

Minutes*

**Senate Consultative Committee
Thursday, September 20, 2007
3:00 – 4:30
Room 238A Morrill Hall**

- Present: Gary Balas (chair), Susan Cable, Nancy Carpenter, Carol Chomsky, Shawn Curley, William Durfee, Barbara Elliott, Marti Hope Gonzales, Emily Hoover, Mary Jo Kane, Nelson Rhodus, Bree Richards, Pamela Stenhjem, Jennifer Windsor, Becky Yust
- Absent: Jeffrey Kahn, Jeni Kiewatt, Cathy Marquardt, Judith Martin, Kristopher Schweber, Alicia Smith,
- Guests: Professor Cathrine Wambach (Senate Committee on Educational Policy); Professor Ken Heller (Senate Committee on Social Concerns)

[In these minutes: (1) Social Concerns Committee update; (2) resolution on the central corridor light rail; (3) University Senate docket]

1. Social Concerns Committee Update

Professor Balas convened the meeting at 3:05 and welcomed Professor Heller to the meeting, sitting in for Professor Fennelly, who chairs the Social Concerns Committee.

Professor Heller noted that he had been asked to provide an update on what the Social Concerns Committee will have on its agendas this year; a number of the items are items they have had in the past.

- Encourage the University to lobby against the Military Commissions Act.
- Look at divesting the University's (very small) investments in Sudan.
- Look at the implications of corporate sponsorships at the University
- Encourage adoption of the vendor code of conduct.
- Discuss the designated-suppliers program and anti-trust laws.
- Follow up on the Minnesota Dream Act.
- Follow up on the lack of family-friendly policies at the University, especially for faculty and graduate students; there is need for a family bill of rights.

Committee members offered a number of observations.

- The committee should look also at the federal dream act.
- Frame the policies as employee-friendly, not family-friendly. (Some employees are single and there needs to be a level playing field for everyone. Professor Heller agreed, observing the University has a diverse population that should be served in productive ways.)
- What are the priorities? Many are at the beginning and the committee will receive reports; they have acted on a number of them and need to follow up.
- They committee should look at socially responsible investments. (It does.)

* 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 represents the views of, nor are they binding on, the Senate, the Administration, or the Board of Regents.

-- Did anyone ask them to consider the social concerns surrounding the strike, which has been framed as a social justice issue in the media? (They did not.)

Professor Balas thanked Professor Heller for his report.

2. Resolution on the Central Corridor

Professor Balas turned next to Ms. Richards, who had provided to the Committee a draft resolution that would be brought to the Graduate and Professional Student Assembly concerning the Central Corridor. The resolution read as follows:

WHEREAS, the Central Corridor Light Rail Line will be going through the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities Campus on Washington Avenue; and

WHEREAS, a considerable percentage of the ridership on the Central Corridor Line will be University of Minnesota students, employees, and visitors; and

WHEREAS, according to the Federal Railroad Administration, "deaths in grade crossing accidents are the second-leading category of deaths associated with railroading" and "elimination of at-grade crossings...offers the greatest long-term promise for optimizing the safety and efficiency of the two modes of transportation" (trains and motor vehicles); and

WHEREAS, the benefits of a tunnel appreciably outweigh the added upfront material costs; and

WHEREAS, a tunnel under Washington Avenue for the Central Corridor cannot be added once the line is completed without significant cost and construction; therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Graduate and Professional Student Assembly supports the plan for the Central Corridor Light Rail Line to go through campus via an underground tunnel on Washington Avenue.

Ms. Richards explained she is bringing the resolution to GAPSA at its next meeting. The Central Corridor line is at present over budget for federal funding, so it must be cut. A tunnel is expensive and there is concern that the tunnel will be cut. Putting the light rail at grade raises safety issues.

Professor Balas asked what this Committee was being asked to do. Nothing at present, although GAPSA may wish the resolution brought to the University Senate.

3. University Senate Docket

Professor Balas next reviewed the Senate docket; the Committee approved it unanimously.

Professor Balas adjourned the meeting at 3:30.

-- Gary Engstrand