

2012-13 UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

FEBRUARY 1, 2013

P&A SENATE MINUTES: No. 4

The fourth meeting of the P&A Senate for 2012-13 was convened in 5-125 Moos Tower on Friday, February 1, 2013, at 9:38 a.m. Coordinate campuses were linked by ITV. Checking or signing the roll as present were 32 P&A members and five 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 January 22. It reviewed the mission statement, restructuring, welcome packet, and Wall Street Journal article.

Lori Lamb, operational director for Human Resources, joined the meeting to discuss the job families study and the report from the consultants in October. HR will be presenting a report to the Regents on October 7 to lay out a three phase approach. The first two stages will be completion of the job family study in two years with market-based salary ranges and elimination of the JEQ. The third phase will be a review of all HR differences between P&A and civil service employees.

2. P&A SENATE SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

Benefits and Compensation (B&C) Subcommittee

Stephanie Bettermann said that the B&C met with Susan Rafferty to discuss annual performance reviews. Central HR has the expectation that they will be completed each year for P&A but there is no central tracking. If a review is not completed, then P&A should talk with their supervisors. In a 65 person sample of P&A, 77 percent reported that they did have a review. HR was happy with this percentage, but it is still much less than other groups.

Communications Subcommittee

There was no report.

Outreach Subcommittee

Stacy Doepner-Hove reported that the Outreach Subcommittee has completed a welcome packet to provide information to new senators, alternates, and subcommittee chairs and use a recruiting tool. If there is anything missing, please let them know. She then noted that elections will be in April so she will ask for nominations in March.

Professional Development and Recognition (PD&R) Subcommittee

Jodi Carlson Grebinoski noted that the Outstanding Unit Awards (OUA) guidelines have been set and announced. There is a brown bag scheduled for February 19 on teaching.

3. DISCUSSION WITH SENATE COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Faculty Affairs Committee

Randy Croce said he is one of two P&A representatives on the Faculty Affairs Committee (SCFA) along with Pamela Stenhjem. While most of the discussions focus on faculty, the P&A perspective is very important on issues such as leaves, retirements plans, workload, graduate student support, salaries, faculty evaluations, and MOOCs. This committee has also been supportive of P&A and civil service participation in governance.

**4. ELECTION OF 2012-13 CHAIR-ELECT
Action**

MOTION:

To approve Cynthia Murdoch as the P&A Senate Chair-elect replacing Kimberly Simon.

**ANN HAGEN, CHAIR
P&A CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE**

DISCUSSION:

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

APPROVED

**5. ELECTION OF 2012-13 BENEFITS AND COMPENSATION CO-CHAIR
Action**

MOTION:

To approve Susanne Vandergon as the Benefits and Compensation Subcommittee Co-chair replacing Cynthia Murdoch.

**ANN HAGEN, CHAIR
P&A CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE**

DISCUSSION:

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

APPROVED

**MOTION A
P&A Senate Bylaws and Operating Manual Amendments
Action**

Agenda Items 6. and 7. are offered as a “Consent Agenda” to be taken up as a single item with one vote. Any item will be taken up separately at the request of a senator. As amendments to the P&A Senate Bylaws, motions require either a majority of all voting members of the P&A Senate (21) at one regular or special meeting, or a majority of all voting members of the P&A Senate present and voting at each of two meetings. This is the first meeting at which these motions are being presented.

6. P&A SENATE BYLAW AMENDMENT

MOTION:

To approve amendments to Article VII, Section 1(a) of the P&A Senate Bylaws as follows (new language is underlined, deleted language is ~~struck through~~):

ARTICLE VII. P&A SENATE MEMBERSHIP, ELECTIONS, AND OFFICERS (Changes to this article are subject to vote only by the P&A Senate)

1. Senate Membership and Voting Units

a. P&A Senate

1. For the purpose of electing representatives and alternate representatives, if any, to the P&A Senate, qualified P&A shall vote within each of the following units of the University:

