

Equity, Access, and Diversity Committee (EAD)
November 30, 2020
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:** Systemwide Strategic Plan Metrics; Demilitarization/Disarmament Resolution; Cedric Alexander Letter]

PRESENT: Ross VeLure Roholt (chair), Tracey Anderson, Noro Andriamanalina, Caroline Bender, Vincente Diaz, Miguel Fiol, Joseph Gerteis, Jeremy Jenkins, Josephine Lee, Anna Horning Nygren, Barbara Peterson, Virajita Singh, Weihong Tang, Nan Thurston, Simon Tran, Aleeya Verdi, Matthew Verkuilen, Stuart Yeh

ABSENT: Thu Danh, Veronica Fisher, Ashok Singh

GUESTS: Michael Goh, vice president, Office for Equity and Diversity; Briggs Tople, chair, Student Senate/Student Senate Consultative Committee

OTHERS: Bill Haldeman, senior assistant to the president, Office of the President; Hana Ikramuddin, reporter, *MN Daily*; Megan Sweet, assistant to the President, Office of the President

1. Systemwide Strategic Plan Metrics

Professor Ross VeLure Roholt, chair, called the meeting to order. He welcomed Dr. Michael Goh, vice president, Office for Equity and Diversity (OED), who was present to conduct consultation on [metrics for the Systemwide Strategic Plan](#). Goh provided background on the strategic planning process and timeline, noting that the proposed metrics would be discussed at the University and Faculty Senate meeting on December 3, 2020, and then presented to the Board of Regents later in December. The Board will vote on the proposed metrics at its February 2021 meeting. He then invited questions and comments from members, who offered the following:

- How will the system campuses' strategic plans be affected by this? Goh responded that the chancellors and vice chancellors have been looped in from the beginning, and will be asked to articulate how the individual campuses' strategic plans align with the systemwide plan.
- A discussion ensued about problems associated with silos. Goh emphasized that although the plan is broken up into different "buckets" (commitments), they overlap and intertwine in many places. This has led to a number of difficult but necessary meetings between the different areas, in order to ensure that work aligns, he said.
- Given the increasing needs in the area of equity and diversity but also the budget cutbacks, what can be done to increase capacity around this? Goh said that although OED had been asked, like other departments, to model 3%, 6%, and 9% budget cuts, there have been no cuts as of yet. Additionally, he stated, education and training is a priority, and there is support at all levels for more widespread training. The Equity and Diversity Certificate Program is now available online and has reached thousands of people, but

there is still an average of 80 people on the waitlist. Expanding capacity will likely involve multi-pronged efforts that involve multiple offices and organizations, continued Goh.

Megan Sweet noted that additional feedback regarding the Strategic Plan can be submitted via [Google Form](#). Goh thanked members for their time and departed.

2. Demilitarization/Disarmament Resolution

Next, VeLure Roholt turned the floor over to Briggs Tople, chair of the Student Senate Consultative Committee, who was present seeking support for a [resolution](#) on demilitarizing University of Minnesota police forces. To date, said Tople, he had consulted with OED, University Services, the Office of Student Affairs, the Social Concerns Committee, and the consultative committees of each senate. He noted that he would consult with the Senate Committee on Finance and Planning in the near future. When asked for their input, members gave the following feedback:

- How many times have University of Minnesota Police Department (UMPD) officers utilized firearms? Tople said he did not know how many times they may have been unholstered, but that AR-15s had recently been used in a display of force during a student protest. UMPD has never discharged a firearm.
- How many campuses have currently disarmed their police forces (across the country)? Tople responded that he had not looked into that, but said that he would.
- How did the University respond to students being arrested during the November 4, 2020, protest on I-94? Tople noted that UMPD was involved in that operation, and that students were arrested and charged. He added that the Minnesota Student Association (MSA) had called for President Gabel to ask the county attorney to dismiss the charges, but she had declined to do so. Sweet clarified that UMPD's involvement in that operation was limited to traffic assistance, and they did not issue any citations.
- Is UMPD required to participate in any operations with the Minneapolis Police Department (MPD), with which the University has severed most ties? Tople explained that there are state statutes that require UMPD to participate in certain operations.
- With regard to the idea of notifying the University community when an officer unholsters their service weapon, the SAFE-U system may not be the appropriate vector.
- It is not only the Black community that is marginalized by police. Latino people, Indigineous people, and people with disabilities are also frequent victims of police violence. Tople said he would expand language around that point to be more inclusive and specific.
- In order to be successful, this resolution needs to have support from constituencies besides students. The suggestion was made to seek support of other groups and committees.
- It may be helpful to frame the resolution around the history of the issue, including the continued impact of policing on communities of color, and the militarization of campus police forces in the 60s and 70s, when the focus changed from protecting and serving students to policing them.

Tople thanked members for their feedback and departed.

3. Cedric Alexander Letter

Next, the committee broke up into several small groups to discuss members' own experience around policing on campus. The purpose of this exercise was to inform a possible letter to the administration regarding the work of Cedric Alexander. At the end of the small group discussions, the following points were raised in the full committee:

- Although 92% of Universities do have their own police forces, there is not much research on college policing.
- There is no armed police force on the Crookston Campus.
- There are issues with racial profiling in the Health Sciences buildings that now have controlled entry.
- Crookston = no armed police force
- The culture within police departments is a larger issue that needs to be considered. In order to change the behavior of beat cops, it is necessary to change how they are trained, managed, rewarded, and incentivized.
- Some issues are related to proximity to a big city; these may not be issues on other system campuses.
- Perhaps Alexander would be willing to partner with a professor of criminal justice with expertise in police culture, training, etc., and jointly produce a report around best practices that the community can aim for.

VeLure Roholt asked whether members would like to move forward with a letter to/about Alexander, including some of the concerns that were raised at the previous committee meeting and also the feedback generated at this one. Members were supportive of this idea. VeLure Roholt said he would reach out to members to put together the letter, and adjourned the meeting.

Amber Bathke
University Senate Office