MEETING OF THE STUDENT SENATE

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 2015

11:30 A.M. - 1:30 P.M.

25 Mondale Hall--Twin Cities Campus
105 Kiehle Hall--Crookston Campus
173 Kirby Plaza--Duluth Campus
7 Humanities and Fine Arts--Morris Campus
Room 322—Rochester Campus

This is a meeting of the Student Senate. There are 56 voting members of the Student Senate. A simple majority must be present for a quorum. Most actions require only a simple majority for approval. Actions requiring special majorities for approval are noted under each of those items.

1. ADMINISTRATIVE RESPONSES TO SENATE ACTIONS

Information

Resolution to “Ban the Box” on Undergraduate Application Forms
Approved by the Student Senate: March 5, 2015
Administrative Response: This past academic year Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost Karen Hanson charged a group to examine our current practices. The Admissions Executive Advisory Group, the committee that reviews admission recommendations for applicants that have indicated a criminal record, reviewed the current conduct questions. Their goal was to determine whether the University should modify the questions to remove barriers to access that may be caused by the broad nature of the current language while at the same time being attentive to campus safety concerns. The recommendation of the committee was endorsed by Provost Hanson and President Kaler and is now in practice on the Twin Cities campus. The language now reads:

· I have been expelled from, suspended from, or placed on probation at any high school or college for reasons of academic dishonesty.
· I have been convicted of a felony or I have pending felony charges against me at this time.
· As an adult or juvenile, I have been found legally responsible for a sexual offense or I have sexual offense charges pending against me at this time.

The administration believes that these changes are attentive to the issues that have been raised regarding the barriers to potential applicants with a criminal record of low level offenses, while at the same time safeguarding the University’s obligation to ensure a campus learning environment that reinforces academic integrity and safety for its students and the campus community.
Please note that regardless of whether a student checks yes for any of the aforementioned questions, academic admissibility is determined first based on the student’s application and academic credentials. If a student is deemed admissible, then consideration of the suspension/expulsion or felony/sexual offense is reviewed and a determination is made as to whether the information poses a threat to safety or academic integrity. If there is information that suggests a possible threat to campus safety or academic integrity, that information is forwarded to a University-wide committee with representation from across campus departments including Counseling, the University colleges, Student Affairs, the Office for Student Conduct and Academic Integrity, Housing and Residential Life, the Office for Equity and Diversity, the Office of the General Counsel, and University of Minnesota Police Department. The committee considers factors including the conduct’s severity, relationship to the academic program, timeframe, mitigating circumstances, and any evidence of rehabilitation to determine whether the student’s circumstances should impact the admission decision. Based on this review, the committee makes a recommendation of admit or deny to the Director of Admissions and the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education. In the past, very rarely have ‘yes’ answers impacted an admission decision.

Resolution in Support of Creating a GRE Subject Test Testing Facility
Approved by the Student Senate:  April 30, 2015
Administrative Response:  PENDING

Resolution for Increased Paratransit Service Flexibility
Approved by the Student Senate:  April 30, 2015
Administrative Response:

Parking and Transportation Services (PTS) appreciates the resolutions from the Student Senate last spring and from the Twin Cities Professional Student Government’s (PSG) this fall detailing concerns with the University’s campus paratransit service. Providing paratransit service helps PTS meet its goal of promoting campus accessibility. PTS operates the intercampus transit system, including paratransit, under a general guiding principle. This principle is that Metro Transit, the regional transit provider for the Twin Cities area, as well as other regional transit providers transport students, staff, and faculty to campus; and campus transit circulates riders on and between campuses. PTS partners with Metro Transit to ensure that the U is well connected to the regional network and encourages Metro Transit to provide affordable options to the U community, including deeply discounted transit passes.

MetroMobility, Metro Transit’s paratransit service, serves certified riders who are unable to use regular fixed-route buses. PTS encourages students who need off-campus
paratransit service to register with and utilize MetroMobility. Additional information on MetroMobility is available here: http://metrocouncil.org/Transportation/Services/Metro-Mobility.aspx.

To keep this service affordable, PTS subsidizes MetroMobility ride coupons for both students and faculty and staff. Students are able to purchase, through PTS, a 150-ride package for $175. The retail value of these tickets is $540.

