
The University Senate

FACULTY · STUDENT · P&A · CIVIL SERVICE

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

Student Senate Consultative Committee (SSCC)

September 9, 2022

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; Election of SSCC Members to the Student Committee on Committees (SConC); Overview of the University Budget and Tuition Process; Student Senate Retreat Planning; 2022-23 Agenda Planning/Other Business]

PRESENT: Pavan Guttipatti (chair), Adam Sychla (vice chair), Niko Vasilopoulos, Michael Waldorf, Mary Kate Wolken, Dannah Nephew

REGRETS: Ella Reichenbacher

ABSENT: Carter Yost (ranking student senator)

GUESTS: Julie Tonneson, vice president and budget director, University Budget & Finance

OTHERS: Megan Sweet

Chair Pavan Guttipatti welcomed the committee, and members introduced themselves.

1. SSCC Updates - Guttipatti asked each SSCC member to provide an update from their respective student governments and they were as follows:

- Michael Waldorf, SSCC representative, University of Minnesota Duluth Student Association (UMDSA), stated that they are in the process of appointing new members to positions including freshmen representatives. They are also looking to re-launch the Bulldog Lyft program for the semester which allows for discounted rides.
- Dannah Nephew, SSCC representative, Professional Student Government (PSG), announced that PSG held its first executive meeting which was focused on the proposal for stipend and tuition transparency. At their upcoming general meeting, they plan to work on their absence policy and agenda planning.
- Niko Vasilopoulos, SSCC representative, Undergraduate Student Government (USG), explained that the former Minnesota Student Association (MSA) changed its name to USG to better identify who is involved in the assembly. At its first executive meeting, the

team has been working on its agenda planning and goal setting for the year. USG is also working on hiring for several vacant positions. One of the first major initiatives from USG is their “Row the Vote” campaign to get more students registered to vote in the fall elections.

- Mary Kate Wolken, SSCC representative, Council of Graduate Students (COGS), indicated that the group is just getting up to speed after the first full week of classes and will be having its first meetings in the coming weeks.
- Guttipatti announced that Jay Allard had to step down as SSCC representative from Morris and that her committee positions would be filled at a later time.

2. Election of SSCC Members to the Student Committee on Committees (SConC) - Nephew was elected to replace Allard on the Student Committee on Committees (SConC) for the 2022-23 academic year.

3. Overview of the University Budget and Tuition Process - Guttipatti introduced Julie Tonneson, vice president and budget director, University Budget & Finance. Tonneson presented a [slide deck](#) and highlights were as follows:

- The University has many revenue sources, including funding from the state, tuition, fees, gifts, earnings, and endowments.
- Certain forms of revenue are more restrictive and must be spent on certain things. Auxiliary revenues are self-sustaining or supporting. State appropriations and tuition dollars have the most flexibility when it comes to spending those funds.
- Tuition rates are often set to support cost increases when necessary, such as for professional schools, campuses, and other support for individual units at the University.
- State appropriations are most often used for academic purposes such as instruction, student aid, and research.
- Key players in the annual budget process include the president, the budget committee, chancellors, deans, vice presidents, and several department heads.
- The University’s budget is developed in a biennial manner, mainly due to the biennial state budget allocations. However, the University sets an operating budget plan each fiscal year as recommended by the president and approved by the Board of Regents.
- Consultation with the key budget players is built into each annual budget cycle.
- The University has the ability to repurpose or reallocate existing resources when necessary in order to possibly reduce costs and gain efficiencies.
- The University must be fiscally responsible to make sure that none of its units have ongoing structural imbalances where recurring resources are less than their recurring spending obligations. Fluctuations in this balance can happen over time.

Adam Sychla noted that the University takes 55% overhead on research grants and asked how that figures into the budget process. Tonneson replied that those funds are classified under indirect cost recovery (ICR) and that would be under the more flexible funds and can be directly allocated to colleges directly.

Wolken asked about the possibility of creating a minimum floor for graduate student stipends. Tonneson commented that is a possible strategic question that the president could make. She added that budget is about choices and how the institution spends its money. Many times, these

rates can be based on market value and are modeled accordingly from particular revenue sources.

Guttipatti asked about how the most recent 3.5% tuition increase was settled upon. Tonneson replied that they are consistently looking at where their costs are going up (as they never go down) and compare it to the amount of state funding that the University will be receiving. When the state's funding doesn't keep up with the rising costs of running the University, tuition is one of the main areas where that imbalance can be corrected.

Vasilopoulos asked if Tonneson could give information about the redistribution of student service fees (SSF) to various student organizations. Tonneson clarified that SSF are not tied to tuition dollars and are not a part of the overall budgeting process. She added that there is a process in place for allocation and re-allocation of those dollars through the Office of Student Affairs.

Waldorf asked if there was any update on the proposal to increase scholarships for employment on greater Minnesota campuses. Tonneson replied that this proposal was tied into the supplemental budget request to the state legislature which ultimately was not approved. The plan moving forward is to include the proposal in the next budget request.

4. Student Senate Retreat Planning - Guttipatti provided an overview of the [draft agenda](#) for the annual Student Senate retreat, which will be held on Saturday, September 24, 2022. Nephew had some logistical questions about students coming from system campuses including hotel and parking accommodations. Senate staff indicated that more details would be coming to impacted students in the coming days. Guttipatti highlighted that the roundtable and small group discussions would be based on topics identified in the survey sent to student senators. That list will be finalized and emailed to SSCC members in the next week.

5. 2022-23 Agenda Planning/Other Business - Guttipatti then opened the floor to discussion on further agenda planning for the academic year and the following topics were suggested:

- Nephew asked if there was a way to talk about DEI efforts, especially in the Medical School and other professional settings. She also suggested working on better land acknowledgment messaging.
- Sychla suggested the topic of increasing and maintaining the value of degrees.
- Guttipatti said that he is continuing his push for transparency in syllabi when registering for classes.
- Vasilopoulos commented that a Twin Cities-specific topic will continue to be campus safety throughout the year, including the use of safety alerts.
- Wolken suggested that faculty retention could be a larger issue to be discussed.

Hearing no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Chris Kwapick
University Senate Office