
The University Senate

FACULTY · STUDENT · P&A · CIVIL SERVICE

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

Social Concerns Committee

April 25, 2022

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 reflect the views of, nor are they binding on, the senate, the administration, or the Board of Regents.

[**In these minutes:** Sustainability; University Investments; Open Access; Cultural Humility Resolution]

PRESENT: Linda Frizzell (chair), Ryan Allen, Nura Ali, Katherine Arnold, Toni Bennett, Mark Collier, Jade Joswick, Kevin Kamau, Jae-Lah Lymon, Jason Meyer, Moses Naughton-Garrison, Jonathan Sachs, Nicole Smiley, Aaron Sojourner, Meaghan Thul, Boris Volkov, Anna Wertenberger

REGRETS: Iris Borowsky, Molly Schwartz

ABSENT: Abdifatah Ahmed, Emily Eaton, Maura McGinnity

GUESTS: Shane Stennes, director, Sustainability; Professor Paul Shambroom, Department of Art; Professor Lauren Martin, chair, Senate Library Committee; Sunshine Carter, Danya Leebaw, and Nancy Sims, University Libraries; Tara Viken, Sylvia Gutierrez, and Leah Hailu, School of Public Health graduate students

OTHERS: Brianna Menning, assistant to the president, Office of the President

1. Sustainability

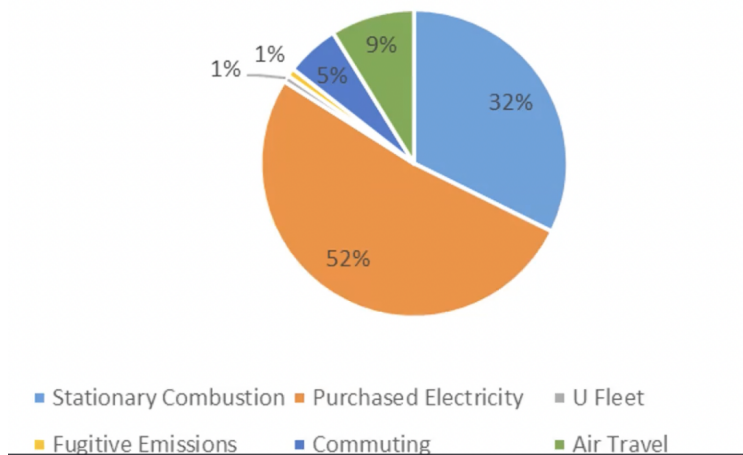
Professor Linda Frizzell, chair, called the meeting to order and welcomed Shane Stennes, director, Sustainability, who was present to talk to the committee about the University's climate sustainability goal as outlined in the MPact 2025 Strategic Plan. Stennes noted that one of the action items in the plan is to build a fully sustainable future, including demonstrating state and worldwide leadership in sustainability and environmental teaching, research, and convening power; developing system leadership and governance coordination for sustainability initiatives; and establishing the next generation systemwide climate action plan.

Stennes explained that MPact 2025 brought to light the need for governance structures around sustainability, and both a Systemwide Sustainability Committee and a [Twin Cities Sustainability Committee](#) have therefore been established.

In 2011, said Stennes, the University published a climate action plan committing to a 50% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2021 (as compared to 2008), and also to strive to reach carbon neutrality by 2050. The University succeeded in reducing its emissions by 51% from 2008 levels in fiscal year 2020.

