

**ACADEMIC HEALTH CENTER STUDENT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE
(AHC SCC)
MINUTES OF MEETING
February 25, 2015**

[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 represent the views of, nor are they binding on, the Senate, the Administration or the Board of Regents.]

[In these minutes: Legislative request discussion; Loan forgiveness discussion; Committee on Committees]

PRESENT: Christine Myers (chair), Sarah Bahler, Jonathan Ekerholm, David Green, Ashley Martin, Karen Myhrman, Anne Christ, Megan Guthmiller, Jeff Theismann, Andrew Weaver

GUESTS: Brian Lucas, senior director of communications, Academic Health Center & Matt Smirga, legislative advocacy coordinator, Government Relations; Joy Hwang, Pharmacy Student & Bithia Fikru, student senator, College of Pharmacy

REGRETS: Jamie Dean, Karl Koivisto, Emily Schuster, Hannah Schultz

ABSENT: Melake Araya, Christopher Kim

1. LEGISLATIVE REQUEST DISCUSSION

Brian Lucas, senior director of communications, Academic Health Center, and Matt Smirga, Government Relations, attended the meeting to discuss the upcoming legislative request. Mr. Lucas explained that there are two requests: Healthy Minnesota and the Medical School. He sees these as related requests and provided the following details and a handout:

- Healthy Minnesota Proposal
 - Biennial total request: \$25.5 million
 - Develop a statewide network of up to six interdisciplinary primary care teaching clinics
 - Encourage students from underrepresented communities to pursue health professional careers
 - Increase scholarships and programs for students who choose to provide care in underserved communities
- The Medical School Proposal
 - Biennial total request: \$30 million
 - Hire over 50 top researchers to form medical discovery teams. This would be a long-term investment as they would be retained employees.

- Secure new grants
- Support Medical Innovation
 - Benefits
 - Elevate the Medical School's national standing
 - Attract and retain the best and brightest and have them graduate without a large amount of debt

Brian Lucas explained that this is a budgeting year at the capitol. There is less money than there are worthy causes. Legislators consider how much they hear about issues from the constituents and the more often they hear about an issue, the more likely they are to support funding it.

He then provided guidelines for constructing communications to legislators.

Mr. Lucas closed the discussion by stating that the state is currently benefitting from the investments in education and healthcare made generations ago. Continued investment is needed for future generations to experience the same level of care and education.

Members then received the following responses to their questions:

- Loan forgiveness is not currently a part of the proposal, but there could be other bills that include it.
- There is support for both proposals, but there are many other requests that could be identified as priorities at the same time.
- The governor did not include Healthy Minnesota in his budget, and this is where the legislature can make this a priority.

Members agreed that they would like to forward this message to their classmates and encourage their participation.

2. LOAN FORGIVENESS FOR HEALTH SCIENCES

Joy Hwang, Pharmacy student, and Bithia Fikru, student senator, College of Pharmacy, attended the meeting to discuss developing a proposal for a health sciences student loan forgiveness program. Ms. Hwang presented the following using a PowerPoint:

- Objective
 - Discuss rural health disparities in Minnesota
 - Identify Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSA) in Minnesota
 - Describe loan forgiveness for health professionals
 - Present current legislation
 - Examine opportunities for improvement in loan forgiveness initiatives
- Rural Health Disparity
 - Rural vs. urban:
 - Higher rates of chronic illness and poor overall health
 - Rural residents are older, poorer, and have fewer physicians to care for them

- MN Department of Health:
 - “Residents in non-urban areas in MN experience 31% more premature death than residents in fringe counties of large metropolitan areas.”
- Rural MN: Access to Health Care Services
 - Primary barrier:
 - Socioeconomic
 - Lack of insurance/ability to pay
 - Geographic
 - Driving distances, extreme weather, lack of transportation
 - Shortage of health professionals and services

Rural Minnesota Health Care Workforce*			
Profession (data year)	Number licensed	Median Age	% Female
Physicians (2007)	1,137	51	24
Physician Assistants (2007)	133	43	51
Registered Nurses (2006)	4,272	49	95
Licensed Practical Nurses (2006)	3,329	47	98
Dentists (2005)	230	53	12

*Numbers are estimates, based on ORHPC surveys

Physicians. Thirty-one percent of active physicians were 55 or older in 2007. The median age was 49. While the median age is similar across metropolitan and rural counties, rural physicians may be slightly older. (See Figure 2).

- Health Sciences: What and Why
 - Disciplines:
 - Clinical Lab Professionals
 - Dentistry
 - Medicine
 - Mental Health
 - Nursing
 - Nutrition
 - Occupational Therapists
 - Pharmacy
 - Physical Therapy
 - Current Resources for Loan Repayment and Forgiveness
 - Mainly funded by State and Federal government
 - Department of Health:
 - Loan Forgiveness Program (2011 – present)
 - Funding’s declining
 - 2007: 48 recipients
 - 2015: 16 recipients
 - The Clausen/Jobs Bill (2015):
 - Provides loan forgiveness for doctors, public health nurses, mental health professionals, and dentists to work in rural MN
 - What about University of Minnesota?
 - Health Sciences Loan Forgiveness Program (proposed: 2012)
 - Goals:

- Increase availability of health sciences clinical providers in underserved areas in the state of Minnesota
- Provide tuition relief to University of Minnesota students who are willing to serve professionally in underserved areas
- What can we do?
 - Mobilize as a coalition to vocalize our concerns
 - Student debt is a real issue
 - Money shouldn't place a limitation to one's access to or provision of health services
 - Goal: Obtain Governor Mark Dayton's support

Members generally expressed support for the proposal and one member volunteered to be a part of the coalition.

3. COMMITTEE ON COMMITTEES REPORT

Members discussed the report completed by the Committee on Committees. They will send corrections to the committee and they then discussed their membership. They agreed that appointments need to be made earlier and they will discuss this with their college boards and/or student councils to clarify that this is important.

Hearing no further business, Ms. Myers adjourned the meeting.

Jeannine Rich
University Senate Office