

SENATE COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL CONCERNS
MINUTES OF MEETING
OCTOBER 8, 2007

[In these minutes: Socially Responsible Investment (SRI) Options, Designated Supplier Program Update, Report to SCC, 2006 – 2007 Issues, Follow-Up for Social Concerns, Senate Chair's Meeting Update]

[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.]

PRESENT: Katherine Fennelly, chair, Joseph Marchesani, Jennifer Oliphant, Todd Tratz, Barbara Foster, Benton Schnabel, Rebecca von Dissen, Greg Schooler, David Fox, Jessica Arett, Christine Dolph, Justin Drees

REGRETS: Richard Lidstad, Craig Hassel, Kenneth Heller, Catherine Jordan, Ajay Skaria, Mani Subramani, Megan Swanson

ABSENT: Julia Washenberger, Kim Boyd, Amelious Whyte, Kurtis McIntire

OTHERS ATTENDING: Ryan Kennedy

I). Professor Fennelly called the meeting to order.

II). At the committee's September 10th meeting, a subcommittee was formed to look into the University's socially responsible investment (SRI) options. Professor Fennelly reported that the subcommittee met with Jackie Singer, director of Retirement Programs, and Chris Suedbeck, director of the Office of Asset Management, on September 27th to discuss what SRI investment option(s) the University offers, particularly now that all future contributions and transfers to TIAA-CREF have been stopped. Detailed minutes from this meeting will be distributed to members once Ms. Singer and Mr. Suedbeck have reviewed them for accuracy.

Professor Fennelly summarized highlights from this meeting, which she shared with the committee:

- The SRI investment option is not highly utilized. The subcommittee thought it would be interesting to learn what other institutions offer in terms of SRI options, their utilizations rates, comparability to the University's option, etc.
- Ms. Singer and Mr. Suedbeck emphasized that:

- The University has a socially responsible investment option in the Vanguard plan. This option should be publicized more because many plan participants are unaware of it.
 - The University's decision to stop future contributions and transfers to TIAA-CREF was based on several factors including, but not limited to recordkeeping errors, and service issues.
 - The University's endowment investments are completely separate and different from the University's retirement plan options.
 - Socially responsible investing means different things to different people, and has many different definitions.
- Subcommittee members noted that the Social Concerns Committee has been reactive rather than proactive in relaying concerns to the administration regarding the University's investment options. The committee should look into working more closely with the SCFA Retirement Subcommittee as it relates to these options.

III). Renee Dempsey, Senate staff, provided the committee with a Designated Supplier Program (DSP) update. She reported that the President's office has charged the Office of the General Counsel (OGC) with setting up a Designated Supplier Program (DSP) Working Group. The President's office has requested participation by the Social Concerns Committee on this working group. Ms. Dempsey sent an email on September 12th to the committee looking for a faculty and a student volunteer to serve on this working group. Professor David Fox and Justin Drees volunteered to serve.

Based on a conversation with Associate Counsel Mr. Benrud, Ms. Dempsey reported that the working group is expected to have its first meeting in late October or early November, once all working group members have been identified.

IV). Professor Fennelly noted that due to a teaching conflict, Professor Ken Heller reported to the Senate Consultative Committee (SCC) on her behalf to report on the committee's tentative agenda for the year. Professor Heller reported back to Professor Fennelly that while the SCC had few comments, it was happy to learn that the committee was revisiting old items to determine what action, if any, the University has taken. The SCC was also glad to hear that the Social Concerns Committee would be looking at family-friendly policies for faculty, staff and students. The only suggestion put forward by the SCC was that the committee should consider exploring the social implications of the recent strike.

Professor Fennelly reminded members that at the conclusion of the September meeting, the committee agreed to not address the strike per se, but instead to focus on the issue of a livable wage. Professor Morrie Kleiner will attend the committee's November 12th

meeting to discuss this issue. Additionally, Patti Dion from Human Resources has been invited to this meeting, and Professor A. J. Skari is working on identifying an economist to attend as well.

