

FACULTY CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

March 12, 2015

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: Discussion with Provost Hanson, Organization of Graduate and Professional Education at the University of Minnesota, Employee Engagement Survey and Use of Data]

Present: Rebecca Ropers-Huilman (chair), Chris Uggen (vice chair), Eva von Dassow, Gary Cohen, Gary Gardner, Maria Gini, Joseph Konstan, Susan Wick, Colin Campbell, Jigna Desai, Allan Erbsen, Janet Ericksen, Jean Wyman

Regrets: William Durfee, Kathleen Krichbaum, James Cloyd, Karen Mesce

Absent: Linda Bearinger

Guests: Provost Karen Hanson; Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate Education Henning Schroeder; Vice President for Human Resources Kathy Brown; Brandon Sullivan, director, Leadership & Talent Development; Jennifer Engler, employee engagement manager, Leadership & Talent Development

Others attending: Deb Cran, chief of staff, Office of the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs/Provost; Emily Lawrence, Associate to the Deputy Chief of Staff, Policy and Initiatives, Office of the President; Joe Schultz, deputy chief of staff, Office of the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs/Provost

1. **Call to order** – Professor Ropers-Huilman convened the meeting and called for a round of introductions. She then turned to Provost Hanson who was invited to talk about the Strategic Plan plus any other items she is interested in sharing with the committee.

2. **Discussion with Provost Hanson:** Provost Hanson began by reporting that she is planning to revamp the process for decanal reviews. She said she would like to connect these reviews more closely with each school's Faculty Consultative Committee (FCC) equivalent. Provost Hanson noted that there is dissatisfaction with the current process. Provost Hanson said she would like to have a process that is fair to the deans who are being reviewed and also useful to the colleges for their planning purposes.

In response to a question about the frequency of the reviews from Professor Cohen, Provost Hanson said she envisions a "pulse review" would be conducted at the three-year mark to make sure everything is on track and then to hold the first significant review at five years. This schedule would give the deans time to launch initiatives and see results.

Part of the reason the reviews have gone off schedule is because they are done centrally by a central review committee. Instead, she would like to see the reviews done in the colleges where the deans serve, which would likely help to keep the reviews on schedule.

Professor Konstan said that in the process being discussed, it is important that any involved internal governance body not be one appointed by the dean because this could undermine the review process. Secondly, he noted that any decanal review should be looking at how well the college is doing compared to how it should be doing. Most of the current questions have to do with process versus performance. Provost Hanson agreed and said she would like FCC members to start thinking about core questions they would like asked during the review, and, as needed, the schools could tailor the questions to incorporate their idiosyncrasies.

Professor Uggen added that having spoken to the central review committee on behalf of the faculty in his department, it would be better if this responsibility was tied to a particular position. Doing this would likely make those who speak to the review committee less reticent to do so and make the process feel less personal. To avoid this concern, Provost Hanson suggested having the responsible administrator who sets up the review work with the school's FCC. To be clear, said Provost Hanson, she does not see the schools' FCCs as evaluating the dean, but working in concert with her office to develop an evaluation that is appropriate. The responsibility for evaluating the deans rests with her.

Collegiate governance varies substantially from college to college, said Professor von Dassow. Having said that, it may be necessary to revisit the collegiate governance process to ensure it is robust enough to do the kind of job that Provost Hanson envisions. In Professor von Dassow's opinion, the CLA governance structure, as currently constituted, would not be able to do this well. Provost Hanson said this is an interesting point and she is hopeful that needed improvements in collegiate governance will come out of the revamped decanal review process, but, if it does not, it may be necessary for every college to have an elected policy committee. The point is well taken, and there will need to be assurance that each school has solid governance structure.

Moving on, Provost Hanson noted that she thought she was clear when the Salary Equity Review Committees (SERCs) were created that these committees would be permanent, standing committees in each of the colleges, but there seems to be some confusion around this matter. She said Vice Provost for Faculty and Academic Affairs would be sending out information to the deans concerning the expectations for the SERCs. Professor Wyman noted that in the School of Nursing there similar numbers of clinical track faculty and tenure/tenure-track faculty, and that the clinical track faculty salaries are much lower. This has created substantial salary inequities; however, the School of Nursing's SERC was instructed to only look at their tenure/tenure-track faculty salaries and not their clinical track faculty salaries. In her opinion, deans should be directed to have their SERC look at all faculty salaries in their department. Provost Hanson said each school needs to clearly decide what guidelines they want to use and to set their own parameters.

