Implementation Committee is the budget.

The Graduate School Diversity Office (GSDO) has played an important role in the Graduate School's ability to build a diverse graduate population. In the document that outlines roughly the restructuring of the Graduate School, diversity efforts have been assigned to the Office of Equity and Diversity, and "local," which refers to individual colleges. In Professor Munson's opinion, he finds this somewhat troubling. If, for example, colleges are given a finite budget from central administration, diversity could be de-prioritized.

Professor Munson proposed that the committee invite to the April 20 meeting Dr. Rusty Barcelo' (or a designee from her office) to discuss this issue and the importance of ensuring that resources for diversity and graduate education remain in tact. Additionally, Professor Munson suggested the committee invite Dean Steven Crouch who chairs the Implementation Team, and who has expressed an interest in consulting with various groups about the Graduate School transition. It will be important for the committee to lobby him about keeping a strong, well-funded mandate for diversity and graduate education at the University.

A member asked whether colleges would be held to certain standards when it comes to diversity and graduate education. Professor Munson stated that based on what he has heard these decisions have not been made, and EAD can likely have an influence in this area.

Several members voiced their concern over giving individual colleges responsibility for aspects of diversity and graduate education. Some committee members feel that the commitment to diversity is not equivalent across colleges.

Professor Munson summarized the action items that came out of today's meeting:

- Professor Munson and Professor Graff will craft a letter to CEHD Dean Jean Quam from EAD. This letter will encourage her to look at the consequences of reducing the hours of CCC as it relates to access and diversity.
- Renee Dempsey, Senate staff, was charged with inviting Dr. Rusty Barcelo' (or a designee from OED) and Dean Steven Crouch to the April EAD meeting.

VI). Professor Munson called on Professor Graff to provide the committee with a MLK Day Subcommittee update. Professor Graff briefly reported that the subcommittee continues to meet and hopes to be able to share a report outlining a timeline and

deliverables by the next EAD meeting. The subcommittee has been comparing and contrasting what the University does for MLK Day with that of other institutions.

VII). Other business – Susan Cable reported that an ad hoc committee has been formed to look at alternative options to a proposed plan to reduce the University’s commitment to the Regents Scholarship Program (<http://www1.umn.edu/ohr/policies/benefits/regents/>). There is a proposal, noted Ms. Cable, to reduce the University’s contribution to this program from 100% to 75%. This is a very expensive program (approximately \$9 million/year for about 2,000 employees/year), and its cost must be reduced. She added, however, that the program is a recruiting tool, a retention tool, and provides an opportunity for first-time, degree-seeking employees to earn a degree.

Fortunately, the President’s Office and the Office of Human Resources are open to looking at alternatives to the current proposal. Ms. Cable stated that initially when the program was launched there were guidelines that employees had to meet (no more than 2 courses per term, which were job-related). Given that this program was not well monitored, it morphed into a much larger program, which did not adhere to the initial guidelines.

Upon hearing further details about the program, several members agreed that rather than taking away the opportunity for employees to take free coursework, the program should impose certain contingencies/guidelines, e.g., limit the number of credits an employee can take per term, use of a sliding scale fee based on income.

Ms. Cable requested that members who have alternative suggestions to the proposed plan to reduce the University’s commitment to the Regents Scholarship Program be emailed to her.

Professor Munson thanked Ms. Cable for bringing this issue, which has access implications for employees, to the committee.

VIII). Hearing no further business, Professor Munson adjourned the meeting.

Renee Dempsey  
University Senate