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# The University Senate

FACULTY • STUDENT • P&A • CIVIL SERVICE

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## UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

### Faculty Consultative Committee (FCC)

September 28, 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 represent the views of, nor are they binding on, the senate, the administration or the Board of Regents.*

[**In these minutes:** Proposal to Create Governance for Non-credit Education at the University of Minnesota; Committee Business; Conversation with Interim President Ettinger]

**PRESENT:** Mark Bee (chair), Rob Blair, David Brown, Carl Flink, Jennifer Goodnough (vice chair), Perry Leo, Monica Luciana, Colleen Flaherty Manchester, Tania Mitchell, Pawel Mroz, Sonali Pahwa, Ann Parr, Katherine Scheil, Rachna Shah, Donna Spannaus-Martin, Cliff Steer, David Stenehjelm, Subree Subramanian, Eric Van Wyk

**REGRETS:** Abraham Ayebo, Liz Davis, Sharon Jansa, Robert Jones, Rick Wagner

**GUESTS:** Interim President Jeff Ettinger; Stacey Tidball, associate vice provost, Academic Support Resources; Ryan Torma, executive director, Professional Development and Lifelong Learning, College of Continuing and Professional Education

**OTHERS:** Bobbie Erichsen, deputy director, University Senate Office; Erin Heath, director, University Senate Office; Maggie Flaten, assistant to the president, Office of the President; Scott Lanyon, vice provost and dean, Graduate Education

### 1. Proposal to Create Governance for Non-credit Education at the University of Minnesota

Professor Jennifer Goodnough, vice chair, called the meeting to order and welcomed Stacey Tidball, associate vice provost, Academic Support Resources; and Ryan Torma, executive director, Professional Development and Lifelong Learning, College of Continuing and Professional Education (CCAPS). Tidball and Torma gave a [presentation](#) about the possibility of creating a governance structure for non-credit education opportunities at the University. The presentation covered the following main points:

#### *Background*

- The University offers many “non-credit” experiences including but not limited to: certificates, Continuing Education Units (CEUs), digital badges, and other microcredentials.

- Presently, colleges and schools are responsible for overseeing the quality and administration of these types of alternative credentials that are outside the scope of a credit-bearing, academic degree program as defined by University policy.
- In 2021, the University developed and shared a set of standards, guidelines and best practices for alternative credentials.
- External regulatory bodies are signaling an intention to have oversight connected to non-credit/alternative credentials in the near future as the landscape is rapidly shifting this direction in higher education.
- The next phase of preparation is focused on central coordination and the development of a governance structure to ensure quality standards for alternative credentials in our distributed environment.

### ***Recommended Standards***

- Adherence to the standards set forth by relevant accrediting bodies
- Use of an enterprise system or a platform integrated with University tools
- Adherence to University branding standards

### ***Challenges and Opportunities***

- Clear definition/delineation of “non-credit credentials” (examples include CEUs, badges, non-degree certificates, microcredentials, and industry certifications)
- Development and maintenance of a University-wide inventory of non-credit credentials—currently, varying credentialing systems are being used
- Varying levels of sophistication, structure, and processes in colleges and units
- Alignment across the system to support portability and quality
- Strategic approach to non-credit-to-credit pathways

### ***Recommendation***

The group recommended that the provost convene and charge a group with developing a governance structure and procedures to oversee and ensure quality for alternative credentials, with a focus on the credential earned and what standards must be in place to earn a quality, alternative credential from the University of Minnesota. Ideally, the governance group would recommend a central process to ensure and oversee the quality of alternative credentials, in order to create a central assurance process whereby colleges and units confirm adherence to quality standards and/or established accreditation standards. Quality of the programs and support of program operations would continue to be the responsibility of the colleges and departments offering the programs.

Tidball and Torma opened the floor for questions and comments, and members offered the following:

- Has Extension been consulted and how have they responded? Torma affirmed that there are members of the group from Extension, and Extension has also been consulted more broadly. He emphasized that their partnership and expertise is essential to the project.
- Given that there is already a best practice document, how big is the problem? Tidball responded that the University is not quite at the level of preparation necessary for the Minnesota Office of Higher Education (MOHE) and the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) requirements. There is a desire not to duplicate the process, which is why a broad

governance group would be useful to think about these things. There are no specific recommendations yet.

- With greater attention from the HLC, etc., is it likely that the Board of Regents (BOR) will get more interested in this, and would this group be positioned to handle that? Tibball said that some interest from the BOR is warranted, at least because of the financial impact to the University, which is pretty significant.
- Will this be an extra burden on faculty? Torma responded that that would be very college specific, noting that CCAPS works with a lot of outside vendors on its programs.

Tibball and Torma thanked members for their time and feedback and departed.

## **2. Committee Business**

Bee informed members that the compensation report had been shared with Executive Vice President and Provost Rachel Croson, Vice President for Research Shashank Priya, Vice President for Human Resources Ken Horstman, and Executive Director of the Board of Regents Office Brian Steeves. The provost already provided feedback, which has already been incorporated into the report.