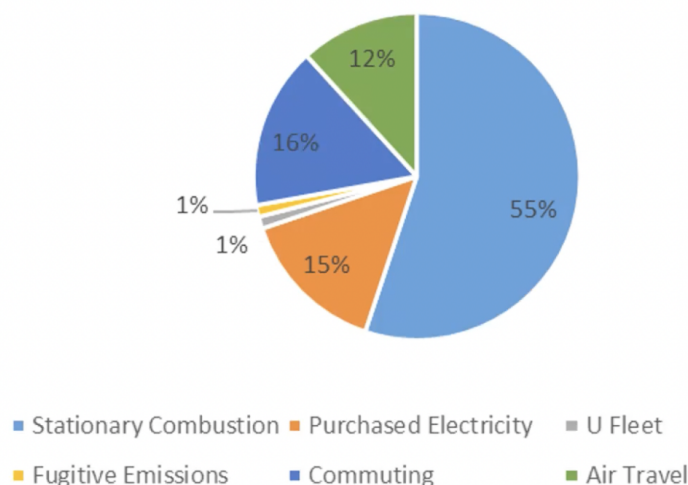
In 2008, just over half of the University’s emissions came from purchased electricity; about 1/3 came from stationary combustion; 9% from air travel; 5% from commuting, and 1% each from the University’s fleet vehicles and fugitive emissions:

UMTC Emissions Sources 2008



In 2020, the picture looked different, with 55% of emissions due to stationary combustion; 16% from commuting; 15% from purchased electricity; 12% from air travel; and 1% each from the fleet and fugitive emissions:

UMTC Emissions Sources 2020



Consultation is now underway for the University's new climate action plan; over the summer, the team plans to establish the approach and conduct analysis, and then do another round of consultations in the fall and winter. Stennes then asked the committee for feedback on how the committee would like to engage with the work; how to engage the larger Twin Cities community; what principles and priorities should guide the work; and aspirations for the work. Members offered the following comments:

- Perhaps a model similar to the Wellbeing Advocates model could be adopted with regard to sustainability. This structure allows the work to filter down into the departments without being dependent on independent departments and people within them.
- The Social Concerns Committee would like to hear about the priorities and approach once those have been defined.

Stennes thanked members for their input.

2. University Investments

Frizzell welcomed Professor Paul Shambroom, Department of Art, who was present to discuss working with the committee to advocate for increased transparency around University investments (the endowment and the Foundation), as well as increased community input. He explained that the Department of Art had received a large, unrestricted donation, which was required to go through the Foundation, but faculty were hesitant because they did not know what that money would be invested in. Although that issue was resolved, the question of transparency remained. Committee members expressed interest in working on this topic, but as it was the last meeting of the academic year, Frizzell asked Shambroom to return in the fall, to work with the committee on this issue.

3. Open Access

Professor Lauren Martin, chair, Senate Library Committee (SLC), told members about a [statement on open access](#) that the SLC had passed in support of the University Libraries' efforts on open access and invited Social Concerns to sign on to or endorse the statement. Sunshine Carter, director, Collection Strategy and eResource Management; Nancy Sims, copyright program librarian; and Danya Leebaw, director, Social Sciences department, University Libraries, gave a [presentation on open access](#).

Frizzell noted that there are federal regulations that stipulate that any research involving the tribes is not required to be made publicly available, unless the tribes agree. She offered to work with the authors to clarify this point. She said that an electronic vote would be sent out to committee members regarding endorsement.

4. Cultural Humility Course

Finally, Frizzell welcomed Tara Viken, Sylvia Gutierrez, and Leah Hailu, School of Public Health graduate students, who gave a presentation advocating for more cultural humility courses at the University. They described the difference between cultural humility and cultural competence, the importance of cultural humility, and the benefits of increased awareness and adoption of cultural humility at the University and in the workplace. The students revealed a resolution directed to the Board of Regents, with the following requests:

- Ensure that all undergraduate and graduate students have opportunities to build foundational understandings of cultural humility through a required course or course component
- Modify cultural competency courses to emphasize lifelong cultural humility
- Ensure that reliable information and transparency on steps taken to support incorporation of cultural humility in undergraduate and graduate foundational studies are provided to the campus community.

Amber Bathke, senate associate, University Senate Office, talked about the process of taking a resolution through the University Senate governance process. She explained that resolutions are directed to the University administration, rather than the Board of Regents. She also noted that the Twin Cities liberal education requirements were currently under review through the work of the Core Curriculum 2025 Committee, and directed the students to Professor Will Durfee, chair of that committee.

Amber Bathke
University Senate Office