

**Senate Committee on Educational Policy (SCEP)
December 4, 2019
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:** Chair's Updates; Systemwide Strategic Plan; Resolution on Academic Integrity Education; Study Day Scheduling Requests; Administrative Policy: *Course Enrollment Limits*]

PRESENT: Jennifer Goodnough (chair), Toni Abts, June Carbone, Thomas Chase, Dan Delaney, Stacy Doepner-Hove, Sara Hurley, John LaVelle, Danya Leebaw, Bob McMaster, Robert Poch, Katherine Scheil, Brian Sick, Jacob Smiley, Nevin Young

REGRETS: Julia Brokaw, Scott Lanyon, Nathan Mukai, Brian Sick

ABSENT: Kriti Agarwal, Otto Johnson

GUESTS: Joan T.A. Gabel, president; Professor Jeffrey Schott, chair, Student Academic Integrity Committee; Stacey Tidball, director, Compliance & Continuity, Academic Support Resources

OTHERS: ETTY DeVeaux, chief of staff, Graduate Education; Brianne Keeney, assistant to the president, Office of the President; Jessica Keucker Grotjohn; assistant to the vice provost and dean, Undergraduate Education; Leslie Schiff, associate dean, Undergraduate Curriculum, Office of Undergraduate Education; Maytham Somji, academic systems coordinator, Leadership Program; Karen Starry, assistant to the vice provost and dean, Graduate Education

1. Chair's Updates

Professor Jennifer Goodnough, chair, called the meeting to order and gave two brief updates:

- She had reached out to Faculty Consultative Committee (FCC) leadership about the issue of non-faculty-like P&A membership on SCEP. They agreed that the FCC should discuss it.
- The FCC asked if SCEP had any position on the liberal education proposals, and Goodnough said that it did not.

2. Systemwide Strategic plan

Next, Goodnough welcomed President Joan Gabel, who was present to consult on [phase 3 of the Systemwide Strategic Plan](#). Gabel gave an overview of the planning effort so far, then shared the five commitments, or general themes, under the plan:

- Student success: Meeting all students where they are and maximizing their skills, potential, and well-being in a rapidly changing world.

- Discovery, innovation, and impact: Channeling curiosity and investing in discovery to cultivate possibility, innovate solutions, and elevate Minnesota and society as a whole.
- MNtersections (health, food, and environment): Improving the health of people and places at the intersection of our system strengths and opportunities inspired by Minnesota that impact the world.
- Community and belonging: Fostering a welcoming community that values belonging, equity, diversity, and dignity in people and ideas.
- Fiscal stewardship: Stewarding resources that promote access, efficiency, transparency, and collaboration through meaningful partnerships with the state, students, families, and partners.

Gabel noted that the next step will involve identifying specific goals and action items under each commitment. She asked for the committee's feedback on the themes and for any ideas for action items. She also specified that units that already have strategic plans should not discard them, but rather articulate how they fit with the commitments identified in the systemwide strategic plan.

Robert Poch expressed appreciation for the president's commitment to student mental health and asked about her plans on that front. Gabel responded that there were no solid plans as yet, but ideas were percolating. She revealed that during her interview process, she heard universally that this was a top priority for students at all campuses. The University is known for doing well on student mental health, noted Gabel, but efforts are more organic than planned; therefore, an environmental scan is in progress, which will inform many of the next steps. The scan has already identified a major gap in counselor availability on the West Bank, said Gabel, and that issue has now been addressed. She is also working with leadership of the Minnesota State system, as the issue is not unique to the University. Gabel is also looking at ideas from peer institutions:

- At The Ohio State University, new students are required to take a one credit class about mindfulness and self care. Gabel proposed possibly working with Minnesota State on this, and offer it during the summer for new incoming freshmen
- At UCLA, clinical students incorporate the university into their psychiatric rotations This could be a possibility at the University of Minnesota, as well.

Other ideas include looking at ways to improve communication around resources that are available, such as having one central location where all resources are listed. The FCC and Provost Hanson are looking at the role of the instructor as an ally, as well, in terms of accommodation letters, how to be rigorous without adding unnecessary stress, etc.

