

SENATE CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

November 13, 2014

Minutes of the Meeting

These minutes reflect discussion and debate at a meeting of a committee of the University of Minnesota Senate; none of the comments, conclusions, or actions reported in these minutes reflect the views of, nor are they binding on, the Senate, the Administration, or the Board of Regents.

[In these minutes: Enterprise System Upgrade Project (ESUP) Update, Employee Engagement Survey, Conversation with President Kaler]

Present: Rebecca Ropers-Huilman (chair), Chris Uggen (vice chair), Katherine Cramer, Susanne Vandergon, William Durfee, Eva von Dassow, Gary Cohen, Colin Campbell, Dale Carpenter, James Cloyd, Janet Ericksen, Joe Konstan, Robert Stewart

Regrets: Gordon Fisher, Susan Wick, Karen Mesce, Jean Wyman, Martin Caride, Nick Dalton

Absent: Bill O'Neill, Jigna Desai, Laddie Arnold, Cedric Citrowske, Valkyrie Jensen, Olivia Stiller

Others attending: Gary Gardner, Ryan Olson

Guests: Vice President for Human Resources Kathy Brown; Jennifer Engler, manager, Employee Engagement; and Brandon Sullivan, director, Leadership & Talent Development; and President Eric Kaler

1. Katherine Cramer, chair, P&A Consultative Committee (PACC), convened the meeting, welcomed those present and called for a round of introductions. Following introductions, she reminded members that in the spirit of shared governance that she, Bill O'Neill, chair, Civil Service Consultative Committee (CSCC), and Professor Rebecca Ropers-Huilman, chair, Faculty Consultative Committee (FCC), will be co-leading this year's SCC meetings.

Next, Ms. Cramer welcomed today's guests from the Office of Human Resources - Kathy Brown, vice president, Jennifer Engler, manager, Employee Engagement, and Brandon Sullivan, director, Leadership & Talent Development, who were invited to provide an Enterprise System Upgrade Project (ESUP) update and to talk about the Employee Engagement Survey.

2. Enterprise System Upgrade Project (ESUP) Update and the Employee Engagement Survey: Vice President Brown began with a brief ESUP update from an Office of Human Resources (OHR) perspective. She noted that the project is on schedule and under budget at this point in time. Altogether there will be a total of six test moves and currently test move five is underway. The sixth test move will take place in January 2015 and there is a planned go-live date of mid-February. She then highlighted a few of the relevant changes to the system:

- Time, labor and absence management will be tracked online in the system. Time approval will also be done online.
- Appointment data in the system will be simplified so all employees will have only one primary appointment.
- A reduction in the number of customized add-ons in favor of tried and true package solutions.

Following her update, Vice President Brown solicited members' questions, which included:

- Will the payroll system be completely upgraded? Yes, said Vice President Brown, the upgrade is virtually a reinstallation of the Human Resource Management System (HRMS).
- Are people being trained to use the new system? Training began on October 15, explained Vice President Brown. The goal is to have all those who need to use the system trained before the go-live date. Training and support will also continue after the go-live date to ensure that people have the tools they need to do their jobs.

Hearing no further questions, Vice President Brown introduced her colleagues Jennifer Engler, manager, Employee Engagement; and Brandon Sullivan, director, Leadership & Talent Development, who would provide information about the Employee Engagement Survey and the role of the Leadership and Talent Development department. Ms. Cramer thanked Vice President Brown for the ESUP date.

Ms. Cramer said at the September Board of Regents meeting Mr. Sullivan and Dean Schwartz from the Humphrey School of Public Affairs described how Dean Schwartz is using the survey results to close what he referred to as a "power gap." A main objective for the Senate Consultative Committee (SCC) this year is to address the Strategic Plan, and Ms. Cramer said she believes this question is related to that objective. In Ms. Cramer's opinion, there needs to be additional collaboration between faculty and staff given power gaps exist across the campus. She asked what steps are being taken to address this issue University-wide.

Mr. Sullivan said to the extent that power gaps exist in colleges and units, it is ultimately the colleges and units that are responsible for addressing them. The role for the Office of Human Resources as it relates to the Employee Engagement Survey results is to give voice to faculty and staff around issues identified in the survey. Faculty and staff should be encouraged to share their thoughts and perspectives on issues of importance.

