

2012-13 UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

DECEMBER 7, 2012

P&A SENATE MINUTES: No. 3

The third meeting of the P&A Senate for 2012-13 was convened in 1-451 Mayo on Friday, December 7, 2012, at 9:33 a.m. Coordinate campuses were linked by ITV. Checking or signing the roll as present were 38 P&A members and seven 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 November 27. It reviewed the advocacy document, reworded the mission statement, and discussed resignations, including Kimberly Simon as chair-elect, and redistricting due to administrative changes. These will also be brought for a vote at the February meeting.

Following the meeting on October 30 with President Kaler and Vice President Brown, PACC discussed the President's statement that solving morale issues is on the shoulder of employees. PACC does not agree with the stance, especially since P&A employees are the least likely to win, and sent a letter to both parties asking for a follow-up meeting.

A statement on tele-presence at Senate meetings from the Senate Committee on Committees was also discussed and endorsed by PACC. This issue will be asked of Vice President Studham later in today's meeting.

Ann Hagen then noted that she participated in a review of the administrative policy matrix which determines which Senate committees are involved in reviews of administrative policies. This was a chance to update the matrix to include PACC and the Civil Service Consultative Committee.

Lastly, an email will be sent later this month asking P&A to volunteer for Senate committee service. Volunteers do not have to be a senator, so she encourages members to apply or ask P&A colleagues to apply.

2. STUDENT SENATE UPDATE

Ann Hagen reported that the Student Senate met yesterday and discussed a tobacco-free campus proposal, medical amnesty, and open source textbooks.

3. CIVIL SERVICE SENATE REPORT

Amy Olson, Civil Service Senate Chair, stated that they continue to work on equity in leaves between civil service and P&A employees and are developing a set of questions regarding morale issues among civil service employees.

4. MINUTES FOR NOVEMBER 2, 2012

**Action
(2 minutes)**

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/111102.pdf>

DISCUSSION:

This item was tabled until the next meeting.

TABLED

5. P&A SENATE SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

Benefits and Compensation (B&C) Subcommittee

Stephanie Bettermann said that the B&C met on October 11 to discuss the 27 pay period issue. She reminded senators to turn-in health care reimbursements before December 31.

Communications Subcommittee

Marilyn Becker stated that the Communications Subcommittee has been discussing what it wants to communicate and the best ways to do this as part of its strategic planning process. They continue to work on the meeting highlights and newsletter. She thanked everyone who submitted a P&A to profile for the newsletter. Review of the website and survey data analysis continues.

Outreach Subcommittee

Stacy Doepner-Hove reported that the Outreach Subcommittee has been meeting regarding Senate restructuring to make sure that every P&A has a voice. The proposal will be brought for a vote in February so that the process is complete before elections start. They have also discussed the vacant chair-elect position. Nominations will be accepted now for someone to fill the position for six months before becoming chair in July. If anyone is interested, please talk to her or Ann Hagen regarding the commitment and also speak with your supervisor. The election will be held in February. She then encouraged senators to consider other executive committee positions that will be open for 2013-14.

Professional Development and Recognition (PD&R) Subcommittee

Jodi Carlson Grebinoski noted that the November brown bag on technology strategies has been rescheduled to later this month. The next one will be on February 19 and will focus on teaching. Outstanding Unit Awards (OUA) preparations are starting with materials being available in early spring semester.

**6. DISCUSSION WITH VICE PRESIDENT SCOTT STUDHAM
Vice President and Chief Information Officer**

Scott Studham, Vice President for Information Technology (OIT) and Chief Information Officer, joined the meeting. As a series of questions had been sent to him prior to the meeting, he began by providing responses to them.

Q: The Senate Committee on Committees has a statement on improving tele-presence at meetings which the P&A Consultative Committee (PACC) has endorsed. What is OIT doing to make improvements in this area?

A: Interactive television (ITV) is what is being used in this room today and is present in B1 Morrill Hall. It is an older technology that requires an audiovisual technician for operations, but it is what is required to connect 20 endpoints. New technologies, such as Skype or Google Hangout, work just as well for up to five endpoints and have a lower barrier of entry. As users become more comfortable with technology, lower-end solutions can be placed into rooms. This is the plan for 238A Morrill Hall, into which video conference equipment will be placed this spring. There will be a webcam, microphones, and four monitors in the room. OIT fully supports Google Hangout and wants to move participants past a central location into support from their laptop or office.