TWIN CITIES: Academic Affairs; Academic Health Center; Athletics; Biological Sciences; Continuing Education; Dentistry; Design; Education and Human Development; Equity and Diversity; Food, Agricultural, and Natural Resource Sciences; Global Programs and Strategy Alliance; Human Resources; Information Technology; Law; Liberal Arts; Libraries; Management; Medical School; Nursing; Other System-wide Offices; Pharmacy; President; Public Affairs; Public Health; Research; Science and Engineering; Student Affairs; ~~System Academic Administration~~; University of Minnesota Extension; ~~University Relations~~; University Services; Veterinary Medicine

CROOKSTON

DULUTH

MORRIS

ROCHESTER

COMMENT:

Refer to the handout 130201 Proposed Restructure.

**STACY DOEPNER-HOVE, CHAIR
OUTREACH SUBCOMMITTEE**

7. P&A SENATE OPERATING MANUAL AMENDMENT

MOTION:

To approve amendments to Appendix II of the P&A Senate Operating Manual as follows (new language is underlined, deleted language is ~~struck through~~):

APPENDIX II - COUNT OF P&As BY UNIT

P&A Senate Unit with P/A counts	"Area Class or Resource Responsibility Center (RRC)"
Academic Administration, UMN System 234	Equity and Diversity, VP/Vice Provost (55) Global Programs/Strategic Alliance (62)

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information Technology (47) • Acad Admin, Acad. Units (20) • Academic Admin., Sr. VP (50)
Academic Affairs	244	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic Affairs, Sr. VP (47) • Agricultural Experiment Station (3) • <u>Center for Teaching and Learning (14)</u> • <u>Center for Urban and Regional Affairs (7)</u> • Graduate School (10) • <u>Public Engagement (2)</u> • Undergraduate Education (159) • <u>Urban Research and Outreach Center (5)</u>
Academic Health Center	264	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic Health Center-Shared (178) • Health Sciences (86) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minnesota Medical Foundation (52)
Athletics	156	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Athletics
Biological Sciences	76	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biological Sciences, College of
Continuing Education	59	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuing Education, College of
Dentistry	45	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dentistry, School of
Design	65	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design, College of
Education and Human Development	301	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education & Human Development, College of
Equity and Diversity	72	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <u>Equity and Diversity, Office of (71)</u> ▪ <u>Conflict Resolution (1)</u>
Food, Agriculture, and Nat. Resources Sciences	241	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agricultural Experiment Station (3) • Food, Agri/Nat Rsrc Sci. College of
Global Programs and Strategy Alliance	69	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <u>Global Programs and Strategy Alliance, Office of</u>
Human Resources	50	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human Resources
Information Technology	52	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <u>Information Technology, Office of</u>
Law School	55	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Law School
Liberal Arts	336	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liberal Arts, College of
Libraries	105	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Libraries, University
Management	128	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mgmt, Curtis L Carlson, School of
Medical School	385	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medical School – Duluth Campus (14) • Medical School – Twin Cities Campus (371)
Nursing	29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nursing, School of
Other System-wide Offices	60	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget & Finance (18) • Controller's Office (24) • Enterprise System Upgrade Program (6) • Institutional Research (7) • Measurement Services (6) • Planning and Administration (3) • Statewide Strategic Research Development (2)
Pharmacy	72	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pharmacy, College of
President	153	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audits (1) • President, Office of the (24) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government Relations (6) • General Counsel (24) • Regents, Board of (2) • Scholarly and Cultural Affairs (14) • <u>University Relations, Office of (32)</u> • <u>UM Foundation (70)</u>
Public Affairs	45	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Humphrey Inst School of Publ Aff
Public Health	177	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Health, School of
Research	135	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research
Science and Engineering	275	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Science and Engineering, College of
Student Affairs	155	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boynton Health Service (56) • Student Affairs, Office of (99)

University of Minnesota Extension	234	• UofM Extension
University Relations	106	• University Relations, Office of
University Services	114	• Auxiliary Services (52) • Capital Planning/Project Mgmt (6) • Facilities Management (14) • Public Safety (3) • University Health and Safety (16) • University Services, VP (23)
Veterinary Medicine	108	• Veterinary Medicine, Coll of
University of Minnesota, Crookston	65	• All units beginning with UMC [5]
University of Minnesota, Duluth	197	• All units beginning with UMD [17]
University of Minnesota, Morris	91	• All units beginning with UMM [8]
University of Minnesota, Rochester	34	• Rochester All Units beginning with UMR [1]

COMMENT:

Refer to the handout 130201 Proposed Restructure.

