

CIVIL SERVICE CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE  
Minutes of the Meeting  
January 29, 2015

[These notes 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 notes represent the views of, nor are they binding on, the Senate, the Administration or the Board of Regents.]

In these minutes: [Committee on Committees and Civil Service Senate membership; Update on Human Resources issues; employee engagement survey; communications plan update; old and new business]

PRESENT: Bill O'Neill, chair; Gordon Fisher, vice-chair; Kevin Prigge, Duane Orlovski, Terri Wallace, Jean Wang, John Paton, Patti Dion, Lynn Hegrenes

REGRETS: None

ABSENT: Carolyn Davidson

GUESTS: Brandon Sullivan, director, Office of Human Resources, Leadership and Talent Development

O'Neill welcomed the committee.

### **1. Committee on Committees and Civil Service Senate Membership**

Chair O'Neill reviewed the initiative wherein two Civil Service representatives would be appointed to the Committee on Committees. He charged each committee member with providing two names for potential candidates by the February 26 meeting. Fisher reiterated that this was a building year for Civil Service and they were working to make it a more action-oriented body. Membership in the Civil Service Senate is quite depleted, Fisher said, and if this was not rectified the civil service governance body would cease to matter and dissolve. Fisher said remedying the situation included the communications plan, membership on Committee on Committees, and filling senate seats. Fisher then distributed a call list to the committee members with discussion points. O'Neill and Fisher charged committee members with three action items: recommendations for people to serve on Committee on Committees; recommendations for people to serve on the civil service senate; and reporting issues that affect constituents.

### **2. Update on Human Resources issues**

Patti Dion, director, Office of Human Resources (OHR), updated the committee on the job classification system redesign. OHR is in the final stages of the student services job family, with approximately 1100 positions. Dion noted that final changes to mapping of positions would not be able to happen until after the Enterprise System Upgrade Project (ESUP) was live, which was projected for early April. The final mapping is estimated to be concluded two months after the go live.

Fisher said that some of his constituents had expressed concern regarding transparency in the process. He said the committee would like to meet with Kathy Brown, vice president, Office of Human Resources, to learn how the committee can help out in the field and support the process with its constituents. Dion suggested it might be easier to schedule a meeting for a smaller setting, but that any communication partnering would be most welcome.

Dion went on to say that the research job family was also underway, and the focus groups would start in mid-February. Research involves approximately 2,700 positions, and Dion noted there was some difficulty in tracking down all the position descriptions. They were still working on how to “bucket” the work, as there is bench research, human subject research, and animal subject research.

O’Neill said there was concern from his constituents that they did not understand the complexity of the reclassifications. Dion said reclassifications did not affect the work that people were doing. Fisher pointed out that the stakes are higher than just job titles for many people. It is a major issue when people’s compensation and benefits are affected, and if there is a mass exodus with an entire group or unit of employees, Fisher said. Dion said that those were legal issues that could not be changed. If people are being moved from nonexempt positions, it falls under the Fair Labor Standards Act and it is because the job duties, as described to OHR, are related to exemption status. Dion noted the Minnesota Public Employee Labor Relations Act governs the University and how the work is bucketed. She emphasized that they were not trying to move people out of civil service into bargaining unit positions unless the work was initially misclassified or the work had changed. Fisher said one of his concerns was with people being reclassified as a result of them not having experience or training in writing job descriptions. Accurately representing job descriptions is a skill that not everyone has and appropriate guidance had been hit and miss, he said. Dion said OHR offers information on how to write job descriptions as required by the reclassification project, and would also work with people individually. She acknowledged that this assistance should have been offered earlier in the process.

The committee further discussed the process. Paton discussed his experience with job descriptions and inconsistencies in them. There were those descriptions that happened early in the process, and the process subsequently evolved. But there was no opportunity to go back and reevaluate those that occurred at the beginning of the process. Wang asked about the possibility of revising one’s job description that might end up being among multiple job families. Dion said they had relied on the human resources leads in the departments to tell them which position should go in which job family. She emphasized that with anything, there was variability in the commitment to the process.

O’Neill thanked Dion for the information.