V). Professor Fennelly turned members' attention to two handouts, one outlining previous agenda items requiring follow-up and the other a list of issues the committee looked at in the 2006 – 2007 academic year. Issues requiring follow-up and actions to be taken by the committee included:

- Total Oil – Joseph Marchesini volunteered to contact Professor Barb Frey, director, Human Rights Program at the Institute for Global Studies, to find out whether Total Oil has suspended its operations in Burma/Myanmar.
- Renewable Energy Resolution (<http://www1.umn.edu/usenate/soccon/renewenergyres.html>) - Is the University planning to adopt the state's position on alternative energy resources? This issue ties into the American College & University Presidents Climate Commitment, which the committee heard about last spring. Has the University decided to sign this commitment? Ms. Dempsey was asked to contact the President's office to find out the status of this document and whether it has been signed. Todd Tratz briefly reported on a sustainability conference he recently attended in Lincoln, Nebraska. He volunteered to provide the committee (via Ms. Dempsey) with the PowerPoint presentation from this conference. On a related note, a member expressed an interest in learning the University's position on the use of green roofs. Also regarding sustainability, what is the status of the joint compact request between the College of Design, Institute on the Environment and Facilities Management to develop a plan for implementing the Board of Regents Sustainability and Energy Efficiency Policy, which the committee heard about last year? Last May, Deb Swackhamer, interim director, Institute on the Environment stated that it would be an appropriate role for the Social Concerns Committee to make sure the University's sustainability efforts are moving forward. The committee requested an update on what the University is doing in terms of sustainability.
- Vendor Code of Conduct – Renee Dempsey reported extending an invitation to Vice President Pfitzenreuter to provide the committee with an update on the Vendor Code of Conduct, which the committee approved in April 2006.
- Sudan Position Statement – no action required per Greg Schooler. He stated that there is nothing new to report.
- Military Commissions Act – Did the President ask the University's legislative liaison in Washington, D.C. to lobby against the Military Commissions Act? Ms. Dempsey was asked to follow-up with the President's office on this matter and report back her findings.
- DREAM Act – Passage of the DREAM (Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors) Act would make college more accessible for immigrant students in the U.S. by restoring states' rights to offer in-state tuition to immigrant students residing in their state, noted Professor Fennelly. Has the University of Minnesota had discussions about offering in-state tuition to undocumented students? Justin Drees volunteered to follow-up with the Admissions office on this issue and

report back to the committee. At the suggestion of Professor Fennelly, Barbara Foster volunteered to contact Mariano Espinoza, executive director, Minnesota Immigrant Freedom Network (MIFN), regarding any conversations the University has had with MIFN about charging in-state tuition to undocumented students.

- Cage free eggs – Now that the University is using cage free eggs, it was determined that this is no longer an issue for the committee, and would be removed from the list of items requiring follow-up.
- Fair Trade Coffee – Professor Fennelly reported that a group on campus intends to bring forward a resolution to the committee asking the University to ONLY serve fair trade coffee. Jessica Arett volunteered to follow-up on this issue.

A member suggested the committee look into the impact the closure of General College has had on the accessibility of a college education for lower-achieving students. Is the University meeting the needs of these students? A member suggested inviting Amy Lee from Postsecondary Teaching and Learning (PsTL) in the College of Education and Human Development to share concerns and issues faced by PsTL. This same member reported that while the University is serving this student population, it is doing so in fewer numbers than when General College was in existence.

VI). Professor Fennelly called on Ms. Dempsey to provide the committee with an update from the Senate chair's meeting. While not all Senate committee chairs were able to attend this meeting, Ms. Dempsey highlighted topics mentioned by Senate committee chairs that their respective committees planned to take up this year:

- SCFA (Senate Committee on Faculty Affairs) – tuition remission, childcare benefits, interdisciplinary teaching issues, spousal hiring.
- SCEP (Senate Committee on Educational Policy) – Implementation of the new student evaluation of teaching, Writing Enriched Curriculum program, receive a report from the Council on Liberal Education, implementation of learning outcomes.
- SRC (Senate Research Committee) – recruitment, hiring and retention of faculty.
- SCIT (Senate Committee on Information Technology) – student technology fees, the University's use of technology in its Emergency Operations Plan, receive a wireless update, protecting private data of faculty by providing them with mass storage space on a central server.
- ConC (Committee on Committees) – recruitment of committee members to serve on Senate committees.
- EAD (Equity, Access & Diversity) – access to the new honors program for under-represented students.
- BAC (Benefits Advisory Committee) – health care benefits, tuition benefits.
- STCFSS (Subcommittee on Twin Cities Facilities and Support Services) – greening of the campus/sustainability, receive a Campus Master Plan update, light rail and parking, receive a Northrop Auditorium update.
- SLC (Senate Library Committee) – safety issues, replacement of computer equipment in the libraries, archiving efforts (caverns at or near capacity).
- CAS (Classroom Advisory Subcommittee) – the importance of long-range classroom planning when buildings are taken off-line to minimize disruption.

- Disabilities Issues – establishment of a Disabilities Studies Program, use of latex balloons on campus as it relates to people with latex allergies.

Members interested in reviewing the minutes of these and other Senate committees were encouraged to visit the Senate website at <http://www1.umn.edu/usenate/>.

VII). Hearing no further business, Professor Fennelly adjourned the meeting.

Renee Dempsey
University Senate