A senator noted that Google Hangout can be used for some committees/subcommittees, but it has a 10 endpoint limit at this time which does not work for a group size of 18. Training is also necessary to know how to use it. However, participants prefer it to being connected via a telephone.

Scott Studham stated that Google Hangout is expanding its endpoint from 10 so it might work for most groups soon. He then asked if there were other rooms on campus that should be considered for a video conference equipment upgrade. Members suggested rooms in Coffman.

Q: Some grant work requires participation by outside parties through video conference. What are other solutions besides Google?

A: The University is working on other solutions with peer institutions that would allow a user to install software on a computer and then connect to a bridge service. The issue is scheduling as there are a fixed number of connection nodes.

Q: What consumer-based products are supported for faculty who need a different level of support?

A: The University is moving to a central help desk model to alleviate service disruptions when local staff leave their positions. For basic services, faculty should be able to work with any technology person.

Q: Does this represent a change in the OIT vision regarding centralized services?

A: The University has always had centralized services. What is being proposed now is realignment of people, which fits with the general maturation trend for technology. Any new technology is unique and starts at the local level. As more people adopt it, the technology becomes a central commodity. Once it is being used by everyone, the technology is outsourced to a vendor who specializes in that service. This process is separate from any OIT alignment issues and does not indicate a centralization of services.

Q: Rumors are being spread because there has been no message sent from central OIT to address these concerns. One question being asked is if desktop support will remain with local IT groups.

A: No, because the industry is changing and fewer people will have desktop computers. As more people access information through mobile devices, central support will be required in this area.

Q: When the internet was down last week, most employees had no idea as to what was happening or when it would be resolved. What forms of communication does OIT utilize when these issues occur?

A: OIT has a Twitter account where notices are posted. System status is also available through the OIT website and through IT community of practice email. In this case, there was no best guess as to when the service would be running again.

Q: Why is MyU portal access restricted on Sunday mornings? For AHC employees, this is the only method to access email accounts.

A: He did not realize that AHC employees required MyU to access their email but now he will check to see if it can be shutdown at an off time or if an alternate path to email access can be developed. Part of the PeopleSoft upgrade includes building a new portal for all employees.

A senator noted that online degree participants at Crookston are also routed through MyU, so they are also affected by the shutdowns on Sunday mornings.

Q: How will OIT accommodate an increasingly mobile society and workforce?

A: OIT is increasing support for mobile devices and providing configurations for systems that can be better supported by OIT.

OIT is also looking at connectivity and bandwidth. Wireless access points vary across campus. OIT is assessing where these need to be improved. In the past, departments paid for these upgrades in their areas and central only paid for some areas of campus. OIT will now be setting aside funds each year for these improvements. A survey in the spring will uncover areas for improvement. If departments want to make upgrades on their own, OIT will be able to provide transparent, upfront costs so that units can start requesting upgrades this summer.

A senator stated that the University provides wireless guest access for free, but this access is slow and creates issues for outside users.

Q: What is being done regarding Google domain issues as sharing is currently restricted to those on the same campus?

A: There is a benefit to each campus maintaining its own brand. However the system doesn't know that sharing should be allowed between some domains but not others. He would like to have one of the coordinate campuses volunteer to test being a subdomain within Google under the Twin Cities domain to see if this would solve this problem. OIT would fund the study and would make sure that campus emails remain, but he would not implement this test without campus approval.

Q: Data longevity is an issue for many at the University. What is being done to train people on how to preserve their work products in Google?

A: There are ways to save work from Google, such as PST files and IMAP. He is not sure that OIT can require preservation but it can provide options.

Q: Moodle concerns still remain in WebCT that are not being resolved. What is OIT doing about this?

A: Overall performance issues are due to the need for additional hardware, which is being done. He has not heard of any usability concerns. The University is stuck with this software until there

is a decision to replace it. This might occur sooner as more changes take place regarding e-learning as the software does not work for MOOCs.

Brad Cohen noted that Moodle is not the only technology available and OIT understands the concerns and needs from CEHD. There is a community of practice for e-learning that will be working on University requirements, what works, and what is missing in the current software.

