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# The University Senate

FACULTY · STUDENT · P&A · CIVIL SERVICE

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## UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

### Student Senate Consultative Committee (SSCC)

December 10, 2021

### 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:** Discussion on Liberal Education Requirements and Curriculum; Discussion of the University's Legislative Agenda for the 2022 Session; Introduction of New Director of the University Senate Office; SSCC Member Updates]

**PRESENT:** Sarani Millican (chair), Justin Goetz (vice chair), Mattea Allert (ranking student senator), Nicholas Wallenhorst, Karissa Grapes, Lucas Simpson, Scott Petty

**REGRETS:** None

**ABSENT:** Brendan King, Karen Coenen, Tatianna Enget, Daksha Gummadi, Dylan Young, Gabbie Raymond

**GUESTS:** Bob McMaster, vice provost and dean, Office of Undergraduate Education (OUE); JD Burton, chief government relations officer, University Relations; Erin Heath, director, University Senate Office

**OTHERS:** Heather McGinnis, Brianna Menning, Noah Wexler

Chair Sarani Millican welcomed the committee, and members introduced themselves.

**1. Discussion on Liberal Education Requirements and Curriculum** - Millican introduced Bob McMaster, vice provost and dean, Office of Undergraduate Education (OUE), who provided a brief overview of the University's liberal education requirements and the work that is currently underway to update them. McMaster noted that the current core components of the curriculum that all students must take include courses in mathematics, social sciences, biological sciences, physical sciences, arts, humanities, and literature. Additionally, there are five themes that must be met within this course load including a required race, power, and justice theme. He noted that this structure has been in place for about thirty years and Provost Rachel Croson is looking to revisit these requirements to better meet the needs of a student in the 21st century. A recently proposed redesign of the curriculum was proposed in 2019 to the Faculty Senate, but it was not

approved by that body. McMaster stated that a new committee has recently been formed to further review the curriculum. The committee will be formed of several faculty members as well as two students. The committee will be chaired by Professor Will Durfee and will start in January with the goal of bringing a recommendation by the spring of 2023.

Millican asked if there is a strategy in place to not repeat the failure of approval from 2019. McMaster commented that this process will hopefully be much more of an open process this time around. This includes involving stakeholders that could be disproportionately impacted by changes, either removing or adding coursework in particular areas. He further noted that each campus develops their own liberal education requirements but must conform to Minnesota's transfer curriculum. The intent is to not force one model of curriculum onto other campuses, but there can be similarities. He also noted that in order to avoid confusion, the name could be changed to core curriculum as opposed to liberal education.

Millican asked how the university is assessing that they are meeting their student development outcomes. McMaster replied that the intent of the curriculum is to address student learning outcomes. Courses are frequently reviewed to make sure that they are addressing one or more of the seven student learning outcomes.

**2. Discussion of the University's Legislative Agenda for the 2022 Session** - Millican introduced JD Burton, chief government relations officer, University Relations, who provided an overview of the University's legislative priorities for the 2022 legislative session. Burton presented a [slide deck](#) and highlights were as follows:

- The Board of Regents each year approves a request from the legislature and it is Burton's team's responsibility to advocate for the University to fulfill each request.
- Even years in the legislature are typically known as a capital investment year. The University will ask the legislature for \$273 million for capital improvement projects.
- The bulk of the request is \$200 for higher education asset preservation and restoration (HEAPR). The request will fund over 175 projects in more than 100 buildings systemwide. Projects include:
  - Crookston: Electrical and Natural Gas Infrastructure
  - Duluth: Heller Hall Capital Renewal
  - Morris: Multi-Ethnic Resource Center Elevator Replacement
  - Twin Cities: Moos and PWB Towers Fire Life Safety Improvements
  - Outreach Centers: Critical Infrastructure Improvements
- Burton further provided historical perspective on aging infrastructure on each campus and recognized that the University has about a \$700 million backlog on building upgrades and maintenance over the past 10 years.
- The request is also asking for \$72 million for a new undergraduate chemistry teaching lab to be added to Fraser Hall on the Twin Cities. Campus.
- The third portion of the request is for \$1.6 million for the designing of a science building renewal on the Duluth campus.

Millican asked about the two year legislative cycle and if this request is in addition to the University's budget request. Burton clarified that the state's budget, which includes the biennial

budget for the University, is passed during the odd year of the legislative biennium, which was this past year.

Nick Wallenhorst asked if the Board was only requesting infrastructure funding this year. Burton stated that some years the Board will make both a budget and capital request, depending on the need of projects and the anticipated state budget forecast. The Board could also ask for supplemental budget money this year as well. Ultimately, the legislature and the governor have the authority to approve all funding, yet they cannot dictate how the university creates programs, policies, initiatives, or tuition levels because the University has autonomy for the state.

Millican asked how students can help advocate for the University. Burton replied that his team will routinely involve specific students to assist in giving testimonials and tours of facilities. They are currently engaging chemistry students for the Fraser Hall project. Burton further encouraged students to become involved with the UMN Advocates program to actively engage their legislators.

**3. Introduction of New Director of the University Senate Office** - Millican introduced Erin Heath, director, University Senate Office, who is taking over the role as director of the University Senate Office after the retirement of Vickie Courtney. Heath stated that she was excited to fill this important role. Heath had previously served as chair of the P&A Senate and looks forward to continuing to work with so many wonderful people in the senate governance system. Most recently, Heath worked in the Office of Institutional Analysis for the past nine years, and has been at the University for over 25 years overall.

**4. SSCC Member Updates** - Members of the SSCC provided updates from their respective groups and associations and highlights were as follows:

- Karissa Grapes, SSCC representative, Professional Student Government (PSG), stated that PSG recently passed a [resolution](#) calling for an amendment to the administrative policy on makeup work, to allow students to view their classes remotely when they have an excused absence. PSG leaders are working with senate stakeholders to bring this forward in the spring.
- Nicholas Wallenhorst, SSCC representative, Minnesota Student Association (MSA), said that the MSA Academic Affairs committee also passed the PSG resolution and is likely to get more feedback during its next Forum meeting. MSA has also voted to support the Morris campus resolution on the Native American Promise Plan. Finally, they are drafting a letter to the Minneapolis City Council to address rent stabilization.
- Lucas Simpson, ex-officio representative, Senate Committee on Educational Policy (SCEP), stated that SCEP addressed many issues this past week. Items included information that this year's freshman class was the most diverse in the University's history; a discussion about retiring the [policy](#) for high school preparatory requirements for undergraduates; and continuing discussions about making Juneteenth a University holiday in 2022.

Hearing no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Chris Kwapick

