The first meeting of the Student Senate for 2015-16 was convened in 25 Mondale Hall on Thursday, November 5, 2015, at 11:39 a.m. System campuses were linked by ITV. Checking or signing the roll as present were 42 student members. Chair Rob Stewart presided.

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
   Information
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 year, the P&A Senate will focus on advancing initiatives already underway. Primary among these initiatives are:

- Restoration of the Regents’ scholarship, a joint effort of the P&A Senate, the Civil Service Senate, and the Faculty Consultative Committee
- Bringing P&A benefits in further alignment with like institutions and constituent needs
- Professional development opportunities for P&As
- Recognition of P&A contributions

Concurrent with this work, the P&A Senate will continue to support other 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

Minnesota Student Association (MSA) – MSA has been working on improvements to undergraduate advising. If system campuses are interested in this topic, they should contact an MSA representative. MSA has also been discussing the Makeup Work for Legitimate Absences Policy and concerns related to mental health resources for students.

Council of Graduate Students (COGS) – COGS has also been discussing mental health issues and reviewing policies, particularly the student health plan. They have also been revising bylaws and the constitution.

Professional Student Government (PSG) – PSG has focused on figuring out their structure to be as effective as possible. They have also been studying paratransit services on campus.

Crookston Student Association (CSA) – CSA has been working with the chancellor to collect student opinions on writing and teaching.

Morris Campus Student Association (MCSA) – MCSA has been involved in the search for a new chancellor and access to gender neutral bathrooms.

Rochester Student Association (RSA) – RSA is focused on creating more activities and outlets for students.
University of Minnesota Duluth Student Association (UMDSA) – UMDSA has been discussing the midterm evaluation policy and language in their bylaws.

4. STUDENT SENATE/STUDENT SENATE
CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE CHAIR REPORT

Rob Stewart, Student Senate and Student Senate Consultative Committee (SSCC) Chair, explained that the role of the Student Senate is to address system-wide policies and issues. He said that the SSCC has worked hard to engage student senators, and that his focus moving forward is a smoother transition from year to year to create a sense of continuity for the Senate. SSCC reviewed the election process and representation as it relates to replacing senators, and looked to make the process easier to follow. They also looked at how the graduate and professional student government split affected membership.

He said that efforts of the SSCC so far have included making sustainability a priority system-wide, from the signing of contracts through food waste and even perhaps making it a topic of the Grand Challenges. Additionally, the committee has reviewed the Minnesota Cooperative Consortium Program (MNCAP) in the hopes of assuring that all Twin Cities campus schools allow admission through this program. Other discussions have touched on Support the U Day and addressing the needs of international students.

5. MINUTES FOR APRIL 30, 2015
Action
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

DISCUSSION:
With no discussion a vote was taken and the motion was approved.

APPROVED

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

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)

...

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 on Committees. Civil service members shall be appointed by the Civil Service Consultative Committee. The alumni member shall be appointed by the director of alumni relations.

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C. STUDENT COMMITTEE ON COMMITTEES

The Student Committee on Committees appoints student 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.

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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

DISCUSSION:

With no discussion a vote was taken and the motion was approved with 38 in favor and none opposed.

APPROVED

7. STATEMENT ON FORMAL DISCIPLINARY ACTION AGAINST Whose Diversity?

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 needlessly 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

DISCUSSION:

Patrick Duschane opened by stating that he felt it was the responsibility of student government to support the Whose Diversity? students because those students did not feel that their voices were being heard by the administration, and it is the job of the Student Senate to voice the opinions of their constituents. The students involved felt the need to commit this act of civil disobedience so that their voices could be heard, he said.

Deanna Wray said that in an address to students, President Kaler stated that the Whose Diversity? students were hostile to and physical toward his staff. She wanted to know if this was true. Duschane responded by acknowledging that President Kaler probably knew better what happened than he did. But it was his understanding that the protest was peaceful. He added that the public documents reflect a peaceful protest.

Rob Stewart stated that he was not there either, but in conversation with three of those arrested he understood it to be a tense environment, but that assertions of physical aggression had been exaggerated. He said that refusing to leave could be taken as a hostile stance but in his immediate statement, President Kaler did not say anything about physical aggression. Kaler said it was a peaceful protest. Stewart said that he cannot be sure what actually happened.

Monica Delgado, in referencing the statement to administration, wanted to know what “negative impact” the students involved would face in their careers. Stewart responded that most of the students arrested were graduate students, and having a formal disciplinary action on their student record could severely limit their job prospects in the future. He said that it has also been difficult for them because they have felt stigmatized by the administration. However, he said, the language in the statement refers specifically to the negative impact on their respective careers.

Max Robinson asked if the arrests were due to the students protesting or because they were in the building after hours, to which Duschane replied that the issues were intertwined. He said the situation could be compared to laws that make it illegal to be homeless: of course they were arrested because they were there after hours, but that was the nature of the protest. The two issues cannot be unwed.
Jennifer Arsjad wanted to know what the administration’s motive was for continuing to pursue the case. Stewart replied that he had not heard an explicit reason from the administration. Aravind Boddupalli said that Kaler’s words in his address to students were that there needs to be consequences, and that he was not going to drop the charges.

Duschane said it made sense that the administration might need to set a precedent. But, he added that it is the job of the Student Senate to support these students in light of this bodies’ role at the University. Adam Berg asked for clarification on whether the criminal charges against the students would be dropped if the students got in no further trouble for a year. Stewart replied that yes, it is a misdemeanor and a typical way such cases are handled. Duschane added that this is the difference between the criminal and academic records: the criminal charges will disappear if the students do not get into trouble, but academic charges would stay on their records forever.

Elise Sanchez wanted to know what efforts the students had made to engage in conversations with administration prior to the sit-in. Stewart replied that the Whose Diversity? students began conversations with President Kaler over two years ago, and that last year they came to a meeting advocating for CLA to hire two additional people for the department of Chicano and Latino Studies. They also met with a couple of other Senate committees, he added. Stewart said that the history of the University’s African American Studies department is the direct result of a similar sit-in in Morrill Hall in 1969. That was the last significant sit-in on campus, said Stewart, so to think other campus groups might follow suit is not realistic.

Henry Zern voiced his support because he believed that the students have already been dealt with through the criminal justice system, and the University should be supporting civil discourse, including civil disobedience. Tommy Keller agreed with the argument that disciplinary action would impact their future job opportunities. But he felt that the career language lessened the impact of the statement. It pulls the focus away from the real issue, he said. Keller proposed to strike the first sentence and first three words of the second sentence of paragraph 3. A vote was taken and the motion carried.

A vote was then taken to approve the statement as amended, and the motion was unanimously approved.

APPROVED

8. OLD BUSINESS

NONE

9. NEW BUSINESS

NONE

10. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 12:24 pm.

Patricia Straub