SENATE COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL CONCERNS
MINUTES OF MEETING
APRIL 3, 2006

[In these minutes: Proxy Information, Cage-Free Eggs]

[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.]

PRESENT: Ken Heller, chair, Joseph Marchesani, Jennifer Oliphant, Todd Tratz, Peter Hiniker, Richard Lidstad, Elizabeth Richardson, Benton Schnabel, Greg Schooler, Amelious Whyte, Katherine Fennelly, David Fox, Mani Subramani, Nick Bengtson, David Gysbers, Mira Reinberg

REGRETS: Julie Sweitzer, Craig Hassel

ABSENT: Catherine Jordan, Ajay Skaria, Christopher Barrett, Samantha Butts, Reid Johnson

GUESTS: Leslie OÕLeary and Donny Mansfield from Compassionate Action for Animals

I). Professor Heller called the meeting to order.

II). Greg Schooler from the Office of Asset Management briefly described the proxy voting to committee members who were unfamiliar with the process. Professor Heller asked for volunteers to research each of the proxies and make a recommendation to the committee on which way to vote at the May 1st meeting. Members volunteered for following proxies:

- Professor Katherine Fennelly – Visteon Corporation – Human Rights Policy
- Professor Mani Subramani – Southern Company – Political Donations
- Professor Mani Subramani – Continental Airlines – Affirm Political Nonpartisanship

III). Professor Heller reminded committee members that the Social Concerns Committee has two items on the April 6 Senate docket:

1. A resolution recommending the University adopt a Vendor Code of Conduct.
2. A motion requesting the Board of Regents replace their policy outlining the investment responsibilities of the Social Concerns Committee in favor of one delegating these responsibilities to the President of the University. Accompanying this motion is an ancillary motion requesting the President

prepare an administrative policy documenting how the social impacts of the UniversityÕs investment responsibilities will be addressed.

Professor Heller will introduce these items at the Senate meeting and answer any questions that arise.

IV). Professor Heller introduced the next item of business, cage-free eggs, and welcomed todayÕs guests Leslie OÕLeary and Donny Mansfield. Mr. Mansfield began by directing memberÕs attention to the resolution before them, which he noted had been slightly revised from the original version members received with the agenda. He noted that this resolution is being brought before the committee for their endorsement.

Next, Mr. Mansfield and Ms. OÕLeary provided background information on this issue to members, and highlighted the following:

- A campaign is underway to have University Dining Services (UDS) purchase only certified humane cage-free eggs for consumption in all its non-residential dining facilities.
- Currently, large corporations dominate the battery cage egg market. Many cage-free egg suppliers are small business owners, which would be consistent with the UniversityÕs policy to do business with small business owners.
- Hens suffer immensely in battery cages. Many animal rights organizations consider the treatment of battery caged hens the most severe form of animal abuse.
- The European Union voted to ban battery hen cages across Europe. The use of these cages will be phased out by 2012.
- Many restaurants and grocery stores are choosing to purchase cage-free eggs.
- More than 80 other colleges and universities have banned or are in the process of banning the purchase of battery caged eggs i.e. University of Wisconsin-Madison, University of Iowa, Georgetown University, etc.
- Many University of Minnesota students want the University to purchase only cage-free eggs. In a brief period of time, Compassionate Action for Animals collected over 2,000 signatures on campus in support of this campaign to ban battery caged eggs.
- Many organizations on campus support the switch to certified humane cage-free eggs including: UDS Advisory Board, Council on Graduate Students (COGS), Graduate and Professional Student Association (GAPSA), Residential Housing Association.
- The Minnesota Daily published a position statement endorsing a switch to the purchase of only certified humane cage-free eggs by the University.
- Cage-free birds are not at a higher risk of contracting Avian Flu. In both caged and cage-free production facilities, hens are kept indoors. Only birds kept outdoors are at a higher risk for spreading and contracting Avian Flu.
- Pictures illustrating the living conditions of battery-caged hens were shown to members.
- Certified humane cage-free facilities give hens the space they need to spread their wings, move freely and groom themselves. Hens are also given nesting boxes, perches to stand on and solid ground as opposed to wire battery cages. De-

beaking, a practice in battery-cage facilities, is not allowed in certified humane cage-free facilities nor is forced molting.

