

DISABILITIES ISSUES COMMITTEE  
MINUTES OF MEETING  
APRIL 20, 2005

In these minutes:

Approval of March 9, 2005 Minutes, Politics of Disability Conference Announcement, Coexistence Event Announcement, 'Disability & Culture: American Perspectives' – Summer Session II Course Offering, Congratulations to Professor Lubet on Receiving the Morse Alumni Award for Outstanding Contributions to Undergraduate Education, SEE3 Campaign Update, Multi-Cultural Graduation Announcement, Proposed President's Disability Advisory Committee, Access Audit, Marshall Education Access Fund Update, U Return, Agenda Items for 2005 – 2006, 2005 – 2006 Meeting Time]

[These minutes reflect discussion and debate at a meeting of a committee of the University of Minnesota Senate or Twin Cities Assembly; none of the comments, conclusions or actions reported in these minutes represent the views of, nor are they binding on, the Senate or Assembly, the Administration or the Board of Regents.]

PRESENT:

Virgil Mathiowetz, chair, Carol Rachac, Maureen McManus, Karen Nelson, Bobbi Cordano, Julie Sweitzer, Alex Lubet, David Marks, Patrick McNamara, Frank Symons, Rachel Garaghty

REGRETS: Tammy Berberi, Marilyn Bruin, Christopher Johnstone, Robert Juarez

ABSENT: Norma Gutierrez Shanesy, Felicia Hodge

OTHERS: Victoria Nelson

I). Professor Mathiowetz called the meeting to order and asked those present to introduce themselves.

II). Members unanimously approved the March 9, 2005 minutes.

III). ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- Professor Mathiowetz noted that 'The Politics of Disability' conference will be held on Thursday, June 2, 2005 from 8:00 am to 3:30 pm in the University Ballroom of the Radisson Hotel Metrodome. The conference is being presented by the Center on Aging, Minnesota Area Geriatric Education Center (MAGEC), Hubert H. Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs, Center for Bioethics, Institute on Community Integration and Disability Services. For additional information, visit [www.bioethics.umn.edu/news/Brochure.pdf](http://www.bioethics.umn.edu/news/Brochure.pdf). This is the final conference in a series on disability issues intended to bring together faculty and community representatives who share an interest in these issues for the purpose of furthering insights and potentially creating an agenda that will form the basis for ongoing collaboration.  
Ms. Bobbi Cordano reported that there has been strong participation on the part of the disabled community in this year's conference series.
- Julie Sweitzer announced that on Monday April 25<sup>th</sup> and Tuesday, April 26<sup>th</sup> the Office of Equal Opportunity is sponsoring an exhibit entitled 'Coexistence'. The exhibit will be located on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor of Coffman Memorial Union and is a series of pictures meant to convey the benevolent themes of equality, fellowship and getting along with one another. The goal is to prompt dialogue. There will be places where people can draw and/or write to create their own images. This is an opportunity for

students, faculty and staff to come together to talk about all the ways that barriers are created and how to bridge these barriers.

- Professor Alex Lubet reported that during Summer Session II he will be offering a course entitled ‘Disability & Culture: American Perspectives’, which will focus on disability and the arts, although some basic disability study theory will also be covered.
- Patrick McNamara congratulated Professor Lubet on receiving the Morse Alumni Award for Outstanding Contributions to Undergraduate Education. The award ceremony will be held on Monday, April 25<sup>th</sup> at 3:30 at the McNamara Alumni Center.
- Bobbi Cordano announced that the Disabled Students Cultural Center (DSCC) has launched its SEE3 (See Ability, See Disability, See Me) campaign. Rachel Garaghty reported that the campaign has been far more successful than DSCC ever imagined and noted that DSCC hopes to be able to do it again next year. Ms. Cordano noted that there have been discussions about the SEE3 campaign sponsoring a Big 10 women’s basketball game next year and she asked Ms. Garaghty if any other activities have been planned. Not yet, reported Ms. Garaghty, but there is a meeting this evening to discuss future activities and also much more planning will be done over the summer with DSCC’s new president and co-directors.
- Ms. Cordano reported that the first multi-cultural graduation ceremony will be held tonight. At least three disabled students will participate. Next year more collaboration will need to be done in order to expand on this event.

### III).

Using the existing Presidential Advisory Committees’ charges as a starting point, Ms. Cordano customized this text to create a draft for a Presidential Disability Advisory Committee charge. She distributed a copy to members for their review and read the charge aloud.

She noted that philosophically there are some differences between the Disability Advisory Committee charge and the other Presidential Advisory Committees’ charges. For example, as drafted, the Disability Advisory Committee charge calls for a greater focus on removing barriers and building bridges at the University for the disability community rather than emphasizing graduation and retention rates. In addition, instead of focusing exclusively on students, a Disability Advisory Committee would seek to support all faculty, staff and students with disabilities.