Professor Wyman said she believes the instructions should come from the Provost's Office.

Professor Campbell said, at least in the Medical School, there is a lack of transparency around the SERC process. He assumes that an objective of the process is not only to achieve equity, but to make sure people understand the importance of salary equity. Professor Wyman added that it is clear that different deans respond to calls for transparency differently; some schools are more transparent about their processes than others. Guidelines outlining what information can be shared should be developed because while the SERCs made their recommendations to their deans, no one really knows what changes, if any, were made.

An issue relevant to this topic is whether there is diversity in the academic staff of the dean, noted Professor Gardner. Deans need to be accountable for diversity within their own staff.

Is there a parallel SERC process for faculty-like P&A staff, asked Professor von Dassow? She noted that anecdotally she has become aware of serious salary disparities among these employees. The principle of equity should not be for regular faculty only. Provost Hanson said that this is a good point.

Next, Provost Hanson reported that the deans had requested and received a presentation from the Office of the General Counsel on the legal boundaries associated with diversity and hiring. She noted they were given good information and asked many questions.

Provost Hanson also reported she has had a number of conversations with the Women's Faculty Cabinet (WFC) about enhancing caregiver support benefits at the University of Minnesota. The WFC has been vetting a draft Faculty Teaching Relief proposal to a number of groups to gather input. In general, Provost Hanson said she is supportive of the draft proposal and has informed the deans about it as well.

As mentioned at an earlier FCC meeting, Provost Hanson noted that the Strategic Plan is being incorporated into the budget planning process. She acknowledged, however, the communication on this could have been handled better, and, therefore, more will be done to keep employees informed about what is happening.

Professor Cohen said he has heard that colleges are being asked to reallocate some of their funds in order to build up a "war chest" for initiatives associated with the Strategic Plan. To be clear, said Provost Hanson, the colleges are not being taxed in order to build up a Strategic Plan implementation fund, but are being asked to demonstrate how they are pursuing either their own strategic priorities or campus priorities that support the Strategic Plan. She agreed that communication around this matter needs to be articulated more clearly.

Professor Desai said she knows of faculty who were interested in proposing Grand Challenges courses, but decided to give up on the idea because they were being told they

needed to get releases and funding from their college. If this is the case, small departments are disadvantaged because they cannot afford to do this; it would require them to do all the things they are currently doing and more. Provost Hanson said the point of a reallocation is not to have departments do all the things they are currently doing plus more. Instead, it is for departments to stop doing some things that are not aligned with their college's strategic plan or the University's Strategic Plan, and put their efforts elsewhere. Provost Hanson noted that especially at the onset of this process as Grand Challenge courses are being developed, some colleges will have more capacity to do so than others.

Professor Gardner recalled the reallocation efforts of the early 1990s, which incentivized departments to think strategically over a 5-year period about new things that they could be doing rather than focusing on cuts, which creates negativity. Departments were instructed to think positively about moving forward and changing direction rather than just looking at the current year's budget. Provost Hanson asked members to remember the Strategic Plan implementation is just the beginning of a process. The current reallocation efforts are intended to get departments to plan in alignment with their collegiate and/or the campus' priorities.

No department can choose to just stop doing something that constitutes its core mission, said Professor von Dassow. The process for new course approval in this context prohibits departments from producing new initiatives that align with the Strategic Plan. After all, developing new curriculum takes time. Grand Challenges curriculum appears to be a process of layering more icing over a diminishing cake. Professor von Dassow added that curriculum needs stability too, and students should not have to worry about what courses will be offered from year to year. As an institution, the curriculum needs to be built upon from one year to the next and the new course process does not seem to be facilitating this. Provost Hanson said while she understands these concerns, she noted that the Grand Challenges courses were never intended to redo the entire curriculum, but to give faculty the opportunity to do team teaching. She remarked that in all disciplines things change over time and this initiative allows for curricular experimentation and collaboration.

Professor Ropers-Huilman thanked Provost Hanson for a good discussion.

