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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)

February 17, 2023

### 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:** SSCC Updates; Resolution on Workforce Reinvestment: Rebuilding a Better U for Employees; Resolution on Ensuring the Possibility of a Living Wage; Resolution to Quantify Instructor Grading Deadlines; Approval of Docket for the February 23, 2023 Meeting of the Student Senate; Resolution to Support the Greater Minnesota Scholarship Program; Policy Review: New Administrative Policy: *Academic Restoration*]

**PRESENT:** Pavan Guttipatti (chair), Adam Sychla (vice chair), Mary Kate Wolken, Alex Christen, Michael Waldorf, Henry Hauser

**REGRETS:** Gwen Vu, Dannah Nephew, Ella Reichenbacher

**ABSENT:** Carter Yost (ranking student senator)

**GUESTS:** Colleen Flaherty Manchester, chair, Faculty Consultative Committee (FCC); Jacob Richter, Student Senator, CLA; Jessica Kuecker Grotjohn, assistant to the vice provost and dean, Office of Undergraduate Education (OUE)

**OTHERS:** Maggie Flaten, Brianna Menning, Bobbie Erichsen, Adolfo Carrillo Cabello, Katie Russell

Chair Pavan Guttipatti welcomed the committee, and members introduced themselves.

#### 1. SSCC Updates

Guttipatti asked each SSCC member to provide an update from their respective student governments and they were as follows:

- Michael Waldorf, SSCC representative, University of Minnesota Duluth Student Association (UMDSA), said that they just held their Bulldog Lobby Day at the state capitol and it went well. UMDSA is getting ready for its spring elections and added new senators to this year's roster.

- MK Wolken, SSCC representative, Council of Graduate Students (COGS), said that they have been working to survey students about their most important issues. COGS will be holding a full meeting next week and hope to increase stipends.
- Henry Hauser, SSCC representative, Morris Campus Student Association (MCSA), noted that MCSA passed a resolution calling for the renovation of meditation spaces. They are also planning on attending “Support the U” day at the state capitol next week and further advocate for University funding.
- Alex Christian, SSCC representative, Crookston Student Association (CSA), shared that CSA is currently reviewing its budget to better the campus and possibly place suggestion boxes across campus. They are also looking to create a graduation social event at the end of the year and a commuter appreciation day.
- The following members were unable to attend the meeting but sent the following correspondence:
  - From Gwen Vu, SSCC representative, Undergraduate Student Government (USG): “This past week, the president and VP of USG met with the Provost. The committees are working on different issues, but there are no new resolutions. USG is talking about bringing up the idea of possibly not revoking our UMN emails after graduation.”
  - From Ella Reichenbacher, SSCC representative, Rochester Student Association (RSA): “Hi! Rochester is doing well. We have been busy with the spring semester. We have been trying to improve our food pantry and gym. We are always accepting and denying funds for groups to stay within our budget. Lastly, we had a safety meeting trying to make our campus safer.”
  - From Dannah Nephew, SSCC representative, Professional Student Government (PSG): “PSG is working on our annual PSG gala celebration set for March 17th at the Macnamara Center. Plus ones are on a first come first serve basis as we have limited space. The theme this year is Green with Envy. There is no cost to attend! Additionally, I met with the executive medical school student council board last week with our med school rep, Jovany Betancourt. We have been pushing to get student government as an excused absence in the Medical School, as it is currently not. There was agreement among the student life deans and they will be discussing with leadership to change the policy for next year to include student gov. as an excused absence. I am in communication with the med school student council president, Sophia Mavrommatis, and we will be chatting in the near future about potentially creating a resolution for this action so that it does not slip through the cracks with leadership. I am also in communication with Jovany about including Duluth in their initiative with CHIP to get more accessible food to the schools to address food insecurity. I will be updating you all about this in the future as it is in development. They are meeting today with CHIP chairs.”

## 2. [Resolution on Workforce Reinvestment: Rebuilding a Better U for Employees](#)

Adam Sychla presented a resolution being introduced by the consultative committee leadership of the University Senate Governance system in regard to reinvestment in workers. Colleen Flaherty Manchester, chair of the Faculty Consultative Committee, also joined the meeting. Sychla presented a [slide deck](#) and highlights were as follows:

- The resolution calls for reinvestment in the workforce and rebuilding a better University

for employees. This is in part a response to the pay cuts and furloughs during the COVID-19 pandemic, increased workloads, and declines in faculty and staff engagement.

- The resolution calls for a long-term investment plan grounded in four principles:
  - Provide liveable, equitable, and competitive pay
  - Recruit, reward, and retain people
  - Establish clear pathways for professional development and career advancement
  - Foster a culture that promotes manageable workloads
- The resolution further calls on the administration to:
  - Identify which priorities will receive immediate attention
  - Identify which priorities would be wrapped into a longer-term plan and budget strategy
  - Identify which priorities are infeasible in the foreseeable future
- The leaders of the consultative committees are working to get feedback from the broader governance community to make sure that these principles and goals resonate with others.
- Sychal further highlighted that the resolution aims to help graduate student employees wages, vacation, and paid family leave.