Mr. Mansfield and Ms. OÕLeary concluded the formal portion of their presentation and solicited membersÕ questions/comments.

Questions/comments from members included:

- Please provide the citation that ensures that cage-free facilities are not open to the outdoors. Mr. Mansfield agreed to provide the committee with the standard for certified humane cage-free eggs following todayÕs meeting. He added that certified humane cage-free eggs are not the same as free-range eggs where hens are allowed to go outdoors.
- What is the difference in cost between a battery-cage egg and a certified humane cage-free egg? Mr. Mansfield indicated that certified humane cage-free eggs cost roughly .04 - .06 cents more per egg. Ms. OÕLeary added that Michael Foods, the UniversityÕs current supplier of battery cage eggs, also has a cage-free facility, however, it is not a certified humane cage-free facility. Michael Foods has quoted the University a cost of .06 cents more for a cage-free egg. There are other suppliers of cage-free eggs besides Michael Foods, which may be cheaper.
- Would the higher cost of cage-free eggs be passed on to students living in residence halls? Mr. Mansfield replied that this campaign does not include the residence halls. Why? According to Mr. Mansfield, the RHA (Residential Hall Association) voted down the cage-free egg resolution in large part because it did not have all the information it needed to make an informed decision. Compassionate Action for Animals is respecting RHAÕs decision.
- How many University dining facilities, outside of the residence halls, use eggs? According to Mr. Mansfield it is a sufficient quantity to order through SYSCO. He added that if the University decides to purchase only certified human cage-free eggs that Augsburg College will do so as well. Currently, Augsburg College, on its own, does not purchase enough eggs to make this a reasonably cost effective move.
- A member indicated that while he is convinced of the merits of the resolution, he is concerned that the cost of each egg will approximately double. Mr. Mansfield stated that the cost increase is quite nominal. For example, if two eggs were used in a menu item, the consumer would pay .12 cents extra for these two eggs.
- Does UDS make their own baked goods? Mr. Mansfield believes that UDS purchases its baked goods through outside vendor(s). Therefore, any pre-made baked goods supplied to the University would not be required to use cage-free eggs. This resolution simply covers eggs used on campus with the exception of residence halls. A suggestion was made to have the resolution reflect this clarification.
- How many eggs does the University use? Mr. Mansfield does not have this information, but knows it is enough to satisfy an order. Despite repeated requests by Compassionate Action for Animals, UDS has not released this information.
- Has Michael Foods taken a position either way on this issue? They have not taken a formal position either way. Michael Foods has cage-free facilities too.