Goodnough said that the committee appreciated being consulted before the commitments are presented to the Board of Regents, and thanked Gabel for her commitment to campus governance. Gabel thanked the committee for their time and said that she would return for further consultation once specific goals and action items were identified.

3. Resolution on Academic Integrity Education

Goodnough then turned the floor over to Professor Jeffrey Schott, chair, Student Academic Integrity Committee (SAIC). Schott explained that part of the charge of the SAIC states that the

committee shall “review the appropriateness and adequacy of the mechanisms to deal with academic integrity in the University as a whole, on each of the campuses, and in each of the colleges, and to make recommendations to the appropriate campus administrators and the University Senate for revisions of University policies that are necessary to ensure academic integrity.” To that end, said Schott, the SAIC embarked upon a year-long mission to meet with academic administrators from several colleges and campuses in order to assess the prevalence of academic dishonesty, the active measures used to prevent academic dishonesty, and the current challenges in maintaining academic integrity. An overarching theme that came out of these discussions is that, while messaging regarding academic integrity and dishonesty appears in nearly every course syllabus, there appears to be a lack of common understanding on the part of many students of what academic dishonesty, especially plagiarism, entails. In parallel, faculty are often faced with difficult decisions when suspicions of academic dishonesty arise, and could greatly benefit from a set of clear guidelines and resources from which to draw. By way of this [resolution](#), the SAIC proposes that the University develop appropriate resources and academic development modules with the goal of providing each group with useful knowledge for minimizing instances of academic dishonesty. In fact, said Schott, the University Libraries are already working on such modules.

Thomas Chase commented that the resolution is timely and much needed. He noted that the Office for Community Standards has a lot of useful information on their website, but said he felt many faculty members were unaware of the website. Goodnough said that a Canvas module might encourage new faculty to engage with the information before needed it is needed, whereas the website is usually found when needed. Schott noted that one or more modules would be required of new students; the modules would likely be optional for faculty.

Sara Hurley said that in the School of Public Health, this is an issue especially with online courses. They have oscillated between surveilling and creating course requirements that resist academic dishonesty. She often recommends [Indiana University’s training](#). It would be great to have our own, she said, but it is difficult to operationalize because our systems (Canvas, PeopleSoft, etc.) do not talk to each other together. She expressed hope that the resolution would spur a conversation on that.

Poch observed that the concept of academic integrity differs across cultures, and it would be important to keep that in mind when creating the modules. Members and Schott agreed. Chase added that transfer students should be included, also.

Hurley suggested incorporating a pre and post test to measure whether the training improves students’ ability to understand the nuances of academic integrity.

Goodnough said that she thought it was a good idea, but noted that if instructors know students have done such a module, they may be less forgiving about academic dishonesty and less likely to accept the excuse that the student did not know their actions constituted such. What now might lead to a warning or learning opportunity might have more severe consequences, and students should be made aware of this.

Nevin Young asked whether courses with the new “Ethics” designators under the proposed new liberal education curricula would address academic integrity. Bob McMaster said he did not think so. Even if one of the new plans was adopted, the idea behind those courses would be to integrate ethics into the lens of the discipline.

Goodnough suggested connecting with Benjamin Wiggins, program director, [Digital Arts, Science, and Humanities program](#), on this effort.

Katherine Scheil noted that the Honors program [NEXUS One Experience](#) contains module on academic integrity, which all freshman honors students must complete. Young said that the College of Food, Agricultural, and Natural Resource Sciences (CFANS) has a course on academic integrity that all new students must take, and suggested sending an email to all instructors to remind them of resources that already exist.

Schott thanked the committee for the feedback and departed.

4. Study Day Scheduling Requests

Next, Goodnough directed the committee’s attention to two requests to schedule events on study days, one for the [Leadership Program](#) and one for the [men’s football team](#).

Leadership

By way of background, Goodnough stated that Dr. Christine VeLure Roholt, interim director, Leadership Minor, had contacted her about a request to hold a showcase and banquet for students completing the leadership minor on a study day, with the following schedule:

9:00 - 9:40 a.m.: Sign in

9:40 - 9:45 a.m: Welcome

9:45 - 11:00 a.m: Presentations

11:00 - 11:40 a.m: Lunch

11:40 a.m - noon: Certificate distribution

Dan Delaney pointed out that the event was not required. Goodnough wondered if students would feel like it was unofficially required. Toni Abts noted that the presentations would be in groups and pointed out that students could feel peer pressure to be there. Goodnough said SCEP could ask the leadership program to make sure students know it is not required.

