

Senate Committee on Educational Policy (SCEP)
December 6, 2017
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 represent the views of, nor are they binding on, the senate, the administration or the Board of Regents.

[**In these minutes:** Fall 2017 Freshman Class; Letter in Support of Immigrant and DACA Students; *Administrative Policy: Grading and Transcripts*]

PRESENT: Jennifer Goodnough (chair), Nicola Alexander, Michael Anderson, Giancarlo Casale, Elaine Darst, Sydney Elliott, Michelle Dobbratz, Stacy Doepner-Hove, Gayle Golden, Jude Goossens, Kenneth Leopold, Keith Mayes, Bob McMaster, Lauren Mitchell, Abby Vogel

REGRETS: John Carlis, Scott Lanyon, Robert Poch, Brian Sick, Nevin Young

ABSENT: Giancarlo Casale, Keith Mayes

GUESTS: Trish Palermo, president, Minnesota Student Association; Guillermo Pérez Soberanes, ranking at-large representative, Minnesota Student Association; Leslie Schiff, associate dean, University Curriculum, Office of Undergraduate Education; Stacey Tidball, director, Compliance, Academic Support Resources

1. Fall 2017 Freshman Class

Chair Jennifer Goodnough called the meeting to order and welcome Vice Provost and Dean of Undergraduate Education Bob McMaster. McMaster gave an overview of the fall 2017 freshman class, accompanied by a [PowerPoint](#). He first stated that the University is fairly unique, in that it is a Research 1 institution, a land grant institution, and in a major urban area. The cost of attendance for a Minnesota resident living on campus is about \$27,348, which is about the middle of the Big 10, and \$41,034 for a non-resident, non-reciprocity (NRNR) student living on campus. The goal over the next few years is to increase NRNR tuition to put it at about the middle of the Big 10. It is now the second-lowest. The room and board rate at the University is about \$9,464 per year, which said is one of the least expensive room and board rates in the Big 10, said McMaster. He added that the average debt upon graduation for students who borrow is about \$26,000; most students have some sort of financial aid, and 57% do not borrow. Ken Leopold asked whether the new student housing developments on campus are private or affiliated with the University. McMaster said that they are private, but with 2-3 students per apartment, they are not much more expensive than the dorms.

McMaster drew the committee's attention to the new freshman headcount enrollment history, and pointed out that between fall 2016 and fall 2017, there was a significant drop in applications-- from 49,128 to about 43,720. Several factors contributed to that drop, he said, including:

- The University's addition of the Common App, which allows students to apply for several institutions with the same application, to the application methods available to prospective students
- The change in application deadline from December 15 to November 1 (first deadline) and January 1 (second deadline)
- The decision to stop buying names from locations that typically yielded a low number of applications.

McMaster said they expect to see a flood of applications at the second deadline. He also added that this year, the target was to admit about 5900 new freshman; that target was exceeded by nearly 300 students, as 6,195 were admitted. This constitutes the largest freshman class since 1970.

Michael Anderson asked whether the drop in applications was uniform across the various student types (resident, reciprocity, NRNR, and international). McMaster said that reciprocity and NRNR applications were up, whereas there had been a decrease in applications from international students and Minnesota residents. The latter, hypothesized McMaster, may be due to the fact that Minnesota residents hear from their high school counselors about the University's high academic standards, leading to fewer applicants from students who would be unlikely to be accepted.

McMaster went on to say that NRNR recruitment is important, because the Gulf and Atlantic coasts are seeing an increase in high school graduates, whereas the midwest and the northeast are seeing a decline. The aim, he stated, was to enroll about 65% Minnesota residents, 15% reciprocity students, 15% NRNR, and 5% international students. Gayle Golden wondered how the intent to increase NRNR tuition would affect the plan to increase NRNR enrollment, and McMaster said that tuition waivers would likely be utilized to balance the two goals. The University also intends to grow undergraduate enrollment overall over the next few years, to 33,000. Currently, it is at about 32,000. Stacy Doepner-Hove asked whether the University has experienced increased competition with peer institutions in the midwest. McMaster said that the University of Michigan focuses on national recruitment, but that the University may face competition from Michigan State. He noted that, in large part due to Minnesota's excellent K-12 system, Minnesota as a state sends more students out of state for college than it brings in. However, the number of Minnesota residents attending the University of Wisconsin Madison, and vice versa, is almost the same; the erstwhile perception that the University of Wisconsin Madison was a better school than the University of Minnesota Twin Cities (UMTC) is no longer as widespread. Goodnough asked how Minnesota's out-migration breaks down by region; McMaster responded that many outstate students opt to attend college in the Dakotas or Iowa. Doepner-Hove wondered how much the University recruits as a system, versus by campus. McMaster said that a system-wide enrollment management committee was established in fall 2017 in order to look at how the University recruits as a system. He also said that there is currently a "share my app" initiative, wherein Twin Cities applicants are asked whether they would like their application to be shared with system campuses. Nicola Alexander asked whether those who agree to have their application shared with system campuses are less likely to be

accepted at the Twin Cities campus. McMaster said no, but agreed that that perception may cause some applicants to hesitate to share their application.

With regard to demographics, McMaster said that over the next 5-10 years, the number of white and Native high school graduates is expected to drop, while the number of Hispanic/Latino, African American, and Asian high school graduates will climb. This year's freshman class had the highest average ACT score yet, the highest number and percentage of students of color, and the highest ever number of NRNR students. About 18% of new freshman on the Twin Cities campus receive a Pell Grant for their first year. About 88% of new freshmen live on campus. Michelle Dobbratz asked whether there was an enrollment target for gender balance; McMaster said there is not-- while ideally enrollment would be equally balanced between the genders, the trend of more women than men entering higher education is likely to continue, he said. Abby Vogel asked whether the colleges have goals with regard to gender balance, and McMaster said yes. For example, the School of Nursing would like to attract more men, and the College of Science and Engineering (CSE), more women.

