

Minutes*

**Senate Committee on Faculty Affairs
Tuesday, February 11, 2014
2:30 – 4:30
238A Morrill Hall**

Present: Joseph Konstan (chair), Christina Bourland, Randy Croce, Kathy Brown, Arlene Carney, Carl Flink, Health Himstedt, Theodor Litman, Sophia Gladding, Frank Kulacki, Scott Lanyon, Monica Luciana, Peh Ng, Nicholas Poggioli, Lori Rhudy, George Sell, Cathy Wambach

Absent: Dann Chapman, Samuel Gill, Karen Miksch, Teri Caraway, Daniel Skaar

Guests: Brandon Sullivan, Ph.D., director, Employee Engagement – Office of Human

[In these minutes: (1) welcome and introductions; (2) issues pending; (3) annual salary instructions; (4) Employee Engagement survey]

1. Welcome and Introductions

Professor Konstan convened the meeting, welcomed those present and called for a round of introductions.

2. Issues Pending

Following introductions, the committee went off the record to discuss the status of unresolved/continuing committee business. During this portion of the meeting, members discussed the status of the sabbatical and leave issue, the ad hoc subcommittee revising the policy on Academic Appointments with Teaching Function (also known as the policy on college personnel plans), and the “professor parent” issue.

3. Annual Salary Instructions

Next, Professor Konstan turned to Vice President Brown for an update on annual salary instructions. Vice President Brown reported that 2.5% has been earmarked in the budget for salary increases for next year. To date, no salary instructions have been drafted. It is unlikely this year’s salary letter will look much different than recent salary instruction letters. She emphasized that when thinking about salary increases that more thought needs to be given to putting together a compensation package that ensures quality in terms of recruitment and retention.

To what extent, asked Professor Konstan, do deans and department heads receive data on how departments in their college distribute salary increases as well as how other colleges distribute their salary increases? Anecdotally speaking, he reported hearing of departments that give 2.5% increases to all their faculty and other departments that give more highly skewed raises. Vice President Brown stated that whatever data is shared is at a collegiate level, and currently there is no mechanism for publishing/sharing

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this data across the institution. The dean's office in each college would have a sense of how their departments are handling raises.

Professor Kulacki asked whether promotional increases are included in the 2.5% annual salary increase and whether the work of the collegiate salary equity committees will have an impact on the July 1 salary increases. Regarding the promotional increase question, stated Vice President Brown, promotional increases are outside the 2.5% annual increase. In terms of the collegiate salary equity committees, Vice President Brown asked Vice Provost Carney to provide an update. Vice Provost Carney reported that she has been working with the various collegiate salary equity committees and clearly there will be some recommended adjustments. These committees have been tasked with identifying individuals that the deans should consider for adjustments. It will be left up to the deans as to how they want to handle these adjustments (within the 2.5%, outside the 2.5% or in addition to the 2.5%). With that said, she stated that she would guess it would vary across colleges. Vice Provost Carney reported that she is asking each unit to tell her how they calculate merit. Having this information will be an essential component to not having to do adjustments later. The ultimate goal is to have merit increases be as transparent as possible. Vice Provost Carney stated that she would be happy to share with members the memos and other documents that have been sent the deans.

Do the colleges/units have to come up with the money for the promotion and tenure increases, asked Professor Ng? Yes, stated Vice President Brown, the colleges/units have been responsible for coming up with money for promotion and tenure increases. Put differently, stated Professor Konstan, the responsibility rests where the resources have been distributed.

Mr. Croce stated that this committee discussed a number of years ago that salary increases should be part across the board and part merit. Is this something that can still be explored or has it already been determined that salary increases will be all based on merit? Vice President Brown stated that there has been no discussion about this, but she will raise the idea. Professor Kulacki recalled that a few years back this committee passed a resolution, which recommended that a portion of salary increases be across the board. This is an issue of significant concern and it would be interesting to get the administration's thoughts on it. Discussion among Vice President Brown and several committee members confirmed that the resolution made a one-time recommendation, following a period of across-the-board temporary cuts. Nonetheless, several committee members expressed interest in the administration considering the idea.

4. Employee Engagement Survey Results

Professor Konstan introduced the next agenda item, employee engagement survey results. Vice President Brown proceeded to introduce Brandon Sullivan, director, Employee Engagement in the Office of Human Resources (OHR). She noted that all the efforts around employee engagement are intended to make this an action exercise rather than simply just a talking exercise. With that said, she called on Dr. Sullivan to talk about the survey and next steps. Dr. Sullivan distributed a PowerPoint handout and walked members through it. Salient highlights from his presentation included:

- A record number of faculty and staff participated in the survey.
- The research indicates that the degree to which employee engagement is present profoundly shapes the quality of experiences and outcomes in the workplace.
- The University's engagement strategy is to provide tools to help the campuses, colleges and departments address local workplace factors that enable research, teaching, service and wellbeing.
- The employee engagement goals are to:

- Understand the current state of the University workforce.
 - Inform the action planning process in order to enhance the workplace.
- Survey results indicate that the University's employee engagement is on par with leading global corporations. The University's positive results reflect its effective leadership and culture and position it as an employer of choice.

A high-level overview of the survey results was shared with the committee and Dr. Sullivan summarized observations of highly engaged departments. Ultimately, he noted, the goal is to learn best practices from the highly engaged departments. For both faculty and staff, the leading edge practice for highly engaged departments was their commitment to individual wellbeing. Vice President Brown added that regarding the commitment to individual wellbeing, the University is doing a lot of programming in this area and cited a number of examples, e.g., the Wellness Program, programming offered through Rec Sports, Boynton Health Services and the Center for Spirituality and Healing. Results from the survey will serve to guide the University's programming activities around increasing employees' sense of wellbeing and engagement.

