

EQUITY, ACCESS & DIVERSITY
MINUTES OF MEETING
FEBRUARY 15, 2002

[In these minutes: Welcome, Senate Governance Presentation, Continued Discussion on the Role of the Committee and Issues to be Addressed this Year].

[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: David Born, Chair, Beverly Balos, Rose Blixt, Don Cavalier, Carol Chomsky, Amele Olufunke

REGRETS: Kathryn Brown, Julie Sweitzer, William Bradshaw, Warren Warwick, Srilata Zaheer, Vanessa Bailey

ABSENT: Eric Burgess, Mariam Frenier, Jacquelyn Zita, Dan Kelly, Kristin Saxelby

OTHERS: H.J. Taylor, J. Petithomme

GUEST: Joe Massey, Chair, FCC

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

II). Professor Born welcomed Professor Massey and asked him to provide the Committee with some context surrounding the creation of the Equity, Access and Diversity Committee. In addition, the Committee was also interested in Professor Massey's opinion concerning the Committee's role and what kind of issues it should be addressing this year.

Joe Massey, FCC Chair, distributed a handout to the Committee and walked members through an overview of the University of Minnesota's senate governance structure.

According to Professor Massey the Committee's mandate is clear and in his opinion he does not believe that the Committee can act effectively as a reactive committee. Instead, the Committee needs to seek out instances where respect for equity, access and diversity are a potential threat to the University community and be proactive in their efforts.

Members were interested to know how other Committee's operate. Along these same lines, the question was raised concerning how much of the Committee's efforts should be spent focusing on broader issues as opposed to more defined initiatives? Professor Massey suggested choosing four action items, broad or narrow in scope, and getting them done this year.

A discussion followed detailing some issues the Committee could pursue this year:

- Increasing the visibility of diversity across campus. What kind of commitment is the administration willing to make regarding diversity and what can be done to bring the issue to the foreground.
- Gender inequity on campus.
- Lack of diversity at the University of Minnesota.
- How does the proposed 13-credit minimum policy impact diversity at the University of Minnesota?
- The need to protect and nurture intellectual diversity. If diversity is going to have meaning within the University context there is a need to protect and cultivate alternative ways that cultures interact.
- Invite representatives from the various learning resource centers on campus to help identify issues facing the different cultures represented on campus.
- Islam issue – to ensure that the University is not seen as anti-Islam.
- Look into why the decision was made to downgrade Rusty Barcelo's position.

Professor Massey stressed to the Committee that they are in a very powerful position and can be very influential in getting resources allocated for initiatives that the University should address. He went on to say that resolutions are an effective way to get the ear of the President and the administration.

In closing, Professor Massey encouraged the Committee to tackle a couple of important issues and bring them before the FCC for backing.

III). The Committee unanimously approved the January 23, 2002 minutes.

IV). Professor Born suggested that over the course of the next few meetings the Committee continue to identify issues it would like address. In conjunction with these discussions, Professor Born proposed inviting one speaker per meeting to briefly update the Committee on current activities surrounding equity, access and diversity issues on campus.

A Committee member recommended that rather than identifying resources that are already available at the University dealing with issues of equity, access and diversity, the Committee should focus its efforts on issues and problems that are not being addressed. In an attempt to create synergy and creative thinking, a suggestion was made to invite learning resource center representatives to an upcoming Committee meeting in order to flush out issues that the Committee could focus its efforts on.

A Crookston Committee member inquired about the status of the Rusty Barcelo vacancy. It was mentioned that the position has been downgraded to an associate vice provost position without system-wide responsibilities. Crookston inquired because they are concerned about funding for a diversity counselor position that in the past was funded in part from Ms. Barcelo's office. It was agreed that Vice President Robert Jones would be invited to the next meeting so the Committee could find out more about the status of this vacancy. In the meantime, Professor Born volunteered to try and find out why the

position was downgraded and distribute this information to the Committee prior to its next meeting on March 13, 2002.

Another Committee member expressed interest in hearing Vice President Jones' perspective on the administration's vision on the issues of equity, access and diversity.

Professor Born solicited input from members on concerns, suggestions or ideas they might have pertaining to the operation and/or role of the Committee. The following items were mentioned:

- How will the Committee make itself known to the University community at large including the coordinate campuses?
- The Committee needs to make sure that whenever a policy shift is proposed i.e. 13-credit minimum policy, attention must be paid to the impact on equity, access and diversity. Establish guidelines to deal with ramifications of impending policy changes. Rose Blixt volunteered to obtain a copy of a 13-credit minimum statement from General College for members to review and Professor Born agreed to distribute a copy of the 13-credit minimum policy proposal to members as well.
- How can this Committee ensure that issues moving through the governance process dealing with equity, access and diversity issues get directed this way? A comment was made that a lot of issues don't necessarily go before the Senate, but are initiated by senior administration. Besides asking Julie Sweitzer, Director of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action, to keep the Committee informed of any issues that she hears, to also ask the President, the Provosts, Vice President Jones etc. to consult with the Committee before initiatives are implemented in an attempt to consider equity, access and diversity issues that in the past may have been overlooked. Oftentimes these issues are not considered before policies are put in place. In order to bring issues before the Committee a suggestion was made that members pass a resolution mandating issues of equity, access and diversity be brought before this Committee.
- A suggestion was made that the Equity, Access and Diversity Committee should be represented on the Faculty Consultative Committee (FCC). Professor Born volunteered to contact Joe Massey to look into this matter further.
- Explore the paradigms of how administrators are evaluated and whether diversity is part of the evaluation process. Professor Born volunteered to contact Vice President Carol Carrier's office to see what tools are being used to evaluate administrators and if diversity is addressed in the process.

V). With no further business, Professor Born adjourned the meeting.

Renee Dempsey
University Senate