

# **SENATE DISABILITIES ISSUES COMMITTEE** Monday,

September 13, 1999

Regents' Room, Morrill Hall

9:00 A.M.

## **MINUTES**

**PRESENT:** James Carey (chair), Harvey Carlson, William Durfee, Barbara Leonard, Elizabeth Lightfoot, Virgil Mathiowetz, Ken Myers, Victoria Nelson, Julie Sweitzer, Kimerly Wilcox, David Wuolu

**REGRETS:** Deborah Brown, Dave Fueker, Lucinda Hall

**ABSENT:** Suann Mitchell, Joe Reichle

**GUEST:** Laurie Wilson

(These minutes reflect discussion and debate at a meeting of a committee of the University of Minnesota Senate or Twin Cities Campus Assembly; none of the comments, conclusions, or actions reported in these minutes reflect the views of, nor are they binding on, the Senate or Assembly, the Administration, or the Board of Regents.)

## **WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

Professor James Carey welcomed members of the committee and then everyone introduced themselves to each other. Professor Carey also noted that there are two student members on the committee, but they have not yet been appointed.

After the introductions, Professor Carey drew the committee's attention to the its charge. He noted that the charge of the committee is to advise the president and other administrative officers on disabilities issues across all campuses. There is also a Disabilities Services office on Campus that relates to the committee and Kathy Brown is serving as the acting director until a permanent director is named. Dave Fuecker, assistant director of Disabilities Services, will represent that office on the committee.

## **MEETING SCHEDULE**

The committee decided to schedule meetings through the end of Fall Semester. The two meetings that were scheduled are set for October 18 and December 6. Both meetings will take place from 9:00 to 11:00 a.m. in the Regents' Room, located in Room 238 Morrill Hall.

## **PENDING ISSUES**

Transportation

Last year, the committee submitted a resolution to the University Senate requesting that money be provided to fund the paratransit service. The resolution was adopted and the administration has agreed to provide the funds. However, Vickie Nelson reported that the money must come from the Parking and Transportation budget and no new money was provided to support it. Therefore, funds from other bus routes were reallocated to cover the expenses. Circulator, connector, and intercampus bus routes have been cut as a result. Although people with disabilities may not be directly affected by the cuts, it will affect the University as a whole.

#### Health Sciences Subcommittee

Perhaps it would be wise to form a Health Sciences Subcommittee given that there are so many areas within the Health Sciences that deal directly with disabilities and access to them is not always possible. The subcommittee would also meet with Fairview to consider all issues.

One issue that the subcommittee could address would be the parking and transportation issue that arises for those going to the Rehabilitation Services department that is located on the fourth floor of the Mayo Building. In the past, parking spots were allotted in the Mayo Garage for those individuals, but the loss of other parking facilities have forced those spots to be eliminated. Individuals must now park in the patient lots, which are at least two blocks away. Even though there is a shuttle, it is not able to access the Mayo Building given its size. Also, departments are able to purchase parking spots for patients, but that may not be utilized or advertised.

#### Building better communications w/ Facilities Management

It is not clear if there is an active interchange between Facilities Management, Disabilities Services, and the committee. The former director of Disabilities Services did not feel there was an active interchange between the groups, particularly in the development and construction of new buildings/structures as well as access to existing buildings. It would be useful to have more publicity given to the status of projects directed by Facilities Management. This would help the committee to follow up on any disabilities issues that should be addressed.

#### Parking/Meters

There is a perception that there is not enough enforcement of the meters and tagged spots that are reserved for handicapped individuals around campus.

#### Peoplesoft ability to address disabilities issues

It is not clear if adequate attention has been given to the development of Peoplesoft to include equal access for people with disabilities so that they can also use the system. Julie Sweitzer noted that there are two issues related to Peoplesoft: how useful and private the information is and how the system is designed to be used. There are different degrees of accessibility, but demographic information will not be made public. Currently, the designers are looking into whether or not the system can trigger a way for appropriate accommodations to be made in the learning environment when a student who has identified himself or herself as having a disability registers for class. Disabilities Services does maintain their own computer system, but linking to the Peoplesoft system is still under deliberation. There is also an overall issue under consideration as to whether or not all of the information systems

available at the University are accessible for people with disabilities. Disabilities Services is currently working on web criteria and will then develop software criteria.

#### Better publicity of the committee (MN Daily)

An occasional notice in the MN Daily about the committee's tasks would stimulate awareness and people could call attention to issues on campus that may otherwise go unaddressed.

#### Diversity Course that focuses on disabilities

There is a liberal arts requirement that includes cultural diversity. Students are expected to understand the roles of gender, ethnicity, and race and how they contribute to the social fabric of the United States. Given this description, there is no case currently available that would inform students about people with disabilities. A course could possibly be developed to provide information on disabilities.

#### Access at the Rec Center

One of the student members from last year's committee brought up the issue as to whether or not people with disabilities have adequate access to the University's rec center.

#### Status of the development of an umbrella committee

A proposal is forthcoming to combine the Senate Disabilities Issues and Equal Employment Opportunity for Women Committees to form one umbrella committee that would also include other areas of diversity not currently represented in the Senate. Under that main umbrella committee subcommittees would be formed to address the specific areas. Last year the idea was controversial among the committee. The Senate would have to approve the change in order for it to occur. Marti Gonzales, chair of the EEOWC, suggested that the two committees meet to jointly discuss the issue. A formal proposal should be distributed before the joint meeting takes place. The other areas that would also be included in the umbrella committee should also be invited to the joint committee to get their reaction to the proposal as well.

#### Issue Assignments

Facilities Management: William Durfee

Parking/Meters: Vickie Nelson

Course: Barbara Leonard, Kim Wilcox, David Wuolu

Health Sciences: Virgil Mathiowetz

Peoplesoft: Ken Myers

Publicity: Elizabeth Lightfoot

Rec Center: James Carey

**ADJOURNMENT**

Hearing no other business, Professor Carey adjourned the meeting at 10:20 a.m.