### **3. Employee Engagement Survey**

O’Neill welcomed Brandon Sullivan, director, Office of Human Resources, Leadership and Talent Development, to discuss the employee engagement survey that took place in October 2014. Sullivan distributed the executive summary of total results to the committee, and highlighted salient points:

- Faculty and staff responded at an even greater rate than the record levels of 2013, indicating employees are invested in the engagement process and want their voices to be heard
  - 2,484 faculty responses (52% participation, up 5 points from 2013)
  - 9,598 staff responses (68% participation, up 8 points from 2013)
- Faculty and staff continue to have very high levels of commitment and dedication while also reporting barriers to productivity
  - Commitment and dedication (pride, motivation, intent to stay):
    - Faculty scores remained strong at 73% favorable (same as 2013)
    - Staff scores increased 1 point to a strong 74% favorable
  - Effective environment (efficient, productive workplace)
    - Faculty scores declined 1 point to 64% favorable
    - Staff scores remained unchanged at 63% favorable

Sullivan also noted engagement action: most faculty and staff have not yet seen evidence that their voices are being heard. Only 24% of faculty and 35% of staff report that action was taken on issues raised in the 2013 survey.

Sullivan reviewed the recommendations listed on the report:

1. Identify examples of units successfully addressing issues from the 2013 survey and share these case studies across the University
2. Ensure that employee feedback on the University's strong culture of respect and empowerment is communicated to internal audiences and informs recruiting efforts
3. Increase accountability for faculty and staff review and discussion of engagement results
4. Identify specific barriers to productivity to address in connection with the strategic plan
5. Create more opportunities for discussion of strategies and goals at the department level and between department leaders and individual faculty and staff
6. Explore concerns about teamwork and collaboration at the department and college levels
7. Further explore root causes of faculty demographic differences and potential actions to address them

Sullivan said he and his team were these sharing results with units, and making sure the results were shared down to department level. He acknowledged that with the prior survey there were varying degrees of how the results were shared within department and units. Sullivan said they were encouraging leaders take the engagement information to establish focus for work already in progress and plan goal-setting activities.

The committee asked if the numbers in the report were broken down by classification, and Orlovski said it would be helpful to have a better grasp on how Civil Service employees responded to the survey. Sullivan said there was not a significant difference among employee groups, and that it was the day-to-day work that affected responses among employees.

The committee brought up various points in the discussion:

- Paton said he thought there would be different types of involvement based on the top-down structure, and seeing the breakouts would be important.
- Wang added it would be good to know if Civil Service was giving different responses than P&A, as well as comparing the number of respondents from each group.
- O’Neill pointed out that such breakdowns would allow Civil Service representation to identify issues with its constituency. Sullivan said the results were broken down between faculty and staff, and that there were similar patterns.
- Wallace asked if it was possible to get the results through a University email rather than a third party. Sullivan said they were working with the Office of Information Technology to address that challenge.
- Fisher requested to see the data broken down to see if the trends align, and that it would assist civil service’s role in supporting the University’s mission. Fisher said civil service would then be in a unique position of augmenting the work of the survey and not supplanting or undermining it.
- Fisher said the most recent survey asked if the respondent had heard about previous survey, and said he was interested in knowing how people had responded to this question.

Sullivan asked for a couple of weeks to provide the data regarding that as well as the P&A and civil service breakdowns. The committee asked about intentions to use the data, and pointed out there were not a lot of resources to change some of the issues the survey may have revealed. It was asked if there were examples of successful implementation of changes in other departments, and if there could be resources for improvements. Sullivan noted that a community of practice was being created and the people were being identified to create “best practices.” He added that leaders needed to be discussing the issues publicly, and he acknowledged the conversations were raising difficult issues.

O’Neill thanked Sullivan for the information.

#### **4. Update on communications plan**

Duane Orlovski recapped the draft of the communications plan, and demonstrated the blog page he had set up. The blog will have a spotlight or profile piece, and will link back to the University Senate’s civil service page. Orlovski again emphasized people were needed to write stories, and noted that profiles did not need to be strictly about civil service people; the stories could be about anyone with a connection to civil service. The link to the blog will be sent out with the email announcing it, and Orlovski said that while emails may be the preferred method for many people it doesn’t have to be the only method.

To O’Neill’s query, Orlovski said that in the coming weeks he would be finishing the story on the Office for Conflict Resolution, and O’Neill was to send his welcome piece to Orlovski. Orlovski said he would work with O’Neill and Fisher to adjust the work plan and recalibrate due dates. The goal is to launch in mid-February.

#### **5. Old and new Business**

O'Neill reported that when he reached out to civil service employees on other committees to report back to CSCC, he discovered there was not a lot of participation. He said these people were on the radar to attend the next committee's next meeting.

O'Neill said he and Fisher had had conversations with the Senate Office about changing the requirement that a person be employed for two years before he or she could serve on the Civil Service Senate. Fisher introduced a motion to change the bylaw; Hegrenes seconded; the motion passed unanimously. It will now move to the Civil Service Senate for approval.

Fisher asked that at its next meeting, the committee discuss its response to individual issues brought to them versus those germane to the civil service constituency as a whole.

Hearing no further business, O'Neill adjourned the meeting.

Mary Jo Pehl  
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