**STACY DOEPNER-HOVE, CHAIR
OUTREACH SUBCOMMITTEE**

DISCUSSION:

With no discussion, a vote was taken and the motion was approved with 31 votes in favor and none opposed.

APPROVED

END OF MOTION A

**8. APPROVAL OF THE P&A SENATE MISSION STATEMENT
Action**

MOTION:

To approve amendments to the P&A Senate mission statement as follows:

Current Statement: To ensure the highest quality of work life for P&A employees at the University of Minnesota through advocacy and proactive engagement with University initiatives and governance in order to further the University’s mission of teaching, research, and service.

Proposed Statement: To advocate for the highest quality of work life for P&A employees in order to advance the University of Minnesota’s mission of teaching, research, and service.

**ANN HAGEN, CHAIR
P&A CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE**

DISCUSSION:

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

APPROVED

9. APPROVAL OF THE P&A SENATE ADVOCACY DOCUMENT Action

MOTION:

To approve the revised Advocacy document as follows:

University-Wide P&A Employees' Advocacy Plan (Adopted xx, 2012, P&A Senate)

The University of Minnesota has expressed a strong commitment to recruit, mentor, reward, and retain world-class faculty and staff, including Professional and Administrative (P&A) employees.

P&A employees at the University are represented by the Academic Professionals and Administrators Senate (P&A Senate) – a governance body made up of elected representatives from all units on the UMC, UMD, UMM, UMR, and UMTC campuses. The P&A Senate is supported by the University Senate Office, which organizes monthly meetings; takes and distributes meeting minutes; provides support for P&A Senate subcommittees; maintains the P&A Senate website and membership database; provides financial support for the P&A Senate annual orientation retreat and travel and teleconferencing for representatives on coordinate campuses; and organizes unit-level P&A groups and their elections. This support from the University Senate Office is limited to the P&A Senate governance body and does not extend to constituents.

The P&A Senate plays an important role for its constituents and proposes ongoing University-wide mechanisms to support and advocate for all employees in the P&A job class. To continue delivering creative, innovative, and emerging service to the University, P&A employees have collectively identified action items that are important to them. These include:

- 1) Job security similar to that of other non-faculty employees,
- 2) Equal waiting period for retirement benefits enjoyed by all other employee groups,
- 3) Targeted orientation programs for new employees,
- 4) Clear career paths and promotional opportunities,
- 5) Professional development opportunities that are comprehensive and widely available, and
- 6) Recognition of P&A efforts and accomplishments.

Job Security Similar to That of Other, Non-Faculty Employees

Any lay off or non-renewal of appointment at the University should be based on some cause. Civil Service employees, for example, may be laid off “because of abolition of position; shortage of work or funds; reorganization of the administrative, collegiate, departmental unit; or other reasons beyond the employee's control that do not reflect discredit on the employee's services” (Civil Service Rule 12.3.1.1 “*Layoffs*”). P&A employees, however, can be non-renewed without an explicit reason or justification. The *Administrative Policy on Non-Renewal of Appointment for Academic Professional and Administrative Employees* states that “non-renewal of appointment may be based on no reason or any reason which does not violate the legal rights of the P&A employee. It is not a dismissal for cause.”

The ability of units to non-renew P&A employees with no justification creates distrust between P&A employees and their supervisors. P&A employees do not enjoy a sense of job security when they can be non-renewed at a supervisor's whim. The policy allowing non-renewal with no cause also may have a chilling effect on P&A employees' exercise of their right to academic freedom.

