

**Student Senate Consultative Committee (SSCC)**  
**April 16, 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:** SSCC Updates; Student Senate Stipend Review Subcommittee; Approval of Updates to the Student Senate Handbook; Approval of April 22, 2021, Student Senate Meeting Docket; Introduction and Q&A with New Vice President for Student Affairs; Meeting and Q&A with the President]

**PRESENT:** Briggs Tople (chair), Gunnar Frahm (vice chair), Sydney Bauer (ranking student senator), Parandis Kazemi, Erika Swant, Annie Counihan, Myle Luong, Justin Goetz, Scott Petty, Abdi Ali

**REGRETS:** Jack Flom

**ABSENT:** Julia Scovil, Manpreet Singh, Stephanie Huisman

**GUESTS:** Calvin Phillips, vice president and dean of students, Office for Student Affairs (OSA); Joan Gabel, president, University of Minnesota

**OTHERS:** Daksha Gummadi, Bri Keeney, Megan Sweet, Erik Dussault

Chair Briggs Tople welcomed the committee, and members introduced themselves.

**1. SSCC Updates** - Tople indicated that due to the full agenda of the meeting, SSCC members were asked to submit updates from their respective campus student associations or constituencies electronically and the responses were as follows:

- Annie Counihan, SSCC representative, University of Minnesota Duluth Student Association (UMDSA), posted the following: "Everybody meet UMDSA Vice President Daksha Gummadi! She will be the SSCC Representative for next year. Dr. Cedric Alexander has begun the consultation process with the UMD campus community. Daksha Gummadi and I attended both of the Q&A sessions. Looking forward to further consultation. UMD Math Department: Article on two female math professors left UMD Math Department due to sexist discrimination. Student group formed: Students for Accountability and Equity in STEM → passing a resolution with the President of this student org in order to hold the Department accountable. Main asks will be: (1) Public acknowledgement from the leaders of UMD's Math and Stats Department of the following: 2019 EOAA findings, Dr. Tracy Bibelnicks' resignation, the causal relationship between the EOAA findings and Dr. Bibelnicks' resignation; (2) Demand accountability from UMD's Math and Stats Department in the form of collaboration with external bodies (EOAA, ODI) to build, publicly release, and execute a plan designed to

do whatever necessary to dismantle the department's "intimidating, hostile, and offensive environment" (as per the 2019 EOAA findings) and replace it with one that is safe, inclusive, and equitable for all. This progress should be continually equitable for all. This progress should be continually evaluated and assessed by an external body such as the EOAA. This plan should be implemented and made public no later than September 1, 2021; and (3) We demand that UMD's Math and Stats Department mandate ally and advocate training and bystander intervention training for all staff and faculty. This training should be completed no later than September 1, 2021. Additionally, all faculty and staff should be required to commit, in writing, to implementing said programs. Daksha and I appointed our Cabinet for the 2021-2022 school year!"

- Erika Swant, SSCC representative, Professional Student Government (PSG), posted the following: "PSG hosted Professional Student Appreciation Bingo and Trivia. U-Matter Grant was approved to increase the amount since inequities were seen amongst programs that were eligible for the In-Class Grant. St. Paul Boynton Clinic was reopened with student input. After the COVID-19 Vaccine and Testing Resolution was passed, discussion regarding providing students free parking passes for these services was discussed with Dave Golden - UMN public health & communication director."
- MyLe Luong, SSCC representative, Rochester Student Association (RSA), posted the following: "Before spring break, we passed a resolution to change the number of committees we have, the title of our student senator and the attendance policy at RSA. We also supported one of our clubs for Sexual Assault Awareness Month."

**2. Student Senate Stipend Review Subcommittee** - Swant volunteered to lead the review of the Student Senate officers' performance over the past year. Members of the SSCC, less stipend-receiving members, then discussed the stipend amounts for the chair, vice chair, and ranking student senator as follows:

- Briggs Tople to receive \$1,250.00 of the \$1,250.00 spring semester portion of their stipend
- Gunnar Frahm to receive \$500.00 of the \$500.00 spring semester portion of their stipend
- Sydney Bauer to receive \$500.00 of the \$500.00 spring semester portion of their stipend

**Counihan moved to recommend approval of the stipends, as presented, to the Student Senate, and the motion was seconded by Swant. Hearing no further discussion, a vote was taken, and the motion was approved.**

**3. Approval of Updates to the [Student Senate Handbook](#)** - Gunnar Frahm, vice chair, SSCC, introduced proposed changes to the Student Senate Handbook and asked for the committee's approval. He explained that the proposed changes were mostly minor as they incorporated changes made earlier in the year to the Student Senate Bylaws regarding officer eligibility. Additionally, Frahm added a section regarding the suggested path for statements, letters, and resolutions and a corresponding flowchart. Finally, the committee requested a few stylistic edits for easier reading.

**Frahm moved to approve the proposed changes to the Student Senate Handbook, and the motion was seconded by Sydney Bauer. Hearing no further discussion, a vote was taken, and the motion was approved.**

**4. Approval of [April 22, 2021, Student Senate Meeting Docket](#)** - Tople provided an overview of the proposed docket for the April 22, 2021, meeting of the Student Senate. Counihan called attention to the fact that the proposed resolution on student protesting was recently updated and finalized.

**Tople moved to approve the April 22, 2021, Student Senate meeting docket, and the motion was seconded by Counihan. Hearing no further discussion, a vote was taken, and the motion was approved.**

**5. Introduction and Q&A with New Vice President for Student Affairs** - Tople introduced Calvin Phillips, new vice president and dean of students, Office for Student Affairs (OSA), and welcomed him to the University community. Phillips stated that he was currently in his seventh week in his new role and is excited to finally get to meet so many new people. While he has yet to visit his office on campus, Phillips indicated that he has met with several University stakeholders already and is trying his best to get up to speed on several student issues, especially those issues that have been exacerbated by the pandemic. Phillips also noted that he has been most impressed by the community's desire to engage in the work of social justice.

