

[In these minutes: Discussion of alternative structure for supporting postbaccalaureate education, Reports, Letter to President on Regents Scholarship]

P&A CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE MEETING MAY 11, 2015

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

Present: Katherine Dowd (Chair), Sherri Boone, Etty DeVeaux, Sandra Ecklein, Linda Eells, Kevin Haroian, Candice Kraemer, Cynthia Murdoch, Susanne Vandergon.

Regrets: Marilyn McClaskey.

Guests: Joe Shultz.

1. DISCUSSION OF ALTERNATIVE STRUCTURE FOR SUPPORTING POSTBACCALAUREATE EDUCATION

Joe Shultz, Associate to the Provost, distributed a handout on a proposed realignment of postbaccalaureate education. The handout explained the vision for the proposed change; there are more details available on the web. The goal of the proposal is to clarify the two postbaccalaureate communities that were created by the 2009 changes to the Graduate School, as well as simplifying policies and procedures.

During her interviews, Provost Hanson was asked questions about postbaccalaureate education. Some of those questions were addressed by the Special Committee on Graduate Education but this proposal resolves the remaining issues. It would create two communities based on academic logic rather than budgetary or historical alignments. Old terms would also be discontinued, such as first professional program. Instead there would be a graduate community for traditional, research-based degrees and a professional community for professional learning that is governed by accreditation and industry standards.

The Graduate School would focus on the graduate community, which would provide more freedom to the professional community. The goal is not to create new costs or create an infrastructure comparable to the Graduate School for professional programs.

There have been many discussion about the proposals with different groups – the Faculty Consultative Committee, University Senate, Twin Cities deans, faculty groups, associate deans group, Regents, Registrar’s Advisory Committee, Council of Graduate Students, and the Graduate and Professional Student Association. He is willing to speak to any other interested group. An email was sent to faculty two weeks ago and feedback has been overwhelmingly positive.

The goal is to enact the proposal before fall semester, so there will be continued discussions about where each program fits.

Q: What are the questions or concerns being expressed?

A: Most questions and concerns are from people who want to see more details and know where their program will fit.

Q: The changes in 2009 promised cost savings through downsizing, but instead costs were pushed into the units. How is this process different?

A: There has been more consultation on this proposal and the Provost's Office has learned from the 2009 experience. There are no intentional financial consequences in this proposal.

2. CHAIR'S REPORT

Katherine Dowd congratulated the Professional Development and Recognition Subcommittee on the successful forum. She appreciated their effort and the content in the forum. It also made her think that a mentor program for P&A, either through OHR or the P&A Senate, might be a topic for the subcommittee to discuss.

Some items from this year will continue next. One is the new employment site. She sent a letter to OHR since the new site does not attract the best candidates. She received a response that the first priority for OHR is payroll but updates to the employment site are at the top of the list of future improvements. A related issue is that payroll abstracts are running incorrectly in the new system. Two other issues to continue next year are follow-up on diversity work and further discussions about the Regents Scholarship program.

In closing she thanked PACC members for their support this year.

3. SUBCOMMITTEE UPDATES

Benefits and Compensation

Candice Kramer said that the subcommittee discussed no vacation accrual for nine and ten month employees at the last meeting. It was decided to not write a resolution at this time. They will be collecting more data on how these employees are impacted before they bring the issue forward for action by the P&A Senate.

Communications

Sandra Ecklein noted that she is working on the final newsletter.

Outreach

Kevin Haroian stated that after reviewing the changes in P&A numbers in all units for 2015-16, he would like to request that the College of Liberal Arts be provided with a fourth senator and alternate. Members discussed the request and decided to not make changes for any unit until the job family work is completed as the administrative class might have a significant impact on units.

Professional Development and Recognition

Sherri Boone said that the May forum had 50 people attending in person in the Twin Cities, three in Duluth, eight in Morris, and 70 online. The subcommittee is working on the wrap-up now, including the feasibility of another forum. Three brown bags are planned for next year including one at Morris. At the last meeting members discussed lessons learned, attendance metrics for the sessions, and goals for next year.

4. LETTER TO PRESIDENT ON REGENTS SCHOLARSHIP

Katherine Dowd said that through a vote at the May P&A Senate meeting, members asked PACC to send a letter to the President to support a full restoration of the Regents Scholarship program. The request seemed simple, but now PACC needs to determine the content of the letter.

Members made the following comments:

- When asked at the May P&A Senate meeting, Vice President Brown was not in favor of 100 percent tuition coverage for non-work courses
- Tuition for courses that are related to one's job should be covered at 100 percent. The question is what about personal enrichment courses.
- If department administrators get to determine what course requests will and will not be approved, standards will not be applied consistently
- Funding for the Regents Scholarship program diverts funding from the fringe pool that could be used in other ways
- Who should judge why an employee is taking a course?
- 100 percent tuition coverage is a recruiting tool
- Speakers at the forum spoke about developing employees across sectors. One way this can be done is by allowing employees to take courses that interest them, which is less likely to happen if they need to pay 25 percent of the cost
- Can PACC decide if it wants to advocate for only professional development or also life-long learning?
- Is this is a good time, politically, to be asking for a change?
- Is it possible to only pay for 100 percent of the course cost if an employee completes a course with a passing grade?

With agreement among PACC, Katherine Dowd said that she would draft an email to the P&A Senate to let them know that the issue is more complex and the committee would like more time to research the requests and garner support from faculty and civil service.

5. OTHER BUSINESS

To complete the P&A Senate annual report to the Regents, Katherine Dowd asked that all subcommittee annual reports be submitted by Friday, May 22.

With no further business, she thanked the members for their service this year and adjourned the meeting.

Becky Hippert
University Senate