It was noted that the four existing Presidential Advisory Committees recently submitted a recommendation that they be merged into one committee and that their focus be broadened. If this were to happen, should the Disability Advisory Committee seek to become part of this committee or ask to be a separate entity? Ms. Cordano stated that one way to separate out a Disability Advisory Committee from the other Presidential Advisory Committee(s) would be to have it report to Sr. Vice President for System Administration Robert Jones rather than President Bruininks.

In Professor Mathiowetz’s opinion, the duties and responsibilities outlined in the Disability Advisory Committee charge seem unique enough to warrant a separate committee. Other members echoed similar comments.

In addition, it was noted that there exists fairly convincing literature on how difficult it is to integrate disability concerns into multicultural concerns.

On the other hand, if the Disability Advisory Committee were part of the larger Presidential Advisory Committee, it would be one way to increase awareness of disability issues across the institution and amongst other cultural groups.

Disability representatives serving on a large Presidential Advisory Committee would need to make sure that the unique issues faced by the disability community are brought to the table and addressed.

Regarding membership, it was agreed that there should be representation from the Senate's Disabilities Issues Committee on the Presidential Advisory Committee, whether it is part of the larger committee or a smaller, separate entity.

Additionally, corporate representation on the advisory committee should be at the CEO/presidential level.

After much discussion, members unanimously voted to endorse the Presidential Disability Advisory Committee charge drafted by Ms. Cordano with a few minor changes. Professor Mathiowetz agreed to draft a letter to Chief of Staff Kathy Brown, Senior Vice President for System Administration Robert Jones and Associate Vice President for Multicultural and Academic Affairs Avelino Mills-Novoa recommending that President Bruininks establish a Presidential Disability Advisory Committee. The letter should emphasize that creating this body was one of the Disabilities Issues Committee's goals for this year.

IV).

Ms. Cordano reported that Disability Services has entered into a contract with a well-respected consultant to expand on the Twin Cities Facilities Condition Assessment (FCA), which was conducted a couple years ago by Facilities Management.

The purpose of this project is to ensure that the Facilities Management facilities access database is accurate and up-to-date.

Disabilities Services does not believe that the Twin Cities Facilities Condition Assessment (FCA) is complete enough. The new physical access audit should be complete by the end of the 2004 fiscal year. Disability Services will report back to the committee its findings next fall. This updated audit goes beyond the legal accessibility requirements outlined in the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and incorporates Universal Design standards.

V).

Disability Services conducted an internal fund-raiser for the Marshall Education Access Fund and raised \$1,500 in a month. The scholarship fund currently totals \$16,000. The goal is to raise \$25,000.

VI). Ms. Cordano announced that the Integrated Return to Work Program has been renamed to U Return. An administrative steering committee has been set up to oversee this program. There are plans to launch the program this fall. Ms. Cordano will report back on its status in the fall.

VII).

Professor Mathiowetz announced that Professor Patrick McNamara will chair the Disability Issues Committee for the 2005 – 2006 academic year.

In preparation for next year, Professor Mathiowetz asked members to brainstorm possible agenda items. Items mentioned included:

- Progress updates on the Disabilities Studies Minor.
- Follow-up on the Presidential Advisory Committee on Disability.
- Investigate University OneStop and WebCT websites that are not compatible with JAWS, a screen-reader software.

Ms. Cordano suggested the committee request Phil Kragnes, Disability Services computer accommodation program coordinator, to prepare a report on this topic. Then, in the fall, when the committee reconvenes, invite Mr. Kragnes to share his findings. Committee member Maureen McManus volunteered to assist Mr. Kragnes with this report. According to Ms. Cordano, currently no one at the University is in charge of compliance and enforcement of the Accessibility of Information Technology Policy (<http://www.fpd.finop.umn.edu/groups/ppd/documents/policy/webaccesspol.cfm>).

- Explore the issues of assisted suicide and euthanasia as it relates to people with disabilities.
- Sponsor or advocate for disability training and outreach targeted at faculty and academic administrators to increase awareness of disability issues.
- Explore expanding the University's collegiate athletic program for students with disabilities. After all,

Minnesota is currently the best high school feeder program for colleges and universities that offer athletic programs targeted at disabled students.

VIII). After a brief discussion, members agreed to push back next year's meeting time to 10:00. Renee Dempsey, Senate Staff, will distribute a meeting schedule.

IX). Hearing no further business, Professor Mathiowetz adjourned the meeting.

Renee Dempsey  
University Senate