

SENATE COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL CONCERNS
February 29, 2016
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: Chair's Report; Transgender Report/Gender-Neutral Bathrooms; Sustainability and Waste Reduction Report; Report to CSCC]

PRESENT: Randy Croce (chair), David Fuhs, Sarah Sexton, Maria del Carmen Garcia de LaSerrana Lozan, Megan Sweet, Lindsey Budde, Laura Duckett, Zan Gao, Naomi Scheman, Rachel Schurman, Deborah Hendricks, Kendra Okposo, Becca Gercken

REGRETS: Sandeep Kataria, Daniel Kelliher, Anna Blasco

ABSENT: Stuart Mason, Anne Sumanjil, Felicia Christy, Katie Benson, Curtis Williamson, Kjerstie Wiltzen

GUESTS: Stef Wilenchek, director, GLBTA Programs; Andy Hillis, Housing and Residential Life

1. Chair's Report: Randy Croce, chair, provided an update on many of the issues with which the committee has been engaged. He said that he had met with Katrice Albert, vice president, Office for Equity and Diversity, and Kimberly Hewitt, director, EOAA Office, about the following three concerns:

- Title IX issues: Croce shared that the Committee believed adequate policies related to Title IX issues are in place, but education about these policies is not always adequate. Hewitt stated that EOAA offers many educational opportunities, ranging from how to respond to reports of sexual harassment to understanding implicit bias. It was agreed that Kendra Turonie, assistant to the director, EOAA, will present information on the various trainings they offer at the next committee meeting.
- Retaining faculty of color: Croce said that at the meeting with Hewitt and Albert, they discussed the disproportionate advising and mentoring duties for faculty of color, as well as the frequent requests for their participation on committees. He added that this is not necessarily taken into account in the promotion process. While there are a number of programs to improve or help with reaching tenure, there is practically nothing for post-tenure faculty.

Professor Rachel Schurman said that there has been some discussion in her department about the 'hidden curriculum' for faculty of color, and questions of access to knowing the 'rules of the game.' She said that students have pushed back on this, saying that maybe the University should not be worrying about the faculty of color understanding the system, but rather that the system needs to change. Professor Becca Gercken stated that there is also a problem with assuming faculty of color do not understand the culture. She added that there has been a movement for about ten years called "Indigenizing the

Academy,” so conversations about changing the culture are not new. She said some faculty are really interested in having these conversations, but some are tired because efforts have not resulted in real progress. She added that the “Keeping Our Faculty” symposium is not for system campus people, unless they are willing to miss a day of classes and drive to the Twin Cities.

Professor Naomi Scheman thought that it might be just as reasonable an assumption that people who come from privilege are ill-prepared to do deal with our changing world, and perhaps the narrative should be shifted in that direction. She added that the symposium looks fascinating, but that it is very expensive for those without funding. Scheman proposed starting conversations with the new vice provost for academic affairs around these issues. Gercken agreed that conversations need to happen at the administrative level, but that these conversations need to be inclusive, address the concerns without reinforcing some of the problematic stereotypes, and the work needs to be done by everyone, not just faculty and staff of color. Croce asked for volunteers to form a working subcommittee. Gercken, Scheman, and Professor Zan Gao agreed to serve.

- **Parental Leave:** Croce reported that the Research Committee; the Committee for Equity, Access, and Diversity; and the Civil Service Consultative Committee have all been looking at different aspects of parental leave. The major topic of discussion with Albert and Hewitt focused on the fact that the University seems to look at parental leave as a benefit, but that it needs to look at it as a societal imperative. He added that the bargaining units have made progress and civil service employees have been promised six weeks leave for birth mothers. He added that there remains an issue of policy: adoptive parents only have two weeks, and there should be parity with benefits of birth parents. Additionally, the other question is if these policies are being enacted. He reminded the committee that some people cannot take leave they have been guaranteed, particularly in small departments and among researchers funded by grants, so the question is how to assure that the University-wide policy is available and followed locally.

One idea was to have a parental leave “czar” in the Office of Human Resources who would be familiar with all of the policies and procedures related to parental leave, so that those individuals who wish to take leave have someone to talk to about their benefits, and how to access those benefits. The idea of a central pool to take over all or some of the costs associated with parental leave was mentioned, but Albert cautioned that this would be very difficult to achieve given the the decentralized way budget works.

Professor Deborah Hendricks reminded the committee to remember categories of people who are not covered at all, such as postdocs and students in the professional schools. Scheman stated that she liked the idea of moving away from talking about parental leave as a benefit, but rather as more of an ethical responsibility, that raising the next generation is something that everyone needs to participate in.

2. Transgender Report/Gender-Neutral Bathrooms: Stef Wilenchek, director, GLBTA Programs, and Andy Hillis, Office of Residential Life, reported on initiatives of the Transgender Commission. Wilenchek said that the office has been around for about twenty

years and is part of the Office for Equity and Diversity. The Trans Commission was initiated to address the environment for trans students on campus. The goal of the trans commission, Wilenchek said, is to find barriers and help to remove them.

Hillis said that the Commission sent a letter last April to President Kaler and Pam Wheelock, vice president, University Services, looking at the inadequate number of gender-inclusive restrooms. That letter led to an allocation of \$250,000 in the budget specifically for restroom modifications. Earlier this month they met with Dave Hutton of Facilities Management. They are still getting a handle, said Wilenchek, on how many single-use restrooms the campus has. Their staff and activist students have been going around campus identifying them. They have also been trying to identify the places on campus that absolutely need bathrooms due to traffic and location. At this point they have identified about 250 bathrooms that can easily be changed. She added that a lot of this effort stemmed from student activism on campus, and that it was one of the initiatives of *Whose Diversity?* as well.

One issue that has been preventing the 1400 potential restrooms from being converted is a building code about the number of male and female restrooms a building is required to have. This code has just been changed, she said, and that is where the issue stands right now. They have not asked yet if the allocated funds can be used on system campuses, but they will do so. And, she said, they are in conversation with the Disability Resource Center to make certain the restrooms become accessible as well. Hillis stated that other details are being worked out, such as pushing for non-gendered signs

Croce asked what the Committee can do to help, and whether the money allotted was adequate. Wilenchek replied that it would be ideal to have at least one easy access restroom in every building, and they are not there yet. Perhaps some multi-stall, gender-neutral spaces as well. She added that it is not enough for the universal design ideal and that the goal is total inclusivity. In regards to how to support their work, she asked the Committee to let her office know when gender barrier show up. For example, the Parental Leave Policy could remove the gender-specific language. She concluded by saying that the Commission is working on a trans-inclusive policy and could use the committee's support on that.

Laura Duckett proposed that the committee write a resolution stating that every building should have at least one gender-inclusive bathroom, with additional bathrooms as needed based on capacity of the building. She agreed to draft something and bring it back to the committee. Wilenchek asked if the resolution could also include language stating that individuals can use the gender-specific restroom for the gender that they identify with. This will return to the April agenda.

3. Sustainability and Waste Reduction Report: Maria del Carmen Garcia de LaSerrana Lozan and Lindsay Budde provided a quick update on this topic: they presented their priority proposal (from the previous meeting) to Sustainability Director Shane Stennes. In February the Sustainability Office presented their goals to the Board of Regents. Stennes said the goals include the priorities from Lozan and Budde. Once that report is public, Lozan and Budde will report back to the Committee.

4. Report to CSCC: Sarah Sexton was asked to provide a short update on the work of the Social Concerns Committee as it impacts civil service employees. She will bring up Parental Leave and gender-inclusive restrooms.

Hearing no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Patricia Straub
University Senate Office