The P&A Senate recommends that the non-renewal policy be changed so that non-renewed P&A employees must be told explicitly in the non-renewal notice why the decision to non-renew was made. Changing this policy can be done at no cost to the University.

Equal Waiting Period for Retirement Benefits Enjoyed by All Other Employee Groups

P&A employees are the only employee group at the University who are subject to a waiting period for retirement benefits after being hired. Both the MSRS plan for Civil Service and Labor Represented employees, and the Faculty Retirement Plan for eligible faculty begin on the first day of employment without regard to salary level. P&A employees who meet percent-time eligibility requirements for the Faculty Retirement Plan, but who make a salary of less than \$45,863 per year with a 12-month appointment (\$37,800 with 9-month appointment) must wait three years for retirement benefits to begin. P&A employees with a 12-month salary of \$45,863 - \$54,135 (\$37,800 - \$46,132 for 9-month appointments) must wait two years for retirement benefits to begin. Eligible P&A employees making over \$54,135 (\$46,132 for 9-month appointments) have the waiting period waived.

Benefit policies of this type are inequitable when not consistently applied across employee groups. Additionally, this policy affects the lowest paid P&A employees most, since the lowest paid P&As experience the longest delay in retirement benefit contributions. The P&A Senate strongly recommends to both central administration and the Retirement Subcommittee of the Senate Committee on Faculty Affairs that this inequitable policy be revisited and eliminated without delay.

Targeted Orientation Programs

The P&A Senate recommends that new P&A employees be provided with a targeted orientation program similar to the 3-day New Faculty Orientation held annually for all new tenure-track faculty. The existing faculty 3-day orientation provides exposure to the structure and organization of the University, access to teaching resources, discussion of research administration rules, and career-path mentoring for faculty. P&A employees should attend a similar orientation with teaching, research, and/or administrative tracks, so that individual P&A could attend those sessions that best relate to their own jobs. Faculty members are typically not on payroll at the time of orientation, and are paid a stipend to attend. The majority of P&A employees are on a 12-month appointment and would not require a stipend.

While a P&A-specific orientation is being developed, the P&A Senate recommends that applicable portions of the New Faculty Orientation be recorded and made available online for review by P&A employees.

Another concrete step toward a welcoming environment is the creation of a dedicated P&A email address (e.g., NewP&A@umn.edu) for new P&A employees. The email sent to the address could be answered by P&A Senate volunteers, who could direct new P&A employees to helpful resources at the University. Such an address exists now for new faculty as a means of providing quick answers to whatever questions are on their minds.

Clear Career Paths and Promotional Opportunities

Opportunities for employees to grow and develop in their careers and to move up in the workplace are essential for employee retention.

The University must provide a clear structure for career progression in P&A job classes that includes consistent, clear job titles and duties, easily understood career tracks, and salary ranges that are based on the internal and external employment markets. Creating this structure would help facilitate P&A employee transfers across the University and would allow the University to better describe to constituents the work that P&A employees do and the role that P&As play.

Career progression and wider opportunity for advancement are stated as explicit values of the Job Family Project, which the Office of Human Resources (OHR) is now implementing. OHR has completed work on three pilot job families in the last four years of the Job Family Project, with a fourth job family expected to be completed by the end of calendar year 2012. To date, thirteen additional job families remain to be classified. OHR is working with an outside consultant to determine how the remaining Job Family Project work can be done quickly and effectively. The P&A Senate urges OHR to complete this work as quickly as possible.

Professional Development Opportunities

P&A employees require professional development opportunities to advance and enhance their skills. Creating a central portal to on-campus staff development opportunities would be valuable for all of the U's employees. The Office of Human Resources might be ideally suited to collect and disseminate such a list of opportunities and to make links available on its website.

The P&A Senate is disheartened to note that two key development opportunities for P&A employees have been put on hold or discontinued. The President's Emerging Leaders program (PEL), which has provided a leadership growth opportunity for mid-level P&A and Civil Service/Bargaining Unit employees since 2001, is on indefinite hiatus by the Office of Human Resources. Additionally, an in-depth project management and process improvement training opportunity that was available to PEL graduates, the Transformational Leadership Program, was discontinued when the Office of Service and Continuous Improvement was disbanded several years ago.