Tople stated that the Board of Regents policy: *Student Conduct Code* will soon be up for revision and asked how Phillips plans to engage with students on these changes. Phillips commented that these efforts are being led by Laura Knudson, assistant vice provost for student advocacy and support, OSA, and she has a great plan for consultation. The intent is to touch base with all student governance groups and make sure everyone has a good understanding in that process. He hopes that any revisions will be done through a lens of diversity, equity, and inclusion. Chris Kwapick, senate associate, University Senate Office, noted that OSA has been in touch with his office and the initial review of the policy will start this spring and the SSCC will have adequate time to weigh in during the fall semester as well.

Justin Goetz commented that he looks forward to seeing Dr. Phillips on campus as the offices for his leadership minor are in the same building. Scott Petty asked if OSA or the Office for Community Standards tracks the demographics of complaints related to student discipline, and if so, if it shows any bias between international and domestic students. Phillips stated that he was unsure about the processes here at the University but at previous institutions where he worked, they did collect that information to help inform them whether policies may be unfairly targeting particular students. Petty further inquired about the possibility for student groups to gain periodic access to space in the St. Paul Student Center and Phillips replied that he would look into that request. Petty further encouraged Phillips to hold more system campus governance events after the pandemic subsides.

Abdi Ali asked for further comment about Phillips's approach towards system campuses and perceived system discrepancies. Phillips stated that it is his intent to visit each system campus as

soon as he can and wants to be a partner to system leaders. Ali further inquired about the possible renaming of buildings on campuses when the individuals whose names adorn the buildings have a suspect history of racism. Phillips stated that he has not been brought up to speed with the specific details of that issue but understands that further guidance and discussion should be coming from the Board of Regents very soon and he hopes to engage in that conversation as a partner for students.

Phillips asked the committee what are some of the top issues that they are hearing from their fellow students. Ali responded that he and other students have recently felt let down and sad by the University, especially given the recent events in Brooklyn Center where University of Minnesota police forces joined other law enforcement agencies to quell protests following the killing of Daunte Wright. Parandis Kazemi commented that better accountability for faculty and staff is needed, especially when accused of wrongdoing. Swant requested better and sustained mental health resources. Tople asked that Phillips act as a chief advocate for the student voice whenever he is in a position to “be in the room where it happens.”

**6. Meeting and Q&A with the President** - Tople introduced Joan Gabel, president, University of Minnesota, who proceeded to provide an update on a number of issues before taking questions from committee members. Highlights of her update included the following:

- The University has made the announcement that classes should be back to a full in-person modality this fall, with most employees returning to campus on August 2, 2021.
- Gabel has heard the concerns of students regarding the dispatching of University of Minnesota Police Department (UMPD) officers to assist officers in Brooklyn Center during recent protests. She stated that she is trying to be as transparent as possible when it comes to the University’s mutual aid agreement with other law enforcement agencies. She stated that UMPD officers were not involved in the arrests of any protestors nor was she aware of any UMPD officers firing any sort of munitions during their time in Brooklyn Center. She committed to staying as transparent as possible through a quickly evolving, and at times emergency, situation.
- The University is hard at work lobbying the legislature for its biennial funding and is hopeful that the state’s stronger than expected financial position will translate into additional funding for the institution.
- There has been progress in the searches for the new vice president for human resources, which is in the “airport interview phase” of the process and a sole finalist has been named in the search for the inaugural senior advisor to the president for Native American affairs, and that candidate is Karen Diver.
- The Office of the President is hoping to do further consultation on the new building renamings policy once it receives further guidance from the Board of Regents.
- Gabel acknowledged and shared in student concerns around issues of faculty sexual misconduct and other hostile conduct. She stated that the situations related to past conduct on the Twin Cities campus and emerging issues at Duluth are personally distressing and she is working to address policy that will help to create a safer climate on every campus.

Goetz commented that he was thankful for Gabel's leadership through these extremely tumultuous times. Ali asked if UMPD officers will be further dispatched to further protests either in Brooklyn Center or elsewhere as a result of the trial of Derek Chauvin. Gabel stated that UMPD officers haven't been involved in any deployments since the second night of Brooklyn Center protests. She further added that they would likely not be further deployed unless there is a need to protect against loss of life. This is a delicate situation because the University may need to utilize a mutual law enforcement aid agreement if an emergency arises on campus. She said that this is an issue that the upcoming M Safe Committee will likely address.

Counihan inquired about equitable funding of system campuses and Gabel stated that she is partnering with University of Minnesota Duluth Chancellor Lynn Black and members of the Board of Regents to respond to historical funding decisions. She noted that state funding has not kept up with increasing costs and the University needs to find other ways to maintain cost savings so as to not raise tuition to an unreasonable level. Part of this process will be facilitated through the PEAK Initiative.

Petty commented that the ongoing issue around the misconduct of Professor Gianluigi Veglia and the lack of University punishment was upsetting to him and other graduate students. While Gabel acknowledged those concerns, she stated that she is doing everything she legally can to respond to student concerns. Swant asked what the University is doing to combat COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy. Gabel commented that the University is working with M Health Fairview, the School of Public Health, and other departments to educate the community about vaccine equity, access, and effectiveness. Evolving education is very much needed to get community buy in, not only at the University level, but across the country as well.

Hearing no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Chris Kwapick  
University Senate Office