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# The University Senate

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

## Social Concerns Committee February 20, 2023 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: Issue Vetting Process; Climate Change Discussion; New Business]

**PRESENT:** Linda Frizzell (chair), Nura Ali, Iris Borowsky, Sunasir Dutta, Jessica Gutknecht, Sara Howard, Katie McLaughlin, Char Psihos, Joanne Richardson, Nicole Smiley, Meaghan Thul

**REGRETS:** Ed Adams, Toni Bennett, Mark Collier, Jason Meyer, Natalie Meyers, Torii Zamora Millet

**ABSENT:** Jade Joswick, Anna Wertenberger

**OTHERS:** Megan Sweet, assistant to the president, Office of the President

### 1. Issue Vetting Process

The committee held an executive (closed) session to discuss a process for handling issues that come to the committee from members of the community. Further discussion and a vote on the proposed process will take place at the committee's next meeting.

### 2. Climate Change Discussion

The committee then discussed whether to take on the request related to carbon pricing. Members agreed that it might make more sense to take action that is more aligned with the Office of Sustainability's initiatives.

Jessica Gutknecht noted that in the past, the University was able to obtain a higher [STARS rating](#), due to the fact that the Social Concerns Committee looked at University investments with an eye toward sustainability. She wondered whether the committee could do this again. Amber Bathke, University Senate Office, explained that according to the Chief Investment Officer, the way the University's investments are currently handled makes it hard to make nimble changes, and therefore ineffective for the committee to review them. Bathke noted that the committee's charge needed to be updated to reflect this new reality.

Gutknecht shared the following resources related to climate change:

- [Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change](#)
- [Greenhouse gas emissions in Minnesota](#)

### **3. New Business**

Sunasir Dutta noted that civic engagement is a key driver of social and mental wellbeing. In light of the committee's interest in mental health, he suggested inviting the [Center for Community Engaged Learning](#) to visit the committee. Members also suggested hearing from Boynton Health about student mental health.

Amber Bathke  
University Senate Office