Manchester added that she has been refining the resolution after each consultative meeting. Wolken asked if this resolution aims to address health insurance benefits for graduate students. Manchester replied that it could possibly be included. She further opined that these investments will have a positive impact on the student experience.

### **3. Resolution on Ensuring the Possibility of a Living Wage**

Sychla presented a resolution aimed at ensuring a possibility of a living wage which also took aim at the subject of wage caps, the maximum amount an employee can earn in their specific job. He noted that he has worked with Hubred, Henry Hauser from Morris, and P&A Senator Kit Breshears. He explained that wage caps can be at a level below the cost of living as established by the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED). The resolution asked for the administration to raise any wage cap to above the DEED cost of living for a 100% appointment. It also calls for graduate students to earn twice as much as the cost of living due to the fact that graduate students are by default 50% employees and are not allowed to take a second job.

Waldorf appreciated the resolution and asked how many students it would impact. Sychla replied that he believes that most graduate students are close to their wage cap. He wasn't sure if this would raise wages for all students but it enables the ability to negotiate. Wolken also appreciated the work on this resolution. Sychla further indicated that he has been consulting with a number of administrative units including the Medical School and the Graduate School.

### **4. Resolution to Quantify Instructor Grading Deadlines**

Guttipatti introduced Jacob Richter, Student Senator, CLA, who presented a resolution on quantifying deadlines for instructor grading. He noted that instructor feedback and grading can vary wildly across courses and this resolution aims to create better accountability for feedback for students. Richter has already met with the Office of Undergraduate Education (OUE), the Senate Committee on Educational Policy (SCEP), and the Senate Committee on Academic Freedom and Tenure. The current policy indicates that instructors must evaluate examinations

and other student work with sufficient promptness to enhance the learning experience and instructors must promptly return examinations or permit students to review their exams to request clarification of grades. This resolution aims to better define “promptness” in this process and change behavior, not penalize instructors.

Guttiatti expressed concerns that this resolution could create more work for teaching assistants who must already balance so much of their work. Richter agreed that it could create increased accountability while also exposing the fact that these TAs are sometimes overworked or given too much responsibility with their duties. Wolken appreciated that it could allow for the mechanism for a TA to push back about working conditions.

Waldorf asked what faculty have thought about the resolution and Richter indicated that he had good conversations with some instructors who acknowledged that it can be easy to get off track and this good push them back in the right direction. Waldorf further asked if the resolution would apply to Duluth and Richter replied that it would only apply to the campuses identified in the policy, the Twin Cities, Rochester, and Morris. Waldorf said it could be a good template for Duluth.

#### **5. Approval of [Docket for the February 23, 2023 Meeting of the Student Senate](#)**

Guttiatti presented the proposed docket for the meeting of the Student Senate on February 23, 2023. Sychla moved to approve the docket and the motion was seconded by Wolken. Hearing no discussion, a vote was taken, and the motion was unanimously approved.

#### **6. [Resolution to Support the Greater Minnesota Scholarship Program](#)**

Waldorf presented a resolution asking for senate support of the proposed Greater Minnesota Scholarship Program which would allow for additional state-funded scholarships for the Crookston, Duluth, Morris, and Rochester campuses. This program has been proposed by the Board of Regents as part of its legislative request for this legislative session. Waldorf further noted that this can help to reverse the downward trend of enrollment at these system campuses. Waldorf is looking for further consultation from the student associations at the other system campuses.

#### **7. Policy Review: [New Administrative Policy: Academic Restoration](#)**

Guttiatti introduced Jessica Kuecker Grotjohn, assistant to the vice provost and dean, Office of Undergraduate Education (OUE), who presented a new proposed administrative policy on academic restoration. Kuecker Grotjohn explained that the purpose of the policy is to facilitate student degree completion for students who experienced academic difficulty and are returning to the University as a degree-seeking student. When Academic Restoration is applied, a student’s GPA will exclude D and F grades earned during the time period of one year (including summer); the earned grades remain on the transcript. This policy would only apply to undergraduate students who have been away from the University for at least five years.

Kuecker Grotjohn further stated that this policy would be utilized by a very small group of students and the policy recognizes that students experience extenuating circumstances and personal growth over time that may result in an increased likelihood of student success. She also presented an [example scenario of an application of the policy](#). The policy would also allow

students to transfer from one University campus to another for better possible outcomes. Kuecker Grotjohn said that she is presenting this language to multiple senate committees and welcomed feedback.

SSCC members were broadly supportive of the policy. Guttipatti asked why the threshold for return was proposed at five years and Kuecker Grotjohn explained that other institutions with a similar policy have thresholds between two and ten years. She felt that five years was a good middle ground where an individual can have the time to change their career aspirations or scholastic goals. Sometimes students are placed on suspension for up to two years and they sometimes come back without the appropriate perspective. Wolken asked what academic support these students would receive upon re-matriculation given the 2.5 GPA standard. Kuecker Grotjohn said that there is some flexibility for academic advisors to work with the student to make sure that they are staying on track.

Hearing no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Chris Kwapick  
University Senate Office