

2012-13 UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

NOVEMBER 2, 2012

P&A SENATE MINUTES: No. 2

The second meeting of the P&A Senate for 2012-13 was convened in 1-451 Mayo on Friday, November 2, 2012, at 9:32 a.m. Coordinate campuses were linked by ITV. Checking or signing the roll as present were 37 P&A members and nine alternates. Chair Ann Hagen presided.

1. P&A CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE REPORT

Ann Hagen, Chair of the P&A Consultative Committee (PACC) and Senate, reported that PACC met on October 30 with President Kaler and Vice President Kathy Brown. Issues at the meeting included the assertion that there are too many administrators, why administrators are bad, an update on the job classification and compensation study as it relates to these issues, and what the P&A Senate can do to articulate the work done by P&A employees.

When asked about employee morale given several years of cutbacks and doing more with less, President Kaler indicated that it was the responsibility of each employee to examine their position and determine what work is outside the scope and mission of the unit. If an employee is doing more with less, then it is acceptable to talk about this situation with a supervisor.

As this relates to operational excellence, supervisors and employees both need to be informed that there are things that units can stop doing that will not affect their core mission. Human Resources has available resources, such as consultants and information from organizational effectiveness, to help this process. PACC members also suggested that efforts at operational excellence might be an area to include on annual performance reviews for all employees.

PACC will continue to discuss these issues.

At the August retreat, volunteers were sought to revise the P&A Senate advocacy agenda. A small group has been working on it, but other P&A Senate members are being sought for a more diverse viewpoint.

Ann Hagen said that she was contacted regarding a P&A volunteer to serve as a member of the Openness in Research Subcommittee. If anyone is interested, please contact her.

Lastly the mission statement will be brought to this group in November.

2. P&A SENATE SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

Benefits and Compensation (B&C) Subcommittee

Cynthia Murdoch said that the B&C met on October 11. Topics include the Human Resources upgrade, senior administrators compensation policy, advocacy documents, and updates from the Benefits Advisory Committee (BAC). It was reported that there will be a new flexible spending administrator on January 1 so employees are urged to submit all receipts prior to this date. Starting in 2013, flexible spending dollars will be pre-loaded on a VISA card. The wellness point bank is also open for 2013. At the November 8 meeting, the 27 pay period issue will be discussed.

Communications Subcommittee

Scott Marsalis stated that the Communications Subcommittee met on Oct. 24. The CAPA Facebook site has been decommissioned and tracking has been added to the P&A Senate website. The newsletter format was reviewed and strategic planning was discussed in terms of goals and objectives, key messages, and the audience.

Outreach Subcommittee

No report.

Professional Development and Recognition (PD&R) Subcommittee

Jodi Carlson Grebinoski noted that the subcommittee had its first brown bag. There were 21 attendees online and 15 in the room. P&A will be eligible for this year's two teaching awards. The deadline for submission will be in January, so units should begin considering applicants now.

3. STUDENT SENATE UPDATE

Adam Matula, Student Senate Chair, stated that the Student Senate met for the first time last month, at which time it approved a resolution opposing voter ID. Future topics include garnering support for Support the U Day in February, adding attendance at Senate meetings to the list of excused absences for students, environmental and sustainability updates from all campuses, enacting a medical amnesty law for the state, and increasing the release rate for student evaluations of teaching.

4. CIVIL SERVICE SENATE REPORT

Amy Olson, Civil Service Senate Chair, stated that the group developed a strategic plan last year and completed a survey of 4800 civil service employees. Top issues for this year are equity in leaves between civil service and P&A employees and making sure that employee growth at the University is not at the expense of the civil service classification.

5. MINUTES FOR OCTOBER 5, 2012

Action

MOTION:

To approve the P&A Senate minutes, which are available on the Web at the following URL.

<http://www1.umn.edu/usenate/pasenate/minutes/121005.pdf>

DISCUSSION:

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

APPROVED

6. DISCUSSION WITH SENATE COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Research Information Technologies

Research Committee

Kyla Wahlstrom, a long-term P&A employee, said that she was one of eight P&A appointed to the first Academic Staff Advisory Committee (ASAC) under President Hasselmo. She is amazed at how much more organized and powerful this group has become, as she feels that P&A are the glue that hold the University together.

She then noted that the Research Committee meets for two hours every other week and deals with many aspects of research at the University.

Greg Haugstad stated that committees topics this year that pertain to P&A include a new third step to the promotional sequence for reach associates in the Medical School, expanding entrepreneurial leaves to P&A, infrastructure funding and structure planning, effort certification being moved to two-times per year, SPA and shared ICR funds between units, paperwork burden for federal government agencies, and balancing the rights versus the research needs in research with human subjects and animals.

