

**Senate Committee on Student Affairs (SCSA)
February 7, 2018
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: Student Affairs update (Twin Cities); Resolution: *Measuring and Maintaining Adequate Campus Mental Health Services*; Student Affairs Update (Morris)]

PRESENT: Susan Mantell (interim chair), Megan Sweet, Kendre Turonie, Thomas Bilder, David Blank, Cody Mikl, Nick Fuqua, Renae Jackson, Rachel Kieffer, Spencer Marchand, Chelsea Montgomery, Fredrick Ogugua, Agnes Omwoyo

REGRETS: Brianne Keeney, Sunyoung Hong, Jane Sitter, Kari Volkmann-Carlson, Runsheng Ma, Emma N. Olson

ABSENT: Molly Bendzick, Joshua Ikuemonisan, Sean Verrill

GUESTS: Maggie Towle, interim vice provost, Office for Student Affairs; Lauren Mitchell, senator, College of Liberal Arts, and president, Council of Graduate Students (COGS); Sandra Olson-Loy, vice chancellor, Office for Student Affairs, Morris

OTHERS: Vickie Courtney, Lisa Erwin

Interim chair Susan Mantell welcomed the committee, and members introduced themselves.

1. Student Affairs update (Twin Cities) - Mantell introduced Maggie Towle, interim vice provost, Office for Student Affairs. Towle gave a brief overview of the three thematic areas the Office for Student Affairs (OSA) is focusing on. They are:

- Advocacy and support, which includes the Parent-Student Help Center, Office for Community Standards, and the Care Manager position. The Care Manager position is a licensed social worker who can work with students on a number of issues. OSA is looking to hire a second care manager due to the volume of requests for its services.
- Health and wellbeing which includes the recreational and wellness facilities and fields, Boynton Health Service, and Student Counseling Services.
- Student life which includes working with student groups and activities on the Twin Cities campus, career Services, leadership education, and student engagement.

Towle continued by sharing the office's goals for the year. They include:

- Improving campus climate by making it more inclusive and welcoming.
- Working on the President's Initiative to Prevent Sexual Misconduct. Towle co-chaired a committee under this initiative on student engagement and focused on sexual assault prevention efforts.

- Student wellbeing and mental health needs have been a major issue for OSA. Statistics show that these needs are rising, about 18% over the last year. However, OSA has received some new resources and there are currently no waiting lists for mental health services. They have found that more group counseling has been a benefit to students as well.
- During the last campus health survey, OSA discovered that up to 17% of students are experiencing food insecurity. In response, they have piloted a “Nutritious U” food pantry program this past fall semester. Part of the program informs students about the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and helping with resources about eating healthy. The “Swipe Out Hunger” initiative just recently began where students in residence halls can donate extra meals from their meal plans. In total, they have donated over 800 meals to be distributed by Boynton Health Service.
- The “Gopher Chauffeur” pilot was recently expanded beyond weekends to Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday nights and starts on February 12, 2018. Boynton has hired 30 student drivers and will measure ridership to see if it should continue at these levels of service. The service has been a big help to student safety.
- It is important to protect freedom of expression on campus including during protests. The office has been working with student groups to make sure that protests are safe.
- Towle introduced the mental health “red folder” which includes information and resources for mental health issues and is really popular with students. Lisa Erwin, vice chancellor for student life, University of Minnesota Duluth (UMD), added that UMD has a similar card on resources for students if they are having mental health issues or have been a victim of sexual assault.

Mantell asked if committee members had any questions for Towle and they were as follows:

- Cody Mikl inquired about the hiring of a full time, permanent vice provost of student affairs. Towle responded that she was uncertain when that decision will be made and that the decision falls directly to the provost.
- Chelsea Montgomery asked if the “Haven” educational module falls under OSA’s jurisdiction and if it applies to PSEO students. Megan Sweet, chief of staff and assistant to the vice provost, Office for Student Affairs, answered that state statute requires the University to deliver it to nearly all students and it is delivered to PSEO students as well.
- Mantell asked about further recommendations that came out of the President’s Initiative to Prevent Sexual Misconduct. Towle explained that some of the recommendations include that all faculty and staff go through mandatory training on the issue. This training is currently being rolled out. Also, a sexual assault prevention coordinator should soon be hired by the University. In 2015, the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities participated in a survey through the Association of American Universities (AAU) that documents sexual assault on campus to compare to other campuses across the country. The Twin Cities campus plans to participate in the survey in the future as well.
- Nick Fuqua asked about the “Let’s Talk” pilot initiative and if it will become a permanent program. Towle said it is planned to be continued. Fuqua added that he has had a very positive experience with the program.
- Spencer Marchand asked about the expansion of “Gopher Chauffeur.” He stated that in Oklahoma, where he is from, they also expanded a similar program to non weekend days.