In 2015, said Mr. Sullivan, he and Ms. Engler will be meeting with the deans, chancellors and vice presidents to share the survey results for their respective units. OHR will work with the senior leaders and provide them with tools, resources and guidance around actions to take.

Professor Uggen commented that he has heard that there is not enough transparency in disseminating the survey results. Having said this, is there any University-wide discussion about a "sunshine policy" on the survey results. This raises an important issue, noted Mr. Sullivan, since ultimately the purpose of the survey is for the results to be shared within each unit. This, unfortunately, did not happen in all units last year. However, it is the expectation that in units where at least 10 faculty and/or staff took the survey (survey data cannot be broken down in units with fewer than 10 responses) that the results are shared. Once shared the unit can decide what action, if any, needs to be taken. This year, a concerted effort is being made to encourage leadership to share the results with their unit.

Professor Carpenter asked what is meant by “power gap?” Mr. Sullivan explain that this is not a term he has used, but rather a term that Dean Schwartz uses to describe what he was seeing in his school. Mr. Sullivan explained that some units have a significant difference in responses between faculty and staff; however, at the overall University level, the response differences are minimal.

What was this year’s survey response rate, asked Professor Gardner? The response rate was higher this year than last year, said Mr. Sullivan and noted the response was 68% for staff responded and 53% for faculty. Last year, the response rate was 57% for staff and 47% for faculty.

Professor Gardner said faculty and staff get bombarded with surveys throughout the year. Is there any assurance that filling out the survey will actually mean something? Is OHR doing any systematic tracking to look at impacts of the survey results? Mr. Sullivan agreed that survey fatigue is an issue, and so every effort is being made to measure things that are meaningful and that will lead to improvements in the environment. The survey is not intended to be an administrative exercise, but to be an exercise in providing meaningful data on the environment that action can be taken on. OHR, said Mr. Sullivan, is collecting examples of actions that are being taken within the colleges.

Professor Ropers-Huilman commented that there are also things that impact engagement at the broader University level. Who is paying attention to experiences that cut across the institution and how is this data being measured and recorded, e.g., how are faculty and staff of color experiencing the campus differently than white faculty and staff, and why isn’t this data being shared? Yes, said Mr. Sullivan, this data has been looked at and has been shared with the Campus Climate Work Group (<http://campusclimate.umn.edu/campus-climate-work-group>) and the deans. The challenge around this issue is who is empowered to do something about it at a system level. This is an issue that warrants discussion and action locally as well as centrally. For example, the survey results, said Mr. Sullivan, indicated there would be value in looking at management and leadership skills as well as development. OHR is looking to help support leadership development across colleges and units and, as a result, this is one of the reasons the unit that was formerly called Organizational Effectiveness has been reshaped into Leadership and Talent Development.

Professor Ropers-Huilman asked when will faculty and staff see the data. It is not just deans and above who have an effect on campus climate, it is the entire University community. Mr. Sullivan replied that it is the deans and the Campus Climate Work Group who are tasked with taking action on the survey results and he would expect them to determine how best to share the data and information. Professor Durfee agreed with Professor Ropers-Huilman and reiterated the request that the data be shared more broadly. Professor Cohen added that sharing this information more broadly would serve to benefit department chairs who are responsible for hiring and retaining faculty of color. Professor Ropers-Huilman said that developing and maintaining a welcoming campus climate is the responsibility of the entire University community.

Ryan Olson asked if there is a student employee engagement survey. It seems like it would be worthwhile to turn student employment into meaningful professional development opportunities. Mr. Sullivan said there is a student engagement survey, but it is not run out of OHR and he does not believe it includes student employment questions. OHR explored the idea of including students in the engagement survey, but logistically it was not feasible.

Ms. Cramer thanked Mr. Sullivan for the engagement survey information.

3. **President Kaler:** Professor Ropers-Huilman welcomed President Kaler to the meeting. She said while a few questions were submitted to him ahead of time that he should feel free to talk about whatever is on his mind.

In response to a question about the challenges and obstacles related to the Strategic Plan, President Kaler began by explaining that there will be an alignment between the budget request to the legislature and the Strategic Plan. He reminded members that this year's request will once again advocate for a tuition freeze. If the legislature, however, does not fund this portion of the request, there will be no choice but to increase tuition.