The P&A Senate recommends that appropriate administrative offices reconstitute these important leadership and development opportunities or something similar.

Recognition of Efforts

When outstanding employees are recognized with University awards, the University demonstrates that it honors and rewards internal excellence.

University faculty and staff regularly attain prizes, awards, and honors from external organizations. For faculty, news of accomplishments and honors is often communicated by departments and colleges, as well as by the Office of the Vice Provost for Faculty & Academic Affairs (in *Brief*, on web sites, and on the Scholars Walk). P&A accomplishments are rarely publicly celebrated in the same way. The P&A Senate encourages all colleges, departments, and central administration to publicize honors earned by P&A employees in a manner similar to that of faculty. It also encourages the University to begin changing the culture so that P&As are nominated more frequently, thus bringing honor to the University and P&As by winning national and international awards.

P&A employees bring a range of talents and expertise to the University and are an invaluable resource for sharing information and engaging in public conversations. A wonderful example of calling upon the P&A employee knowledge base was including P&A panelists recently on the University Senate's Centennial Event. Along these lines, the Senate encourages development of a P&A lecture series throughout the academic year on timely and relevant topics.

Supporting P&A employees in targeted and concrete ways puts the University in an excellent position to achieve its recruitment, retention, and recognition goals. By supporting P&As in the ways listed in this document, the University of Minnesota will better realize its ideals as a premier place for all its employees to work, learn and engage.

**ANN HAGEN, CHAIR
P&A CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE**

DISCUSSION:

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

APPROVED

10. DISCUSSION WITH JASON ROHLOFF Number of University Administrators

Ann Hagen began the discussion by referencing the Wall Street Journal article and the University's IPEDS (Integrated Post-secondary Education Data System) data that was the basis for the article. This article has led to the legislature asking for a preliminary report from the University by March 15 on its spans and layers. A consultant will also be hired to benchmark the University against other Big Ten institutions in terms of IPEDS data.

Jason Rohloff then joined the meeting to discuss the legislative response to this year's budget request, the Wall Street Journal article, and what P&A staff can do to help the University. He noted that he hears about the University administration every day. At legislative hearings, the President has stated that the University spent hours with the reporter to explain the data since it is a complicated structure. However, the reporter chose to mischaracterize the University instead.

He noted that the IPEDS data is notoriously inaccurate which leads to institutions varying greatly each year and subjective reporting. Of the 1000 new administrators in the report, the University admitted that it incorrectly reported 300 in this group who are actually faculty. Also important to the legislature is how positions are funded. Of the remaining 700, over half are not paid with state dollars but instead are in positions funded through research grants. This analysis does not represent phenomenal growth in administrators using state funds.

The President has posted this response on his website and has provided articles for the Washington Post and the Star Tribune. At the same time he is explaining cost reductions that have already occurred by closing two administrative offices, reducing energy costs, and merging the two fundraising foundations. In this same period, the University has admitted 9000 more students, doubled completion rates, and is doing more with less.

He recommended writing to legislators or sending a letter to the editor of local newspapers. Everyone needs to tell the story for the University and defend the good things that are done here.

Jason Rohloff stated that the Governor's budget proposal, 87 percent of the total University request, was good news as it provides \$80 million on top of the base budget which allows for a tuition freeze, supports the full allocation for MnDRIVE, and provides the majority of the funding for the loan forgiveness program. The only piece not included is the accountability measures, which the University will work with the legislature to include in the final bill.

The legislature has asked for a report by March 15 on administrative costs. It will provide a snapshot of the current personnel structure in terms of spans and layers, and allow the University to explain cost trends in areas such as HR, IT, and procurement. The University will be hiring one consultant to complete the spans and layers analysis and a second consultant to benchmark the University in these areas. The second analysis will not be complete by March 15, but a progress report will be provided.