Chase observed that while the event itself is three hours, students will probably also need additional time to prepare. Goodnough said she got the impression that the work was already done. Maytham Somji, academic systems coordinator, Leadership Program clarified that the students had already done in-class presentations and been graded on those presentations. This is just a chance to showcase their work for family and friends, he said.

Goodnough suggested asking the Leadership Program to have the students’ certificates available throughout the program, so they do not feel they need to stay until after lunch to receive them. Stacy Doepner-Hove suggested also stipulating that next year they should not plan to hold this event on a study day.

A motion to approve the request was made and seconded. The motion carried. Goodnough said she would communicate this to VeLure Roholt, with the above stipulations.

Men's Football Team

Goodnough said that the request was to hold the annual banquet for the team on a study day, noting that the Athletics Department had made the same request last year. SCEP approved that request, but instructed the Athletics Department to avoid study days in the future.

McMaster informed members that the Lindahl Academic Center, which supports student athletes, was in favor of this request. Advising staff have no concerns about the athletes' academic performance, he said, adding that this event is also optional. In addition, the Faculty Academic Oversight of Intercollegiate Athletics Committee (FAOIAC) approved the request.

Goodnough said that the banquet was pushed later this year because the football team did well, and therefore couldn't plan to use their typical weekend after the end of the season. Doepner-Hove asked why the banquet couldn't just be held in January.

Chase pointed out that family members may come to town for the weekend for a banquet, which may constitute more of a distraction for students than the banquet itself.

Goodnough asked if the committee's concerns rose to the level of denying the request. Members reluctantly conceded that they did not, but stressed that Athletics should be firmly instructed not to schedule events on study days in the future. A motion to approve the request was made and seconded, and it carried with two abstentions.

Hurley pointed out that the committee had received three requests for exceptions this year, and wondered whether people understood that study days are supposed to be protected. Stacey Tidball, director, Compliance & Continuity, Academic Support Resources (ASR), said that there are actually many more "requests" each year that do not rise to the level of seeking an exception. If looking in Astra for a space to schedule an event, she said, people see a lot of open space on study days and often do not think about the policy against holding events on study days. The schedulers in the Office of Classroom Management (OCM) monitor requests for space on these days to make sure the event is not required or tied to a course. If such a request comes in, OCM reminds the requestor about the policy and usually that is the end of it, said Tidball.

5. Course enrollment policy

Goodnough then recapped the conversation from the [October 2019 SCEP meeting](#) regarding the Administrative Policy: *Course Enrollment Limits* and turned the floor over to Tidball to update the committee on the progress since then. Tidball informed members that ASR had conducted additional consultation with advisors, the colleges, and the Twin Cities associate deans for undergraduate education regarding amending the policy to disallow course cancellation for low enrollment after the term starts. Currently, she reminded members, courses can be canceled for low enrollment until the fifth day of the term. They still need to consult with graduate education, she added.

Young asked whether there was language in policy about exceptions. Tidball said that typically they try to avoid putting exceptions into policy, with the knowledge that people will ask for and receive exceptions. There is flexibility, she said, but we do not necessarily advertise it. It could go in a procedure or FAQ, though, she added.

Hurley pointed out that the policy protects students with visas, financial aid requirements, contract faculty, teaching assistants, etc. Tidball said that if people have to ask for an exception before canceling a course, they can examine the impact on these groups before approving it. Doepner-Hove suggesting including a list of considerations that people should look at before asking for an exception.

Goodnough said that there are other reasons a course might need to be canceled after the term starts, and suggested adding a sentence about extraordinary circumstances.

Since this would not be a minor change, asked Young, would the Faculty Senate have to approve it? Goodnough said yes, along with the Faculty Consultative Committee, as well as the Policy Advisory Committee and the President's Policy Committee.

Goodnough noted that there did not seem to be objections to the potential change from the committee, but said it would also be important to think about when it would be implemented.

Hearing no further discussion, Goodnough adjourned the meeting.

Amber Bathke
University Senate Office