
The University Senate

FACULTY • STUDENT • P&A • CIVIL SERVICE

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

Minutes of:

The Student Senate

Thursday, November 2, 2023

1. Assembly/Association Updates

Chair Pavin Guttipatti called the meeting to order. The meeting began with updates from the student government organizations.

University of Minnesota Duluth Student Government Association (UMDSGA)

Ethan Ion, UMDSGA representative, reported that they have elected Rowda Bashir to fill the College of Education and Human Services Professions senate seat. A webpage is being built to increase visibility and to promote University of Minnesota Duluth (UMD) student programs. Senators are planning the annual “Donuts with Deans” event, which provides an opportunity for students to meet with the college deans in an informal setting. Lastly, two UMDSGA members are on the search committee to fill the open chancellor position at UMD.

Rochester Student Association (RSA)

Kaitlyn Roers, RSA representative, reported that RSA is hosting a fundraising event to raise money for student clubs. Future student engagement events for the 2023-24 year are in the process of being planned.

Undergraduate Student Government (USG)

Mia McGraw, USG representative, reported that State Senator Amy Klobuchar reached out to USG for support of her anti-hazing bill; USG passed a resolution in support of the bill. The government and legislative affairs local coordinator has been working with the city to establish an early voting site on campus that is scheduled for October 31, 2023. USG has started working on food insecurities and is working with city officials, state legislators, and University administrators to determine steps, both short and long term, that can be taken to combat food insecurities. The government and legislative affairs local coordinator has been working with the city to introduce new city laws that allow tenants to break out of leases if the residence is not ready by the scheduled move in date.

Crookston Student Association (CSA)

Madeline Schneider, CSA representative, reported that CSA had their annual “Trunk or Treat” event and had a great turnout. A winter driving day is in the planning process to prepare students for winter driving conditions. Another event called “Santa Land” is in the process of being planned.

Council of Graduate Students (COGS)

Natalie Bennett, COGS representative, reported that their advocacy stances were finalized at their recent meeting. COGS has also hosted several events to connect with constituents. The Graduate Student Resource Guide is also being updated to provide graduate students with a central place to find a variety of information and resources.

Student Senate Consultative Committee

Jovany Betancourt, ranking student senator, reported that the process of moving forward with bylaw changes is being discussed. Betancourt asked members to contact him if interested in being part of the discussion.

Taiwo Aremu, vice chair, asked chairs/co-chairs of committees to meet with team members to create working documents that include possible agenda items and share the document with Betancourt and/or Aremu.

2. Student Senate/Student Senate Consultative Committee Chair Report

USG Senator Removals

Two senators were removed from Student Senate positions due to unsatisfactory attendance at USG scheduled meetings. Per Student Senate bylaws, senators must be in good standing within their Recognized Governance Student Organization (RSGA) in order to be a member of the Student Senate. SSCC will be focusing on bylaw changes to revise eligibility for Student Senate; if interested in being a part of the discussion, contact Guttipatti or Betancourt.

Sick and Safe Leave Policy

SSCC discussed the proposed updates to the Sick and Safe Leave Policy. The policy is being updated to meet the new requirements of the Sick and Safe Leave state legislation. Members with questions or interest in the policy should contact Guttipatti.

Guttipatti also asked members to reach out to Student Senate leadership if there are any issues or concerns that they would like to have addressed within the Student Senate.

3. Old Business

No old business to be discussed.

4. New Business

No new business reported.

5. Presidential Search Advisory Committee: Listening Session Discussion

Chris Uggen, vice chair, Presidential Search Advisory Committee (PSAC), explained that PSAC has been meeting with various groups across University of Minnesota colleges and campuses to ensure the criteria and qualities outlined in the position profile reflects student, faculty, and alumni interests. The floor was opened for members to share questions and input.

Betancourt asked Uggen what type of work and/or educational background the PSAC is looking for in the next presidential candidate. Uggen said the ideal candidate should have a PhD and a demonstrated track record of success in higher education. He also stated that other listening sessions have put forth the criteria that the future president should have experience in the

classroom, working directly with students, as well as writing and submitting grants. Betancourt agreed and added that considered candidates should have a positive track record with students and do not have any outstanding criticisms of mistreating students.