The House Higher Education Committee has asked for information in 12 different areas which the University will integrate into its overall presentation on how finances work. Two hearings

have already been had on this subject and two additional hearings are scheduled next week. Then MnSCU will present.

Q: If P&A write letters, should they include the percent of their position that is funded from state dollars?

A: Yes as the public perception is that every job at the University is completely funded by the state.

Matt Sumera, co-chair of the Operational Excellence Staff Work Group, noted that they have stories from the central administration level, but are looking to highlight successes from the college or unit level on operational excellence so he would appreciate being forwarded these stories.

Jason Rohloff seconded this point and noted that these stories are also incorporated in the President's talking points when speaking with local groups to highlight the impact from the University.

Q: The *Minnesota Daily* ran an article last semester which focused on administrators making over \$200,000 per year. Is this issue being dealt with separate from the issue of too many administrators in general?

A: The University received a request for salary information from the legislature so this issue is also being examined by many groups. The University is being transparent and providing information quickly to any group that makes a request. This is a fair question and one that requires better data to determine if these salaries are truly out-of-line with those at other institutions.

Q: After the spans and layers report is complete, it might show that one person has few reports due to the level of involvement required with students. Will the University make changes to look good politically or choose to do what is operationally best for the students? How will these issues be balanced?

A: Each case will be looked at individually to review the core functions of the job and the benefit provided to students under the current structure. If a benefit can be seen, changes will not be made. However the first step is to have this information.

Q: When comparing the University to peer institutions, the ratio of administrators to students has been in the University's favor. Will salaries will be only distinction between the top administrators and the rank and file variety?

A: The University already has a list of its 41 top-paid administrators. When these salaries are benchmarked across peers, there is no one at the University on the high end of the salary distribution; most are in the middle or low ranges.

Q: Is the legislature considering that it has already decreased its allocation to the University?

A: They know that the state allocation has already decreased by \$140 million and the University was able to raise this amount through other sources to continue to deliver a quality education. The University continues to remind legislators that Minnesota funding for higher education is on the same trajectory as Louisiana and Michigan, which is not a group with which the University wants to be included. The University is also trying to bring legislators to campus to connect with it emotionally through the students and staff that they meet.

Q: Has MnSCU been asked for the same administrative accounting?

A: No.

Q: As there are no remedial courses offered at the University, does this influence the discussion?

A: The University hears this argument as well and the one that all Minnesota students should be able to attend the University. They want a guarantee, which cannot be done, in a time when the demand is great.

Q: When use of funds is an issue, how can the University justify spending resources on outside consultants to conduct the analyses that are requested?

A: The legislative request asked for an outside consultant to provide an objective opinion and the University agreed as this will be an important factor in how the report is received.

Jason Rohloff reminded senators that if the University does not tell its story, no one else will. Legislators listen to their constituents, so everyone should be vocal talking about how it educates students and brings research dollars to the state.

11. TOBACCO-FREE TWIN CITIES CAMPUS Discussion

David Golden, Chair of the Social Concerns Committee, and Ferd Schlapper, Director of Boynton Health Service, joined the meeting to discuss a proposal for a tobacco-free Twin Cities campus as part of creating a healthier environment on campus. They walked the senators through a presentation to provide information. They are looking for feedback and input from major stakeholders on campus and are gathering support before presenting the proposal to the President.

Q: What is the plan for roll-out of this proposal?

A: 12-18 months would be required to complete planning for implementation so they hope to have a package to present by the end of this academic year so that this plan could start in fall 2014.

Q: From where was the data collected for this presentation?

A: A survey was sent in December to a random University sample. The response rate was 28 percent for students and 36 percent for faculty/staff.

Ann Hagen thanked them for the presentation and noted that they could be invited back at a later meeting to answer questions.

12. P&A SENATE OLD BUSINESS

NONE

13. P&A SENATE NEW BUSINESS

NONE

14. P&A SENATE ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 11:32 am.

**Rebecca Hippert
Abstractor**