PTS operates a paratransit service for on-campus travel within a set boundary. The paratransit service is subsidized by parking revenues. Paratransit’s primary role is to assist student movement between classes. The core issue raised in the PSG resolutions is geographic coverage. Defining campus boundaries is a sensitive issue. No matter where the boundary is set, inevitably, someone will be just outside of it. This is particularly true as neighborhoods adjacent to campus continue to expand. This year, PTS launched a pilot project that extended paratransit service to the West Bank Office Building. This demonstrated that there are a number of unintended consequences associated with expanding the service coverage area, including:

- Travelling longer distances reduces the overall number of rides available in a day
- Increased wait times for the users
- Unpredictable service interruptions due to changing traffic conditions

Campus paratransit service began as one van in 1997 and has grown over time in response to feedback from the University community. Recent changes include:

- Expanding the paratransit fleet to three vehicles
- Hiring an additional driver during the academic year to provide additional service coverage (now at three full-time drivers)
- Adding on-line scheduling capability, which has resulted in more rides per day
- Expanding service hours to 9:30 p.m. to accommodate night classes
- Exploring the addition of the West Bank Office Building to paratransit service as a pilot program in response to the initial PSG resolution

PTS understands that PSG has requested a pilot program that allows a limited number of riders to travel three blocks beyond the campus boundaries. For the reasons laid out above—a reduction in the total number of available rides system-wide, increased wait times, and unpredictable travel times—PTS is not able to expand paratransit off campus.

The University’s current paratransit service goes above and
beyond what is required legally by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Sec. 37.25, which specifically exempts public postsecondary institutions from having a paratransit component. Paratransit is a supplemental service to the fixed route service, which is required by the FTA to be accessible. Not all Big 10 institutions have a paratransit system.

2. P&A SENATE UPDATE

For Information:

The P&A Senate represents the academic professional and administrators (P&A) class of 5400 non-unionized employees at the University. This class was started in 1980 and the governance body was formed as an advisory committee to the President. P&A have skills between civil service employees and faculty in jobs such as teachers, researchers, advisors, counselors, and extension service workers. Most people stay in this classification or move to a faculty position. P&A employees have some of the same benefits as faculty, but work on annually renewable contracts.

The P&A Senate meets from 9:30-11:30 am the first Friday of most months and meetings are open to the public. The P&A Senate consists of 40 representatives from campus units and colleges and has four subcommittees: Benefits and Compensation, Communications, Outreach, and Professional Development and Recognition.

Report

During this P&A Senate year, we will focus on advancing to successful conclusion initiatives already underway. Primary among these initiatives are:

- restoration of the Regents' scholarship, a joint effort of the P&A Senate; the Civil Service Committee; and the Faculty Consultative Committee;
- bringing P&A benefits in further in alignment with like institutions, and constituent needs; and
- professional development opportunities for P&A's; and recognition of P&A contributions.
- Concurrent with this work, we will look continue to support other senate initiatives that impact employees, students, campus climate, and the University’s relationship with the broader community.

ETY DEVEAUX
CHAIR-ELECT, P&A SENATE

3. ASSEMBLY/ASSOCIATION UPDATES

(5 minutes)

4. STUDENT SENATE/ STUDENT SENATE CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE CHAIR REPORT

(10 minutes)

5. MINUTES FOR APRIL 30, 2015
MOTION:

To approve the Student Senate minutes, which are available on the Web at the following URL:

http://www1.umn.edu/usenate/ssenate/minutes/150430stu.pdf

JENNIFER ALEXANDER, CLERK
UNIVERSITY SENATE

6. STUDENT SENATE BYLAW AMENDMENTS
Civil service appointments to Student Senate Committees

Action
(5 minutes)

As amendments to the Student Senate Bylaws, motions require either a majority of all voting members of the Student Senate (29) at one regular or special meeting, or a majority of all voting members of the Student Senate present and voting at each of two meetings. This is the first meeting at which these motions are being presented.

MOTION:

To amend Article VI of the Student Senate Bylaws, as follows (language to be added is underlined; language to be deleted is struck out).

ARTICLE VI. COMMITTEES OF THE STUDENT SENATE (Changes to this article are subject to vote only by the Student Senate)

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5. Student Senate Committee Charges

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B. STUDENT AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

The Student Affairs Committee is concerned with all issues dealing with the welfare of students at the University of Minnesota.