Information Technologies Committee (SCIT)

James MacDonald said that SCIT is a means to voice opinions and talk directly with the Chief Information Officer. The committee is involved in reviews of new initiatives and has been hearing about the restructuring taking place in OIT.

Benton Schnabel noted that topics for this year include ISO standards for security in the AHC, data security and storage, professional development, accessibility and wireless connections, and the PeopleSoft upgrade.

Q: Are changes being made in how OIT is doing business as it is hard for people outside of central OIT to tell?

A: President Kaler has stated that he wants a reduction in IT costs in three years, so OIT is trying to engage all IT professionals through communities of practice on topics such as elearning and research. OIT is hoping that users do not see day-to-day changes in how services are provided, as much is happening behind the scenes. One example is the consolidation of help desks without affecting customers.

Q: Is there an update on the PeopleSoft upgrade?

A: The process for this upgrade will be much different as more input will be sought from end users before implementation. A professional company is also being hired to handle implementation instead of relying solely on internal resources.

7. BENEFITS ADVISORY COMMITTEE UPDATE

Tina Falkner, Chair of the Benefits Advisory Committee (BAC) since July, joined the meeting to provide an update. She noted that in 2011 the University moved to one plan administrator, Medica, to cut costs. This arrangement is evaluated each January. While there were a few issues with the initial transition, overall feedback has been positive.

Open enrollment began on November 1. Next year's rates were set in July. The amount being paid next year for each employee depends on whether the employee earned a wellness point bank premium reduction last year.

The figures from this year's wellness point bank indicate that 5756 employees earned some form of points. The hope is that this will increase next year as the timeframe for collecting points is longer, October 1, 2012 to August 31, 2013. New options are also available for workouts done outside a registered facility and some point values have increased.

Q: What is the return on investment for the wellness program?

A: John Nyman from the Health Policy and Management department at the University has calculated that from 2006-10, the University saved \$1.76 for each dollar it spent.

A senator commented that he and his colleagues appreciated the expansion of programs at the coordinate campuses and the increased options to be able to achieve the point level for the reduction.

Q: Is the program structured as all or nothing for the premium reduction?

A: Yes. The program contains a minimum number of points to earn a reduction.

A senator then commented that many P&A are on year-to-year contracts. This program is structured so that employees earn points now for a benefit next year, but P&A are not guaranteed that they will be here next year. An earlier benefit reduction would be better.

Another senator asked that the list of activities for which points can be accumulated be expanded.

Tina Falkner noted that this list is reviewed each year and additions are made.

Q: Can the online system be redesigned to include the point totals from the previous year?

A: As this was the first year, any confirmation can be received by calling StayWell. Next year the website will include an archive of the point total from the previous year.

A senator suggested that the system should send the employee an email once the point total is reached. This would be better than an employee constantly logging into to check when the final points are awarded.

Another senator commented that the University's human resources system appears to push corporate businesses over small businesses for verification purposes, whether this is for wellness or pharmaceuticals.

Tina Falkner then stated that dental rates will remain as is for 2013 and the premium relief for low-paid employees will continue until June 30, 2013.

Next steps for the BAC will be determined by next week's election as the Affordable Care Act may change depending on the outcome. Some conditions would be likely to remain regardless of the outcome – coverage to age 26 on a parent's insurance, removal of health care maximums, exclusion of pre-existing conditions, and electronic medical records.

BAC is now starting to look at plan design for 2014. RFPs will be issued this year for Cobra, retiree medical, life insurance, dental, and long-term care insurance.

8. CONFLICT RESOLUTION ANNUAL REPORT

Carolyn Chalmers, Director of the Office for Conflict Resolution (OCR), joined the meeting to discuss the annual report. The OCR helps employees with employment-related issues and concerns. Most work involves informal, private consultations to develop strategies for a productive work environment. There is also a formal process, however only about five percent of cases proceed in that manner. She is working with the Office of Equity and Diversity (OED) and Organizational Effectiveness to reach more employees.

As she notes each year, use by P&A is very low. Gaps that she sees include no P&A advisors in her office, how and where academic freedom cases are handled, and reductions in P&A employees at the University.

Q: What is the process for cases brought to OCR?

A: Cases can either be resolved informally or through a hearing in which a recommendation is made to the Provost.

Q: It has been announced the OCR will now be housed under OED. How will this affect the work?

A: It will allow for better alignment of functions in the two offices to tackle big issues. She is not aware of any negatives to this arrangement unless employees feel that her office is no longer an independent entity.

9. P&A SENATE OLD BUSINESS

NONE

10. P&A SENATE NEW BUSINESS

NONE

11. P&A SENATE ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 11:09 am.

**Rebecca Hippert
Abstractor**