3. Update and discussion about rethinking post-baccalaureate education – Professor Ropers-Huilman welcomed Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate Education Henning Schroeder who was invited along with Provost Hanson to talk about post-baccalaureate education at the University of Minnesota. Provost Hanson reported that Joe Schultz, deputy chief of staff, Office of the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs/Provost, has been leading an effort to identify issues related to post-baccalaureate education. Deputy Chief of Staff Schultz took a couple minutes to describe the process that is being used for identifying the issues. The next step, he reported, is the formation of two advisory groups comprised of faculty from the graduate and professional sides of the organization to review the current model and identify the positive and negative aspects, and then, to use this learning opportunity to recommend adjustments to the current model

to Provost Hanson, and invite the broader community to also share their thoughts on any proposed changes.

Since the Graduate School restructuring in 2009 – 2010, said Vice Provost Schroeder, an ongoing struggle has been the fact that the University has a huge post-baccalaureate endeavor that applies the same metrics to every program. In order to apply metrics fairly to the various programs there needs to be a distinction between research-oriented Ph.D. and master degree programs and degrees with different goals and emphases. As he mentioned to the FCC in January when he met with the committee, when talking about graduate education, the general public often think about physicians, lawyers, pharmacists, etc. Rarely are graduate students and postdocs thought of as the pillars of an institution's research endeavor. The fact that graduate students are contributing to the knowledge base of society is often overlooked. Many people do not understand why the public should support graduate education. By distinguishing between the different types of programs, it will be easier to advocate for the different needs, strengths and contributions that research-based and professional degrees make that benefit society.

In response to a question from Professor Ropers-Huilman about the timeline for making the organizational changes proposed in the draft plan of post-baccalaureate education, Provost Hanson said the next academic year, barring any unforeseen problems.

Professor Konstan made three points:

- There is a problem with syntactically separating a "research-based" graduate degree from a non-research-based degree. It is clear that the Ph.D. is a research degree, but degrees such as the M.S. or M.A. are not always research-based. There are professional master's degrees with these titles, and this proposal seems to judge and treat them as research degrees when in fact they are run and judged by the fields as professional degrees.
- A number of professional programs also have graduate programs. Having said this, how can this be managed in such a way as to not double the work of the person who is running multiple programs within a unit?
- Historically, professional student tuition, in part, supported aspects of graduate education that primarily benefited graduate students. Graduate student tuition is already too high as is the cost of employing graduate students and this could all be made worse if professional education is made cheaper.

Provost Hanson said those involved in looking at graduate education at the University are mindful of these issues. Regarding the under-resourcing of graduate education, this can be mitigated but will entail finding other sources of reallocation at the University. She added that different metrics for different programs are appropriate, but the current structure makes this difficult. Lastly, regarding the first question about the different types of degrees, the expectation is that the consultations with the colleges will remedy this problem because the colleges will decide where their degrees will be housed.

If changes to the graduate education structure are to be implemented by the next academic year, are there plans to communicate this at the Faculty Senate this spring,

asked Professor Cohen? Yes, said Provost Hanson, this can be shared with the Faculty Senate.

In Professor Gardner's opinion, it will be important to make clear whether graduate programs are run by the faculty in those programs or whether they are subject to decisions by the collegiate administration under which they exist. He added that in a number of interdisciplinary programs, some of the envisioned administrative changes could be prejudicial to graduate students who are not working with an advisor in the college where the program is located. This issue should be thought about program by program. Provost Hanson agreed that this is on the list of issues that needs to be addressed. Vice Provost Schroeder noted that some programs that are interdisciplinary and do not yet have a collegiate home are still in the Graduate School to protect interdisciplinary endeavors that span more than one college. This is particularly important for interdisciplinary research and instruction. Professor Konstan said this mechanism is more or less broken and to support his point cited an example of a program that spans multiple colleges and struggles because it has no teaching assistant (TA) slots to support its graduate students.

In light of time, Professor Ropers-Huilman thanked Provost Hanson and Vice Provost Schroeder for a good discussion.

4. Employee Engagement Survey and use of the data: Professor Ropers-Huilman welcomed Vice President for Human Resources Kathy Brown; Brandon Sullivan, director, Leadership & Talent Development; and Jennifer Engler, and employee engagement manager, Leadership & Talent Development. Before beginning, Professor Ropers-Huilman called for a round of introductions.