One issue that popped up was learning that certain parts of campus were unsafe, there was lack of lighting and phone access. Towle noted that off campus is the main area of concern especially in the Marcy Holmes and Huron Ave. neighborhoods. She noted that lack of transit in the Huron area is a concern as well.

- Mantell asked about the factors that have contributed to there being no waiting list for mental health services. Sweet said it is starting to ramp up and volume tends to ebb and flow over the course of the semester but it is in good shape right now. She noted that mental health providers from across the system teleconference twice a month to collaborate on the resources for the entire system so that they can meet the needs of such diverse environments.
- Towle asked about how to better communicate with students before they reach a crisis level of mental health. Agnes Omwoyo suggested that since students have to periodically meet with an academic advisor that the advisor could be more proactive in looking for mental health issues with the student. David Blank added that training could be needed for those advisors but many are good at catching those instances. Marchand added the fact that statistics regarding the use of mental health services is up might actually be a good thing because the stigma of admitting to the need for help is going away. Sweet added the same thing is happening in regards to sexual assault cases.
- Fuqua inquired about the off-campus housing surveys. Vickie Courtney noted that this was an initiative started by Minnesota Student Association and the Student Senate and it can be found on the Student Senate's website. The purpose was to look at and enhance landlord accountability.

2. Resolution: Measuring and Maintaining Adequate Campus Mental Health Services -

Mantell introduced Lauren Mitchell, student senator, College of Liberal Arts, and president, Council of Graduate Studies (COGS). Mitchell provided an overview of her resolution, Measuring and Maintaining Adequate Campus Mental Health Services. She noted that this resolution was passed by both COGS and the Student Senate Consultative Committee (SSCC).

Mitchell provided the committee with an overview of past student advocacy on the issue of student mental health resources. During the 2015-2016 academic year, waitlists on the Twin Cities campus peaked at 50-60 students. This problem was occurring on the system campuses as well. In Duluth, there were only four full time counselors for the 2016-2017 academic year (recommended 6-8). In Morris, wait times for three to four weeks were reported due to staff turnover in the fall of 2016. In Rochester, there was no licensed on-campus counselor for the 2016-2017 academic year. In Crookston, there was a threefold increase in suicidal ideation in fall 2016.

In February 2016, COGS and the Minnesota Student Association (MSA) created several documents to ask the University to bring on more staff to help. That resulted in stakeholder meetings between COGS, MSA, OSA, and staff from the Provost's Office. In March 2016, the student representatives to the Board of Regents report highlighted mental health as a top priority. COGS sponsored a letter writing campaign to the president. However, in May 2016, the University budget announced no new funding for these services. That month the Student Senate passed a resolution and several students spoke to the issue at the Board of Regents budget forum.

In June 2016, \$200,000 in bridge funding was provided to hire new counselors on the Twin Cities campus. In June 2017, another \$283,400 was provided to system campuses to hire more staff.

The current resolution seeks to address the following remaining concerns:

- Demand for mental health services continues to increase.
- The University still lacks a comprehensive, system-wide strategy on student mental health.
- Data available on students' needs and campus mental health services is unclear and incomplete.

Therefore, the resolution proposes to commit to providing an annual report of the designated mental health measures to the Board of Regents and add measures of prevalence, counseling staff ratios, and wait times to the University Progress Card.

Mikl said that he was supportive in general of the resolution but had questions about the progress card. Mitchell explained that it is a short, basic list that can be a great start to measuring services, and Mikl agreed.

Thomas Bilder asked what the University is doing to look at the root cause of mental health and prevention as opposed to throwing so much money at the problem and adding staff. He noted that student debt is obviously a factor. Mitchell responded that there is an underlying base rate of service, but rates are decreasing now and he thinks that investment is working and helping.