Niel Drabek shared that he would like to see the next president come from an educational background rather than a business background. Uggen agreed but added that the president position is multi-faceted and the candidate selected will need to be able to handle the array of responsibilities of the position. PSAC will be selecting a candidate that reflects the University's mission and while also helping it move forward into the future.

Uggen asked members what they would like to see the next president tackle within the first 90 days of assuming the position. Members shared the following:

- Improve the quality of life of both undergraduate and graduate students, both within and outside of the classroom;
- Increase awareness and inclusion of the smaller system campuses, especially the Rochester campus
- Improve communication and increase of opportunities for system campuses;
- Increase/improve access to affordable housing and food;
- Create a plan/approach to gain access to additional funding from the state.

Jacob Richter raised the point of the salary of the president and the recent increases/bonuses. He acknowledged that offering a competitive salary is necessary to recruit qualified candidates, however, from the perspective of students, he said the salary is disproportionate. Richter asked for salary to be discussed with potential candidates so there is clear understanding of what is fair and pragmatic. Uggen agreed, saying that pay has been discussed and various proposals have been put forth such as staggered compensation based on success. Uggen added that other listening sessions have also raised the point that the next president should be committed to the University with the intention of seeing through long term goals.

Drabek asked for PSAC to consider hiring a candidate that understands the balance between education and research. He explained that, from the perspective of an undergraduate student, some professors seem to prioritize research over quality instruction.

Ella Menke voiced her desire, as well as that of her constituents of Morris Campus Student Association (MCSA), to have the next president continue to expand the University's relationship with indigenous tribal communities, especially in terms of student tuition and academic support.

Nick Tomhave asked to see the next president work on building bridges, in terms polarized politics within the state, and encouraging diversity of thought and constructive dialogue. He also added that he agreed with Drabek's suggestion to emphasize the balance between education and research.

Regent James Farnsworth explained that the Board of Regents (BOR) will be meeting in early February to name candidate finalists. He emphasized the importance of constituencies across the whole University to be engaged in the presidential search process during the month of February. The BOR will be looking for feedback on the selected finalists; the feedback will play a key role during the final interviews to select the next president.

Mattea Allert asked what characteristics and qualities PSAC will be looking for when selecting final candidates. Uggen explained that the position profile, which will be approved by the BOR, will be used to select candidate finalists. Allert also added that she would like the next president to prioritize graduate students and to also recognize the different groups of graduate students.

Allert suggested the PSAC increase transparency of the presidential candidate search process. Betancourt suggested using social media platforms to reach as many University students, staff, and faculty as possible to help increase transparency of the search process.

Drabek asked if there is a process in place if University members believe the presidential candidate selected is not best suited for the position. Uggen said that he is not aware of a process in place, however, like Farnsworth previously mentioned, the BOR will be collecting feedback from University members on the final candidates during the month of February and using the feedback to guide the final interviews.

Allert asked if there is a different recruitment process/strategy in place to attract top quality candidates and to ensure that the candidate pool is composed of the best in the field. Uggen said that a new search firm is being used to recruit candidates. He elaborated saying that the candidates they are looking for are not only highly qualified and have esteemed track records, but also have a long term trajectory that can lead the University of Minnesota long term.

Aremu suggested looking for candidates that are not coming from another institution, arguing that candidates with previous experience in similar positions risk having a mirrored philosophy/approach. Instead, Aremu said PSAC should consider looking for candidates that may not have the experience in leading similar sized institutions as the University, but instead look for candidates that have the drive and the vision to lead the University into the future. Aremu also suggested looking closely at internal candidates from the University that are seeking the position.

Allert also emphasized the importance of selecting a candidate that is willing to be a leader amongst the larger institutions and push for innovation. Uggen agreed that the PSAC will be looking for someone to lead *from* Minnesota and with the interests of Minnesota in mind.

Uggen thanked the Student Senate for the suggestions and feedback. Guttipatti thanked Uggen and Farnsworth for their participation in the listening session. With no additional comments or discussions, the meeting was adjourned.

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University Senate Office