7. DISCUSSION WITH PRESIDENT ERIC KALER

President Kaler then joined the meeting and stated that he would be happy to answer questions from the floor.

Q: Most P&A serve on one-year contracts. What are your concerns regarding productivity and workloads for these employees?

A: Many P&A do work that is similar to positions outside the University and these positions have less notice or protection than P&A employees. He is concerned that P&A are saying that they cannot talk about doing their jobs better or challenge the status quo without risking their positions, but he wondered if this was the impression from a few P&A or a concern among the larger group. This is not the correct culture to promote change. The University is a great place to work and it receives valuable energy from the work P&A do.

A senator stated that there is a divide between faculty and P&A because most faculty do not know what it feels like to have an unprotected position. There is equity between employees in the corporate structure, but at the University P&A are the only employees without tenure or a different form of job protection.

President Kaler stated that P&A cannot be provide the same protection as tenured faculty, but if P&A cannot express concern to these faculty, then he needs to know so changes can be implemented.

Q: As the University reviews its stance on innovation and risk recalibration, will P&A be made eligible to take entrepreneurial leaves?

A: P&A are eligible for several leaves from the University and should take advantage of these options.

Another senator questioned whether multi-year contracts would be made available for P&A. This would allow for better planning and decision-making if P&A knew that they would be in their position for more than one year at a time.

A senator then noted that when unit budgets appear tight, nonrenewal notices are sent. This practice makes P&A very nervous.

President Kaler stated that the University is in a very challenging budgetary environment. When a large percentage of costs relate to personnel, the ability to move P&A is critical to the overall health of the University.

Q: Operational excellence is being pushed as a way to make changes at the University. However, how can this be a priority when there is less time for innovation due to increased workloads?

A: The reality is that there will not be new money available for the University so the organization needs to be more efficient. This means having conversations with supervisors and colleagues and sharing ways to do the work better. In some cases it also means deciding what work will continue to be done and what work can be stopped.

Q: Employees from other institutions appear to be very passionate about their institutions. However the University does not seem to have this built-in groundswell of support and it appears to hurt the University at the legislature. What can be done to change this?

A: How people engage and emote is different in Minnesota. There is passion and pride in the University, but it is expressed in different ways. The University has also been complacent for many years. Institutions with great passionate also seem to be located in states with multiple institutions of higher education, which is not the case here. The University also suffers by being located in the Twin Cities where there are many other options for fans.

Q: Will you be looking at changes in any of the deans? Could this be a result of the AHC review?

A: The changes so far in senior leadership are not unusual in a Presidential transition but most has been done through retirements or departures to other positions. It is not his goal to change people, including deans, unless that would be the recommended outcome of a decanal review. The AHC review will be issued soon and he hopes to share it with the community shortly thereafter.

Q: What would be the cost to eliminate the retirement waiting period for all P&A?

A: \$2.8 million.

Q: What is your strategy for this year's budgetary request to the legislature?

A: He is hopeful after a series of good conversations. They are interested in the University's accountability and support for research. He will have a conversation next week with the Governor. He will need to look at personnel budgets for salary increases and benefits. If funds are allocated to one, such as restoring the Regents Scholarship to full funding, then those funds are not available for salary increases or benefit expenses. The correct strategy is required.

Q: Are there benchmarks and metrics set for operational excellence so that the University can know when it has achieved success?

A: There are metrics, as he sees this as a continuous process with no ending point. The website simply documents the steps taken and the funds saved.

A senator asked if the number of P&A who were not renewed last year could be shared.

Q: What are the factors that you use to define a successful P&A Senate?

A: He believes in shared management and employee engagement. The P&A Senate should be the vehicle to bring good ideas forward and surface concerns from P&A. This group can also help move the University forward by bringing the best ideas forward and allowing P&A employees to do their best work.

Q: What will be the biggest impacts from the enterprise system upgrade?

A: This upgrade will enable everyone to do their jobs better by providing more efficient access at a lower cost. He wants users to be engaged in the product roll-out. Some functionality will be lost but it will be made up for in other ways. The University will be reviewing each change that it has made in the current system to determine if it is critical. If not, it will be cut from the new system.

8. P&A SENATE OLD BUSINESS

NONE

9. P&A SENATE NEW BUSINESS

NONE

10. P&A SENATE ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 11:30 am.

**Rebecca Hippert
Abstractor**