The range of average ACT scores of accepted students, continued McMaster, was between 26-31, with the average being 28.4. There is a perception, he said, that a student cannot get into UMTC with an ACT score of less than 28-- but 25% percent of admitted freshmen had ACT scores below 26, and the range of ACT scores varies by college. Leopold inquired whether ACT scores correlate with GPAs. McMaster said that ACT scores are a good predictor of first year GPA, but not necessarily of four-year success.

Finally, McMaster stated that several projects are underway in order in order to learn more about transfer admissions and identify the pipelines that are successful.

In the interest of time, McMaster concluded his presentation there. Goodnough thanked McMaster for his time.

2. Letter in Support of Immigrant and DACA Students

Next, Goodnough welcomed Trish Palermo, president, and Guillermo Pérez Soberanes, ranking at-large representative, Minnesota Student Association. Palermo thanked the committee for their time, and said that she and Pérez Soberanes were attending to garner support and feedback regarding a letter in support of assisting, by means of distance learning, directed studies, etc., Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) recipients and students affected by the travel ban, should these students find themselves unable to physically complete their studies on campus due to political decision. The text of the letter was as follows:

*President Kaler, Provost Hanson, & the University Community,
In the event that students at the University of Minnesota find themselves with uncertain residential status, and – as a result of the termination of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), reversal of Temporary Protected Status (TPS), or the Travel Ban – are not able to physically attend the University of Minnesota due to deportation or denied entry into the United States, we, as faculty, stand willing to assist students in the successful*

completion of their degrees. We urge the University's leadership to take the steps necessary to remove barriers by allowing faculty to implement flexible learning plans and enable students to meet their academic goals to complete their degrees.

*In solidarity,
[Signatories]*

They directed members to a link where faculty could go to sign the letter online, and said that the plan was to deliver the letter to the president and provost on December 18, 2017. Golden asked whether there were policy barriers that could be addressed to assist these students, such as the requirement that 15 of last 30 credits of a student's degree program be resident credit. Stacey Tidball said that online courses and directed studies count toward these credits. She said there would likely be other policy implications, but that as each student's circumstances would be different. Members said that leaves of absence and additional time allowed to complete Incompletes could be other options for these students. Golden suggested that the committee could propose policy or procedure modifications to address such a situation, but cautioned that it would be a political act to do so. Leopold asked how many students, in the worst case scenario, would be affected by the changes to DACA, and Pérez Soberanes said that the University does not collect information on immigration status, but that it would likely affect a small number of students. Goodnough suggested further discussion of removing barriers at a subsequent meeting, and in the meantime encouraged members to sign the letter and pass it on to their colleagues, if they were so inclined. Palermo and Pérez Soberanes thanked members for their time and input.

3. *Administrative Policy: Grading and Transcripts*

Next, Goodnough turned to discussion of the [*Administrative Policy: Grading and Transcripts*](#) and the verbal descriptions credit-earning and non credit-earning letter grades, which as of this date read as follows:

Permanent Grades for Academic Work for Credit

A	4.000 - Represents achievement that is outstanding relative to the level necessary to meet course requirements
A-	3.667
B+	3.333
B	3.000 - Represents achievement that is significantly above the level necessary to meet course requirements
B-	2.667
C+	2.333

C	2.000 - Represents achievement that meets the course requirements in every respect
C-	1.667
D+	1.333
D	1.000 - Represents achievement that is worthy of credit even though it fails to meet fully the course requirements
S	Represents achievement that is satisfactory, which is equivalent to a C- or better.

Permanent Grades for Academic Work for Which No Credit is Given

F	“0” Represents failure and signifies that the work was either (1) completed but at a level of achievement that is not worthy of credit or (2) was not completed and there was no agreement between the instructor and the student that the student would be awarded an I (see Section D). The F carries 0 grade points and the credits for the course do not count toward any academic degree program. The credit hours for the course will count in the grade point average.
N	Represents no credit and signifies that the work was either (1) completed but at a level of achievement that is not worthy of credit or (2) was not completed and there was no agreement between the instructor and the student that the student would be awarded an I (see Section C). The N carries no grade points and the credits for the course do not count toward any academic degree program. The credit hours for the course do not count in the grade point average.

She said that most institutions seem to use a one-word description such as “excellent,” “good,” and “satisfactory” for such descriptions, and asked for members’ thoughts on that approach. Members felt that putting the descriptions in terms of course expectations was helpful and less subjective. Goodnough said that another option would be to take out the language entirely and leave only the grade points. Tidball said that many institutions do this and added that she rarely receives questions or feedback about the language. She suggested that it may be helpful to separate the tables by grading basis (A-F versus S-N), rather than by credit-earning or not. Members agreed emphatically, and Goodnough added that there is often confusion about a D grade mapping to an N, if a student chooses the S/N grading basis, even though a D counts as credit-earning on the A-F scale. She also suggested making it clear that this applies to

undergraduates, as graduate grading is different. Tidball suggested perhaps moving the verbal descriptions to an appendix, as it is not very enforceable.

With regard to the time to complete Incompletes, Goodnough suggested the deadline be the grading deadline for the following semester, with the caveat that extensions are still an option.

In the interest of time, Goodnough suggested that discussion of this policy continue at a subsequent meeting. Members agreed, and Goodnough adjourned the meeting.

Amber Bathke
University Senate Office