Also in terms of the Strategic Plan, President Kaler admitted being somewhat concerned about inertia as an institution given it is always easier to do tomorrow what was done yesterday. In his opinion, he sees enormous opportunity around the Grand Challenges and this means inertia will need to be overcome and alignment to take place. Having said this, what does not worry him is a lack of enthusiasm for the Strategic Plan because when he talks with people there is an awareness of what the plan is about and an excitement about it.

Regarding a question about whether he will reconsider the Regents Scholarship and eliminate the 25% charge to employees who already have a degree, President Kaler said he feels strongly that there is a difference between an undergraduate degree and a graduate degree, which is more of a private benefit. In President Kaler's opinion, paying 25% towards a graduate degree, or, especially an elective course, is not asking too much of employees to have "skin in the game."

In terms of a question about diversity, President Kaler agreed the campus needs to be considerably more diverse. He added that he is optimistic that progress will be made in this area, especially under the leadership of the Vice President for Equity and Diversity Katrice Albert. He noted that he has tasked a work group to draft a report on the current state of the campus climate. Diversifying the campus is everyone's job, and governance groups have a special responsibility to move this discussion forward and ask hard questions about hiring practices, etc.

Professor von Dassow argued for restoring the Regents Scholarship to 100%. The Regents Scholarship offered many benefits beyond the small amount it cost the University to offer. For example, it allowed employees to take courses purely out of intellectual curiosity. This sustained many low-enrolling courses so they were available to degree-seeking students. Employees are no longer able to pursue such interests because of costs, and the consequence is the withering of curricular offerings. The decision to charge employees 25% was a penny-wise, pound-foolish decision, especially if the University wishes to carry out its fundamental mission, which is intellectual.

What steps has the University taken to deal with the change in control in the legislature, asked Professor Carpenter? Will there be changes in how the University messages its funding request, etc.? President Kaler said the change in control in the legislature was anticipated. There are no plans to change the University's budget request, which has already been approved by the Board of Regents. The University has a good relationship with Representative Kurt Daudt, state House speaker-elect, and will continue to develop relationships with legislators to convey to them the great asset the University of Minnesota is to

the state. President Kaler added that a search is underway for a new leader for Government and Community Relations. An important component of this job is the ability to work across party lines because it is critical the University's position be non-partisan.

Professor Campbell commented that unlike a number of other departments, department heads in the Medical School stay in their positions for a long time. While faculty are well intentioned and supportive of hiring diverse faculty, until the senior leadership is held accountable, nothing will change. President Kaler agreed and said that pressure from above and below will facilitate a change in practice. Additionally, resources need to be allocated to support objectives. At the end of the day, faculty hire faculty. Faculty need to hold deans and department heads accountable for having a diverse candidate pool. He noted that the School of Dentistry recently hired a new associate dean and his wife, who are two of the most distinguished African American dentists in the United States.

Professor Cohen commented on the passing of Regent Larson, and what a great loss this was for the University. President Kaler agreed, and noted that he is confident that there will be a good pool of candidates to fill the open Board of Regents' seats.

Professor Cloyd asked what is happening on the national scene in terms of budget cuts for higher education. President Kaler said funding is variable and really comes down to politics and the economy. State economies play a significant role in higher education funding. Fortunately, the State of Minnesota's economy is doing well and has one of the lowest unemployment rates in the country. Professor Cloyd suggested using this fact to help recruit new faculty. President Kaler said this is a good idea.

Professor Cohen asked about federal funding for scientific research. President Kaler said static at best, which means the University will likely lose about 2.5% - 3% in purchasing power a year.

Is the MnDRIVE funding secure over the next few years, asked Professor Durfee? Yes, said President Kaler. Professor Durfee asked when President Kaler reports to the state how the money was spent, will this be a good story. President Kaler said he is confident he will have an excellent report to share. Vice President Herman has done a good job managing MnDRIVE and has gotten a lot of faculty buy-in.

When looking at the University's competitive position against its peers, where is the University in terms of its total compensation package for faculty and staff, asked Professor Konstan? President Kaler said that when looking at total compensation, the University is in the middle, but when looking at salary, the University is below the middle. The University continues to talk about rebalancing this position. This is why being able to give salary increases is so important.

In light of time, Ms. Cramer thanked President Kaler for this time.

4. **Adjournment:** Hearing no further business, Ms. Cramer adjourned the meeting.

Renee Dempsey
University Senate