- Do cage-free eggs taste any different? No, the type of grain that the hens are fed determines the taste of the egg.
- At some point in the future does Compassionate Action for Animals ultimately want the residence halls to purchase cage-fee eggs as well? Ultimately yes, however, Compassionate Action for Animals respects the position of RHA not to endorse this resolution. Therefore, at this time, Compassionate Action for Animals is only seeking to have cage-free eggs in non-residential dining locations on campus.
- In light of the fact that RHA supports non-residential dining locations using cage-free eggs seems to infer that they may, at some point in the future, decide to use cage-free eggs in the residence halls as well. Mr. Mansfield agreed that this is a possibility at some point in the future.
- How are egg purchases made at the University? Does each food location purchase its own eggs? No, eggs are purchased centrally through UDS and distributed to each location.
- Endorsement of this resolution could be a public health issue unless there is someway the committee can be assured that certified humane cage-free hens are housed indoors, and not permitted to go outside. Mr. Mansfield noted that the certified humane cage-free standards require that hens be housed indoors.
- Who enforces the certified humane cage-free standards? Certified humane is a program of Humane Farm Animal Care (http://www.certifiedhumane.com/) the enforcing body.
- Are there any government standards regulating certified human cage-free eggs? No, just like there are no government regulations governing battery cage eggs.
- If the University decides to purchase cage-free eggs, does this mean they have to be bought from a small business owner? Not necessarily, however, a vast majority of cage-free egg producers are small family farmers.
- It seems that enforcement of standards on small family farms would be much more difficult. Mr. Mansfield stated that while administering the inspection process may cost a little more, all certified humane cage-free eggs are inspected.
- Can the Avian Flu be passed through an egg? A committee member who had looked into this matter stated that the Avian Flu could be spread via an egg, which is not thoroughly cooked. She added that the Minnesota Department of Health and Minnesota Department of Agriculture have both brought up the enforcement issue of small farms as it relates to controlling Avian Flu. Mr. Mansfield referred members to the Humane Farm Animal Care website (http://www.certifiedhumane.com/) to review the certified human cage-free egg standards.
- In response to a question regarding Michael Foods, Mr. Mansfield noted that while they sell cage-free eggs, they do not sell certified humane cage-free eggs. Certified humane cage-free eggs have higher standards.
- The resolution really raises two issues, supporting small businesses and endorsing the use of certified humane cage-free eggs. Mr. Mansfield agreed and noted that both these issues are specifically mentioned in the resolution. Members debated both sides of whether the resolution should include the small business aspect. For some members it strengthened the resolution and for others it weakened it.

- Without the endorsement of RHA, this resolution seems to lack forcefulness. At some point in the not too distant future, serious consideration should be given to garnering the endorsement of the RHA to use cage-free eggs in the residence halls.
- It may be difficult to garner support from the broader University community for a resolution that does not affect the majority of the campus usage, residence halls.
- The resolution as currently written does not define certified humane cage-free eggs. In addition, it mentions other types of farming methods such as certified organic, and free-range, which muddies up the real issue. Mr. Mansfield stated that in many instances egg labels have little relevance to animal welfare, or, if they do, they have no official standards or any mechanism to enforce them. For example, the label Òcage-freeÓ does not have any standards or auditing mechanisms behind it. Whereas certified humane cage-free eggs are required to satisfy the Humane Farm Animal Care standards in order to be labeled certified humane cage-free.
- Members of the committee recommended the resolution be redrafted to make it as straight forward as possible and take out text such as certified organic, free range, etc. The committee also suggested to the authors that they draft two distinct resolutions to separate out the two issues contained in the current resolution: support of small family farmers and the use of certified humane cage-free eggs in all non-residential dining facilities on campus. Or, alternatively, incorporate the small family farmer issue in the discussion section of a single resolution endorsing the use of certified humane cage-free eggs.

Professor Heller stated that this item of business would carry over to the May 1st meeting. In the meantime, representatives from Compassionate Action for Animals agreed to make some changes to their current resolution in hopes of being able to get the committee to endorse it at the next meeting. Also, Renee Dempsey, Senate staff was charged with inviting guests that could speak to some of the concerns that were raised today.

V). Professor Fennelly reminded members that last year the committee passed a statement on academic freedom (http://www1.umn.edu/usenate/soccon/acadfreeres.html), She distributed a handout, which provided information on a book recently published by The MIT Press, *Academic Freedom After September 11*, and asked whether any members were interested in reading the essays complied in this book. Professor Fennelly believes the essays are quite thought provoking and would make for interesting discussion.

Professor Heller stated that academic freedom is an issue that continues to come up, and that it always useful to reaffirm it.

Along these same lines, Professor Heller asked whether the committee would be interested in hearing from someone within the administration to find out what action, if any, has taken place around the Social Concerns 2005 academic freedom statement, which the Senate approved. Members were interested to learn what has occurred around this issue.

VI). It was announced that Professor Mani Subramani would chair the Social Concerns Committee next year. The committee will continue to meet once a month on Monday afternoons, but the meeting time has been pushed back slightly to 2:30 – 4:00.

VII). Hearing no further business, Professor Heller adjourned the meeting.

Renee Dempsey
University Senate