Mr. Sullivan reported that the second annual Employee Engagement Survey was administered last October to all faculty and staff systemwide. The response rate to the survey was 52% for faculty and almost 70% for staff. Over the last eight weeks, he and Ms. Engler have been meeting with the deans, chancellors and vice presidents to share their respective unit-level/college-level data. The goal of the engagement process is to provide feedback and information from faculty and staff to colleges and units to help inform their decision-making. It is a tool for building an effective work environment at the local level. A copy of the executive summary of the Employee Engagement Survey results was distributed to members.

Next, Mr. Sullivan walked members through the four major themes that emerged from the survey:

1. Differences in engagement responses by race/ethnicity – The results suggested a need to visibly prioritize diversity and inclusion at the department and college levels and to identify meaningful ways to demonstrate this commitment.
2. Differences in engagement responses by gender – The results suggested a need for more support and recognition for female faculty.
3. Differences in engagement responses by rank – These results suggested that a large number of associate professors face significant and increasing challenges to

their productivity. The data also suggested a need for greater access to mentoring from highly productive senior faculty as well as more regular and useful performance feedback and greater clarity about how to align their work with department and college priorities.

4. Differences in engagement responses by years of service – The findings suggested a need for more support for new faculty beyond the first 12 – 24 months, which could have implications for faculty retention as well as for creating a workplace that demonstrates an ongoing commitment to diversity and inclusion.

Salient questions/comments included:

- There were a number of questions from various members about the sample sizes and the denominator. Vice President Brown reported there are just under 3,000 total faculty at the University of Minnesota systemwide.
- Mr. Sullivan said this survey is not intended to be a precision instrument, and he would never encourage anyone to make decisions or prioritize issues based on a few percentage points. The data is meant to paint a picture of some of the challenges.
- Have the survey results been statistically adjusted for each college, asked Professor Uggen? It would be instructive to see the data both with and without controls, particularly any residual differences. Mr. Sullivan said that he and Ms. Engler are working individually with each college on their results, and acknowledged there are definitely differences by college. Regarding looking at the data with and without controls, Mr. Sullivan commented that in his opinion he is not sure if the effort it would take to do this would pay off in terms of informing a different kind of action.
- Professor Konstan asked whether Mr. Sullivan is concerned about the overall numbers and the fact that half of the faculty respondents did not feel they are able to be as productive as they should be. While Mr. Sullivan said the numbers are lower than what he is accustomed to seeing, it is important to keep in mind the University is a different context too. Professor Ropers-Huilman asked Mr. Sullivan whether he is referring to other academic institutions or other kinds of organizations. Mr. Sullivan said that this is part of the challenge because there is not comparable data from other academic institutions. Professor Ropers-Huilman suggested that high-achieving people might yield negative responses on an item asking about whether or not they are as productive as they could be because respondents would naturally respond that they could always do more. She wondered if faculty, who are typically high-performing in their fields, would answer similarly.
- Professor Cohen voiced concern about various aspects of the survey noting it seems to be geared more towards the norms and expectations found in large corporations than to research universities. Mr. Sullivan said the survey was developed with input from a faculty advisory group and was aligned with research that has been done at the University on factors associated with highly productive departments research-wise.