The remaining slides, stated Dr. Sullivan, provide information on next steps. The University's engagement web pages (<http://www1.umn.edu/ohr/e2/index.html>) contain a tool kit of resources for HR leads, which are both online and in the I2A tracking system. In closing, Dr. Sullivan stated that the survey results are providing units with information on where they can focus their efforts in order to increase employee engagement and also giving them the motivation and tools to take action without creating a lot of extra work for unit leaders.

Members' comments/questions included:

- Professor Flink voiced concern that departmental reductions in administrative staff have not been factored into these efforts. A reduction in the number of staff in a department has an impact on what can be accomplished. While employee engagement efforts are commendable, it will inevitably create more administrative work. The information provided in the survey results, noted Dr. Sullivan, are intended to equip leaders and their teams with information to help them focus their efforts on their goals. Vice President Brown added that there is nothing about this work that is designed to create more administrative structure or work. A desired outcome of this effort is that it will create conversations about how to improve commitment as well as the work environment. The real value of this data is that it drives conversations that the University has never had data to support. Employee engagement is not intended to be an administrative nightmare, but rather to help support employees at the local level to create a positive work environment.
- Professor Konstan suggested the data be teased out even further to know where problems, for example, would be best addressed, e.g., at the department level, the collegiate level or centrally. Dr. Sullivan stated currently the focus is getting the survey results out, but in the mid-term there will be opportunities to further analyze the data. Professor Konstan proposed identifying areas that have substantial unit differences rather than rolling all the information out to departments. Doing this could potentially avoid burning out unit leaders who are spending their time trying to address locally what are discovered to be system-wide problems.
- While the data will be reflective of what is occurring in a particular department, noted Professor Flink, the process does not empower leaders to discuss how they got to this point in the first place, which could create a lot of defensiveness. He stated he is very concerned about how the data is being rolled out. Dr. Sullivan stated that this gets to the ability of leadership teams to have

the right kinds of conversations. The conversations that have taken place thus far have not cast blame, but focus on departmental strengths and areas for improvement. The information being provided is intended to feed having the right kind of conversations. Dr. Sullivan agreed that the data needed to be looked at in context and is not intended to point fingers.

- Professor Luciana stated that while the survey response rate was considered very good, she wonders about the other 50% of University employees who did not respond. The data collected is a snapshot of engagement among engaged employees who had enough interest to complete the survey. She stated that as a department administrator she would like to know the participation rate by college and unit. She added that those that did not respond probably have an entire different set of issues that should be more worrisome. Dr. Sullivan reiterated that a record number of faculty and staff did participate in the survey. His hope is that this is just the start of a process that will be helpful and give voice to faculty and staff moving forward.
- Mr. Poggioli asked whether the Hay Group, the consulting firm that worked on the survey with OHR, followed up with non-responders. No, stated Dr. Sullivan, there was no follow-up with non-responders, but he appreciated the suggestion. Along this same line of thought, Professor Wambach proposed doing demographic comparisons of the non-responders to responders.
- Professor Sell questioned the relevancy of this effort, particularly for faculty, and wondered what type of action plan is being considered. Vice President Brown stated that she feels strongly that employee engagement is highly relevant to both faculty and staff. Employee engagement is not just about having employees get together and socialize, but it is about what can be done to make a difference in their work environment. Dr. Sullivan added that every effort was made in developing the survey to make it relevant to both faculty and staff. If there are areas that are not relevant to faculty, work will be done to improve these areas; this is a work in progress.
- Professor Ng stated that she appreciates all the work that went into the survey, but has concerns about the timeline, which seems overly optimistic. It takes time to implement changes, especially when faculty, on 9-month contract, may not be around for three months during the implementation of action period from March to December. Vice President Brown acknowledged this concern and appreciated the reminder that many faculty are not around in the summer. She added that this is not intended to be a pre/post survey, but an annual survey. There will be plenty of time to have conversations about the results. The hope is that the data and the conversations coming out of the survey will be helpful over the long term.
- Professor Konstan asked whether the administration has the data to do analyses of how the levels of satisfaction and engagement vary with life status demographics, e.g., gender, length of employment at the University, marital status. Life status impacts one's wellbeing. Dr. Sullivan stated that the University has some of this data, but not all. Professor Konstan suggested the University include as much of this data as they have so departments can use it to determine if life status may be influencing what is going on in the department. Dr. Sullivan stated that the data is being looked at more broadly in terms of what is going on in the colleges/departments, and where there are differences, etc. He appreciated the suggestion and stated that he could see where this information could add value.
- Professor Gladding asked whether the Hay Group has other higher education clients, which would give the University an opportunity to do benchmarking. Dr. Sullivan stated that the RFP process revealed that none of the consulting firms that submitted proposals had higher education clients. However, this is definitely something the University is interested in pursuing. He added that he could see the CIC institutions being interested. This will be something to pursue in the future.

- Going forward, Professor Konstan requested correlations with existing data at the unit level be included, e.g., unit level policies (teaching policies), unit level outcomes (national rankings, non-retirement faculty departures). For people that are data driven, if they cannot see a connection between an outcome and the intermediate measures, they will likely become disinterested.
- Was the confidence in leaders by level of leadership analyzed as part of this survey, asked Professor Wambach? Dr. Sullivan reported that the survey question that referenced leaders was about the college leadership teams. The data shows that areas that had new leaders had scores that indicated more uncertainty. Further analysis can and will be done in this area.

Vice President Brown thanked members for the opportunity to talk with them about the survey results.

Hearing no further business, Professor Konstan adjourned the meeting.

Renee Dempsey
University Senate