Fuqua asked about the thought process behind the metrics in the appendix. Mitchell said that by providing the Board of Regents with data, it gives them the tools they need to ask questions. The goal is to provide a comprehensive view to make sure that all measures are coming along together and make sure that while some areas are strengthened, others are not weakened.

Bilder asked if it will be separated by undergraduate, graduate, and international students. Mitchell thinks that the suggestion is a good idea and there are additional metrics that could be added.

Marchand asked what is the current counseling staff to student ratio. Mitchell said she did not have those numbers.

Mantell queried if this type of data was already available? Mitchell believed the vast majority of the data is available. A lot of the data is already reported in the Boynton fees request and the aim is to not create additional effort in collecting the data.

Sweet asked about the available resources on system campuses for pulling these data. Mitchell noted she has had contact with some system staff and said that many of these measures are not relevant to them. Erwin urged Mitchell to talk to Jean Baribeau-Thoennes, director of counseling, UMD.

Bilder asked if the resolution was run by the Provost's Committee on Student Mental Health. Mitchell responded yes and the committee wrote a letter of support for this resolution. She also noted that this is not the final version and she continues to work with others on improvements.

Mantell moved that the committee endorse the following resolution: Measuring and Maintaining Adequate Campus Mental Health Services. **A vote was taken and the committee unanimously endorsed the resolution.**

3. Student Affairs update (Morris) - Mantell introduced Sandra Olson-Loy, vice chancellor, Office for Student Affairs, Morris. Olson-Loy gave an overview of the Morris campus. She said it is three hours west of Twin Cities, enrolls about 1800 students, and it educates undergraduate students only. It is a public liberal arts college and is a small intimate community. The campus is about half the population of the town.

Olson-Loy highlighted three topics that her office has been working on. They are as follows:

- The first area is student mental health. She noted that she appreciates the Student Senate and this committee's interest in the issue. Recently, Morris received new funding to strengthen their work, thanks to student governance. They have added a new staff person and are focusing on infusing good wellbeing habits for students. A mental health group from system campuses are connecting via WebX technologies online for better planning. The office recently requested \$80,000 for pilot projects to extend multiple mental health projects to other campuses. "Let's Talk" is a new program in Morris and has worked very well for counseling purposes. There is also a telepsychiatry pilot program due to the fact that there are no psychiatrists on campus. Wait times for students needing these services were reaching up to 6 months, otherwise they needed to go to the Twin Cities for access to services.
- Sexual misconduct is another major issue in Morris. Olson-Loy has worked with multiple people across system campuses to make sure everyone is on the same page for rolling out new policies.
- Finally, student legal services are a concern on campus. Students are looking for support, mainly in issues dealing with renting and housing. Unlike the Twin Cities campus, which is a national leader when it comes to student legal advocacy, Morris students who have legal needs must currently be referred to a local legal aid program that is not near campus. Recently, they have had legal services come travel from the Twin Cities but the campus needs a better model for more support.

Mantell solicited questions from committee members and they were as follows:

- Mikl asked about need of service comparisons for ratios regarding both mental health or legal services needs. Olson-Loy said right now there are three mental health counselors for about 1600 students. Morris reports some of the highest student mental health rates and she will be presenting these facts to the Board of Regents soon. Many students have reported levels of unmanageable stress. It is possible that an increase in student fees may be in order to address the poor level of access. For legal services, needs of service don't come up as often but when it does, it is significant. One possible solution that has been

suggested is to have a representative from the Twin Cities campus legal services come to Morris for one day per month.

- Blank asked if there is an upward trend for the need of legal services. Olson-Loy responded that she wasn't sure if those trends were going up.
- Mantell asked about food insecurity and if it was possible for Morris to have the same or similar program the Twin Cities has to donate meals from meal plans. Olson-Loy said they are looking into it and just presented that idea to the student affairs directors this past week.
- Blank asked about the percentage of students who live on campus. Olson-Loy said 95% of students live on campus their first year and about 50% overall. Probably about 95% overall live within a mile of campus.
- Marchand asked about mental health rates and how it relates to addiction including prescription drug addiction. Olson-Loy said that all system campuses will be conducting a student health survey this spring which looks at the use of not only prescription drugs, but also alcohol and illicit drug use as well. Olson-Loy added that high risk drinking is still the biggest concern at Morris. Sweet offered to connect Marchand with someone at Boynton for more information.

Hearing no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Chris Kwapick
University Senate Office