Membership

The Student Affairs Committee shall be composed of:
6 faculty/academic professional members,
12 students,
1 civil service staff member,
1 alumni representative, and
ex officio representation as specified by vote of the Student Senate.

Student members shall exceed by at least one the total of other voting members. Faculty, academic professional, civil service, and student members shall be appointed by the Committee
C. STUDENT COMMITTEE ON COMMITTEES

The Student Committee on Committees appoints students members of certain committees of the University Senate, Faculty Senate, and Student Senate, and advises the Student Consultative Committee on the committee structure of the Student Senate.

Membership

The Senate Committee on Committees shall be composed of 5 elected students.

Of the 5 student members, three shall be elected by the Student Consultative Committee from among their members. Of these three members, at least one must be from the Twin Cities and at least one must be from a coordinate system campus. This election will take place at the May Student Consultative Committee meeting. The remaining two members shall be elected from among the student senators by the Student Senate at their final meeting of the academic year. One seat is designated for a coordinate system campus student senator and the second seat is designated for a Twin Cities student senator. If quorum is not present at the final Student Senate meeting, nominations will be sought and the election will be conducted by the Student Consultative Committee.

Student vacancies shall be filled in accordance with the preceding procedures for the balance of any unexpired term.

The Student Committee on Committees shall elect its chair from amongst its members for a one-year term of office. The chair is eligible for re-election to that position.

COMMENT:

During 2014-15, the Civil Service Consultative Committee (CSCC) worked with the Faculty Committee on Committees regarding the appointment process for civil service employees to University Senate Committees. It was determined that CSCC would no longer make these appointments. Instead the Faculty Committee on Committees would fill these seats in a similar manner to how faculty and academic professional seats are filled.

The proposed Bylaws amendments make the change in the appointment process for each University Senate Committee that has civil service members and adds two civil service members to the Faculty Committee on Committees. It also corrects a term used in one of the charges.

DAVID KIRKPATRICK, CHAIR
SENATE CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

7. STATEMENT ON FORMAL DISCIPLINARY ACTION AGAINST WHOSE DIVERSITY?

Action
(20 minutes)
Statement on Formal Disciplinary Action against Whose Diversity?

On February 9th, 2015, members of Whose Diversity? (WD?), a non-official campus student group, staged a sit-in demonstration in Morrill Hall. The goal of the demonstration was to advance eight diversity-related demands that were “based on marginalized students’ experiences and community recommendations” by identifying concrete steps the University could take. Members of WD? discussed these demands with President Eric Kaler and other University administrators throughout the day. WD? requested a written response to each of their demands, which President Kaler provided. The activists were warned that remaining in the building after it closed would be cause for a legal citation and/or arrest. Not satisfied with the University’s response, thirteen WD? members remained in the building risking arrest in an act of civil disobedience. These thirteen members were then arrested for trespassing and transported to the Hennepin County Jail, where they were later released on bail. On advice from their attorney, the thirteen members later agreed in Hennepin County District Court to accept a deal for deferred prosecution.

In addition to these legal sanctions, the administration and the Office of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity (OSCAI) has chosen to pursue disciplinary sanctions, charging these students with violating Section VI, Subdivisions 4 (Refusal to Identify and Comply) and 9 (Disorderly Conduct) of the Student Conduct Code.

The pursuit of formal disciplinary action in this case will negatively impact the careers of the students involved while providing no worthwhile benefit to the administration. But more importantly, continued pursuit of these charges will only serve to hinder the University’s efforts to improve the campus climate, especially considering that these individuals were standing up for students from marginalized backgrounds who have historically struggled to be heard and feel welcome on campus. To the student body, this action appears as an act of needless retribution and a message that free speech and student activism is not welcome on this campus.

Therefore, the Student Senate urges the Office of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity to drop the pursuit of formal disciplinary action against the thirteen members of Whose Diversity?. Further, the Student Senate supports the position held by more than 150 faculty members urging “the administration to err on the side of supporting critically engaged students and upholding freedom of speech and assembly, even at the cost of the temporary inconveniencing of business as usual.”

ROB STEWART, CHAIR
STUDENT SENATE CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

8. OLD BUSINESS

9. NEW BUSINESS

10. ADJOURNMENT