MSSA MEET & CONFERENCE
Thursday, November 3, 2005
Meeting Minutes

Present: Richard Davenport, Patricia Swatfager-Haney, Scott Olson, Mark Johnson, Joel Johnson, Rob Wills, Mike Brunner, Haley Pederson, and Ben Nelson. Guest: Dean Trauger

1. Meeting called to order by President Davenport

2. Information Items

   President Richard Davenport’s Report –

MSSA President Rob Wills’ Report –
   • President Wills thanked all who attended the Student Forum on Thursday, October 13th. President Wills has a committee of five who will continue working on the issues discussed at the Forum. The response about the Forum from students was positive. They are very happy that this is being addressed.
   • President Wills stated he has a student to serve on the search committee for Vice President for Finance and Administration.
   • President Wills has a committee who will work with Dean Trauger to break down the budget. President Davenport expressed his appreciation for the student input on this.
   • Student Senate will continue the consultation process with Residential Life (room and board rates) and Student Union (fee proposals and finance plans).
   • President Wills stated that nearly all seats are filled on Senate. All new people are going through the training process.

Student Affairs Vice President Patricia Swatfager-Haney’s Report—
   • VP Swatfager-Haney indicated that the Residential Life room and board consultation process is going well with RHA as well as the consultation process with the Union Board on the Union budget.
   • The consultation process on the RFP for Food Service is continuing.
   • The student consultation letter regarding tuition needs be completed by the November deadline.
   • VP Swatfager-Haney noted that the architects for the new housing project were on campus for a meeting. The architects met with students also. Based on the discussions they had while here, the architects will be getting some ideas back to the MSU group.
   • VP Swatfager-Haney indicated that Student Affairs is in the process of getting ready to begin the search for the Student Union Director. President Davenport asked President Wills to appoint someone to serve on the search committee.
3. Discussion Items
   
a. Follow-up on Student Open Forum/Off Campus Student Housing Issues
   President Wills indicated that a small committee has been formed. They are talking with students living in apartment complexes near campus regarding issues relating to landlords/tenants. The Student Affairs Coordinator is working with City of Mankato officials regarding these same issues. Lauren Long, SLD & S-L is developing a data base on housing information in the area. Work on this important issue is well underway.

   President Wills suggested a new location for any future Forums. The acoustics were not very good for the question and answer process. Ideally, having the meetings outside would draw in more people as would the prospect of free food. Overall, students are very happy this issue is being addressed. Student’s questions will be answered.

b. Update on status of Greek System (Rob Wills/IFC Representative)
Haley Pederson, representing the IFC (consisting of seven fraternities and four sororities) and member of Alpha Sigma Alpha, spoke about the Greek Community (prefer that they are referred to as Community rather than System) at MSU. She stated that the Greek Community is strong and growing. They are nationally recognized. Greek standards are high. They have specific academic, community service, and campus requirements. Members of the Greek Community provide much of the student leadership on campus. They have members on Student Senate, in Residence Hall Association, Student Union Board and serving as President’s of Recognized Student Organizations. They are big participants in Homecoming. They feel that the students who participate in the Greek Community usually stay on campus until they graduate. They constantly battle the stereotype about the Greeks. They definitely do not participate in any hazing events. The Greek Community at present numbers about 350 members. How do they grow that community? Right now their numbers are not strong enough to be ready for a Greek Village but they definitely would like a Greek Village. They feel that their PR on campus is not great and would like some positive recognition from the administration about the projects they are doing. President Davenport suggested Michael Cooper and Ann Fee, Media Relations, should get something positive out about the Greek Community. He also indicated that MSU needs a Task Force to evaluate the Greek Community here and make plans for the future. A housing design could be created to work for a Greek Village. President Davenport tapped Vice President Swatfager-Haney to put together a task force and create a charge (something to increase numbers). Also, some research on numbers in Greek Communities at other universities should be done.

c. Interior Design Program
Vice President for Academic Affairs Scott Olson addressed this item. The College of Science, Engineering and Technology looked at the program to see how it fit in with their mission. It was determined that it just did not fit in. VP
Olson stated that it is not unusual for the University to drop a program; however, it is not done without an extensive review. The program’s mission is assessed to see how it fits into MSU’s Strategic Plan; the cost per student credit hour is audited to see if income is covering the cost of running the program and how it fits with the Academic Master Plan. Total enrollment in the program is looked at based on the Academic Data Summary Information which is recorded by Institutional Research (access Institutional Research Web Site for this info), and, finally, the overall quality of the program is evaluated. VP Olson indicated that Academic Affairs had been receiving complaints against the program for a long time. Initially, the program was suspended—not dropped. A professional consultant was hired to assess the Interior Design Program and MSU was told the whole program would need to be re-tooled. Efforts were made to improve the program to meet accreditation guidelines (Accreditation visit by Commission on Institutions of Higher Education is scheduled for February 6-8, 2006) and meet student’s needs. Costs for keeping the program going were looked at as the University wants to keep tuition costs down. Factor in lack of interest in the program (43 programs have already been reduced and the University has not received any backlash on that) so the decision to drop the program was made. The University wants to maintain the quality of our University. No new students have been admitted and students involved who have concerns about completing their programs will receive the help they need to finish their program in a timely manner. VP Olson indicated that he has met personally with the students and the appropriate University personnel will continue to meet with students to answer their questions and help them finish their program.

d. Tailgating Proposal
President Wills met with Director of Intercollegiate Athletics Kevin Buisman. He would like to see this proposal go forward also. St. Cloud State University and University of South Dakota are doing this and they have not had any issues. The MnSCU Chancellor’s Office wants the policy amended, whereas the Board of Trustees do not see this in a positive light in view of the recent tragic events related to drinking.

President Wills sees Tailgating more as a matter of camaraderie, bringing students, faculty, staff, alumni, community members together for food and drink prior to football games. Alcohol is not the focus of this event! It encourages a lasting connection with the University. Besides, it is fun. VP Trauger noted that there are legal, complex issues involved in getting this event carried out. He and Kevin Buisman would be more than willing to meet to discuss this further.

Bring the Tailgating Proposal on a future MSSA M & C Agenda.

e. Tuition Consultation
VP Dean Trauger indicated he would be meeting with representatives from Student Senate regarding tuition. The student consultation letter is due in to MnSCU in November.
4. Policies for Review
   - Feedback on informal review for: Post Secondary Enrollment Options
     Written feedback provided to Warren Sandmann
   - Feedback on informal review for: Graduate Enrollment
     Written feedback provided to Warren Sandmann
   - Formal review of: Smoking Policy
     MSSA executive officers Wills and Brunner do not believe these policies
     would work let alone be enforced (D.) Smoking is prohibited within 15 feet of
     all entrances and (G.) Cigarette receptacles will be placed at least 15 feet from
     all entrances…especially, when cold weather moves in.

     Receptacles at entrances allow smoke to go back into the building’s system
     which is unacceptable.

     The consensus was that University community will need to police itself and
     follow the policy OR eventually smoking will be prohibited on the campus.

     MSSA will provide written feedback to Academic Affairs.

Meeting adjourned.

   Next MSSA Meet & Confer
   Thursday, December 1, 2005
   12:00 p.m.
   WA303