Bee also reported that the [dates for listening sessions](#) with the Presidential Search Advisory Committee (PSAC) had been set.

### ***Discussion about Qualities in the Next President***

Next, Bee asked members to discuss qualities they would like to see in the next president of the University. The intention, he said, is to develop and distribute talking points amongst FCC members and maybe more broadly, for use during listening sessions. They could also be included in a letter to the BOR, if members desire. Members brainstormed the following characteristics:

- Academic background
- Strong and demonstrated commitment to shared governance and academic freedom
- Experience with interacting and working with the state legislature
- In touch with higher education in general, able to follow and lead on nation-wide trends
- Long-term investment in the position
- Experience running a multi-campus system
- Ability to address the challenging history of higher education with tribal nations
- Ability to speak to the arts

Bee said that he would start with the list provided in the [letter regarding desired qualities for the interim president](#) and edit it to reflect this discussion.

The conversation then turned to the possibility of writing a letter to the BOR with these qualities. Members went back and forth about whether a letter was necessary for various reasons. Some members suggested that an ongoing dialogue with the Presidential Search Advisory Committee (PSAC) and the BOR would be more productive. A decision regarding whether to write a letter or not was not reached.

### ***Discussion about Amy Coney Barrett's Visit***

Bee then turned the committee's attention to the upcoming lecture by US Supreme Court Justice Amy Coney Barret at the Law School, as a part of the [Stein Lecture Series](#). Members agreed that

conversation should not be limited and that denying Justice Coney Barrett the opportunity to speak would only result in further polarization. Eric Van Wyk pointed out, however, that [PEN America's Campus Free Speech Guide](#) indicated that colleges and universities had the right, and perhaps even the obligation, to affirm institutional values when controversial speakers are invited. He suggested that if the administration were to issue a statement acknowledging that many may feel that Justice Coney Barrett had a part in denying their rights, while affirming the institution's commitment to free speech and academic freedom, it could help protestors and other community members to feel heard. He said that the FCC could put out a statement to that effect, but would be better from the administration.

### **3. Conversation with Interim President Ettinger**

Bee welcomed Interim President Jeff Ettinger, who provided some opening remarks, emphasizing the following:

- Karen Diver, senior advisor to the president for Native American affairs, recently provided background and information on the [TRUTH Report](#) to campus leaders. Leaders then broke into groups and came up with ideas in response to what they had learned. Ettinger and Diver will be meeting again soon to start refining specific responses.
- Groups also discussed how best to support the system as a whole. Ideas included amending application procedures so that students apply broadly to the system rather than a specific campus; doing behind the scenes work to admit students who are not accepted to the Twin Cities campus to other campuses; and continuing to improve transfer procedures.
- Some potential applicants reported difficulty in getting a tour of the St. Paul campus. He suggested that making that a better experience may be helpful in attracting students from Greater Minnesota, who may be more comfortable on the St. Paul campus.
- The Namings and Renamings Work Group is working with the Office of the President and the Office of the Board of Regents to make progress over the year ahead. They are beginning to talk about Fraser Hall, which is being renovated to house chemistry labs, but is named after a former Law School dean.
- Regarding upcoming lectures from former US Congresswoman Liz Cheney and US Supreme Court Justice Amy Coney Barrett, Ettinger commented that the goal in both of these events is to cultivate a mindset of being calm but firm that the event should go on, and that those invited speakers should have their opportunity to speak. Officials are also preparing for how to handle things if there are challenges at the events.

Van Wyk shared the previously discussed guidance from PEN America, stating that the institution has a right – and possibly an obligation– to reaffirm institutional values when controversial speakers come to campus.

Carl Flink noted that free speech presumes a civil society, and when rights are taken away, civil discourse is far more difficult to maintain.

Bee asked whether there were plans to send out an email or some sort of communication in advance of Barrett's lecture. Ettinger said that he did not believe so.

Ettinger continued:

- The governor's task force on academic health at the University will have three people with strong connections to the University on it— Jakub Tolar, vice president for clinical affairs and dean of the Medical School; Regent Penny Wheeler; and Connie Delaney, dean of the Nursing School. Dr. Tolar and Ettinger have a meeting next week with other people who applied to be on the task force to get their input.
- Regarding the data breach, Ettinger asked whether FCC members had heard concerns from University community members.

Members revealed that they had heard concerns from graduate students, particularly international students, not knowing what to do, and suggested that releasing a communication with more concrete information may be helpful. Members also reported hearing from colleagues that people felt 12 months of credit monitoring was not enough, and that the University should offer 24 months. Finally, people noted that when signing up for the credit monitoring service, they are asked to provide the same data that was just compromised, and that some communication around why it is important to do so and how the information will be used could be helpful.

Ettinger stated that officials are working to determine if data retention policies and procedures were followed appropriately and would be looking at data retention policies and data storage practices.

Amber Bathke  
University Senate Office