- Professor Cohen questioned whether the survey should be conducted every year and asked if it would be conducted again next year. Yes, said Mr. Sullivan, the survey will be conducted next year. He noted that the survey results are intended to be input into discussion, and not an evaluation tool. Vice President Brown said the survey is quite short, and because there is not a lot of data on other research universities, the University will be using the results to measure against itself. To say there are no other instruments for measuring data against other institutions is not accurate, said Vice Provost Levine, who cited the Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education (COACHE) survey. Mr. Sullivan noted that after meeting with the deans and chancellors about their data, it is clear the survey data is serving to inform the colleges about issues they need to take action on. While the survey is not perfect, it presents an opportunity to use the information provided by faculty and staff to make improvements at the University. The survey, in Mr. Sullivan's opinion, provides some of the best data on what faculty and staff are experiencing in their departments and colleges.
- In the FCC meetings with the deans and department chairs, said Professor Ropers-Huilman, it came up repeatedly that conducting the survey every year is too often. She asked that consideration be given to conducting the survey less frequently than every year. In Mr. Sullivan's opinion, a tool like this survey will not be effective unless it is done regularly until there is demonstrated action. If the survey is removed before action is taken, he believes accountability will be lost.
- Professor Gini voiced concern over survey fatigue and conducting the survey annually. In response, Mr. Sullivan noted he would be more concerned about seeing no action taken from the results rather than survey fatigue. He added he is disappointed to hear the focus is on survey fatigue as opposed to what he sees as powerful information to address significant issues.
- Small departments do not get any data, said Professor Desai, and, as a result, the information they are given is not particularly helpful. She added she is uncertain whether the questions on the survey get at the real concerns. Framing questions around whether people are happy puts the responsibility on the department heads/chairs to fix problems that are uncovered, but does not address several important factors such as the structural issues that may create conditions for unhappiness. Chairs can be part of the problem too; yet they are being held responsible for situations that they have no means to fix. She said she has not heard a lot of enthusiasm that the survey is helpful.
- Professor Cohen asked what instructions Human Resources are giving to the deans and/or department chairs on using the survey results to help the departments. Ms. Engler noted that how the data is being rolled out varies from college to college. Human Resources, however, is being called upon by a number of colleges and departments to help them understand and take action on the results. There are resources available, e.g., public websites, online information on the vendor's website. Vice President Brown added that this is not a satisfaction survey, but an engagement survey, and these are two very different things. The survey is intended to be an action-oriented experience. A number of suggested actions are provided for every survey item needing attention. In addition, said

Vice President Brown, Mr. Sullivan and Ms. Engler are willing to work with any college and/or department who requests their assistance to put together a plan.

- Professor Uggen said he likes the idea of the survey being conducted annually and receiving the year-to-year data to help sort out the experience effects versus period or cohort effects. He suggested having senior leaders communicate the actions that are being taken to address the issues that have been identified would likely motivate faculty and staff to participate.
- In Professor Konstan's opinion, nothing changes fast enough at the University to warrant an annual survey after a baseline has been established. Vice President Brown agreed to a degree, but added she also believes that colleges and departments need to be prodded multiple times before they will take action; this is human nature. She noted that this discussion has been helpful in terms of getting a sense of how people are feeling about the survey in general. The goal is not to have the survey be a thorn in people's side, but to get people talking and engaged. There is a lot of science/research backing up this work. The Employee Engagement Survey is designed, noted Vice President Brown, to help the institution create a culture that is productive, creative, innovative – all the values that have been articulated in the Strategic Plan. She thanked members for their feedback.
- Beyond survey fatigue, said Professor Gardner, there is the issue of administrative burden. A lot of work is being passed down to faculty from various parts of the University. Vice President Brown acknowledged the comment and said this fact shows up in the survey data.
- A number of concerns identified in the survey, said Professor Desai, go beyond culture and are actually structural/systemic issues. The way the concerns are being communicated to department chairs/heads is in telling them to fix the problems but without any resources. She said she cannot fix racism in her department without shifts in how resources are being distributed. Mr. Sullivan thanked Professor Desai for her comments and noted that as he and Ms. Engler are meeting with the various colleges it is clear that some issues are local and need to be dealt with at a department or college level, and there are other issues that are systemic. People and groups with institution-wide roles will be identified to look into the systemic, broader institutional issues to address them and take action on them.
- In response to a comment from Professor Wick about Vice President Brown's earlier remarks about the survey being an engagement versus satisfaction survey, Mr. Sullivan responded that a number of the questions on the survey are drivers of engagement. These questions address factors that are important in increasing or decreasing engagement. He said he would be happy to share research on the survey.

In light of time, Mr. Sullivan and Ms. Engler distributed additional handouts containing data by ethnic group and gender to share with the committee. They asked that the group review the information and decide as a committee whether this discussion should be continued in more depth or not because they would be happy to come back.

Professor Ropers-Huilman encouraged members to visit the Leadership and Talent Development website to view the multitude of resources on the site. Vice Provost Levine commented that the COACHE survey results indicate the University of Minnesota is not that much different than its cohorts in terms of issues they are facing.

5. **Adjournment:** Hearing no further business, Professor Ropers-Huilman adjourned the meeting.

Renee Dempsey
University Senate