

## **EQUITY, ACCESS, AND DIVERSITY COMMITTEE (EAD)**

November 2, 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:** Parental Leave; The Big Lift and the Office of Equity and Diversity Update; MLK Day Event Compilation]

**PRESENT:** Chair Deena Wassenberg, Abbe Holmgren, Jeremy Jenkins, Keisha Varma, Shailey Prasad, Teddie Potter, Jude Fom, Ann Burkhart, Kimberly Hewitt, Naty Lopez

**ABSENT:** Patrick Dean, Solomon Gashaw, Richard Graff, Tyler Lande

**REGRETS:** Kamaori Xiong

**GUESTS:** Nichole Morris, researcher, Mechanical Engineering; Professor Maria Gini, Computer Science and Engineering; Katrice Albert, vice president, Equity and Diversity

**OTHERS ATTENDING:** None

Chair Wassenberg welcomed the committee and members introduced themselves.

**1. Parental Leave:** Nichole Morris, researcher, Mechanical Engineering, joined the committee to discuss her experience taking parental leave while on a research grant. She explained that she came to the University as a research associate. She said that all of her funding for research and salary are paid out of contracts. None of the funding comes from the University directly. She shared what she observed when another woman went on leave twice with two pregnancies. It became apparent to her that the lab had to cover the cost of the leave. Morris explained that contracts are set to have work completed by a specific time, which makes the budget very inflexible to accommodate leave. She went on to say that neither the University, the Mechanical Engineering Department, nor the fringe pool were covering leave for her colleague. This meant the contract had to cover the leave, and that the contract didn't factor leave into the budget. She said small pots of ICR existed but they were hard to come by and not guaranteed funds.

Mr. Jeremy Jenkins explained Indirect Cost Recovery (ICR) and said that grants pay direct money for direct costs (tangible things such as salary) and an additional 52% is added for indirect costs. A \$1,000,000 grant becomes \$1,520,000 to cover both direct and indirect costs. The indirect cost money is divided between the University, the college, and the department that has the contract.

Morris said that finding the extra funds to come up with her colleague's leave caused unintentional tension between her colleague and the lab supervisor. Morris discussed her decision to keep her own planned pregnancy quiet because she feared that it would make her a target for termination. Morris said that she contacted OHR and felt that at the very top levels of

OHR there was a lack of understanding regarding the structure of pay with research grants and the resulting difficulty in funding parental leave. She discussed the potential for hiring discrimination against women of childbearing years because of the high cost of parental leave to labs.

Wassenberg thanked Morris for sharing her story. She reaffirmed that this was an issue of equity, access, and diversity because hiring decisions could certainly be determined based on such circumstances.

Professor Maria Gini, Computer Science and Engineering, handed out a resolution the Senate Research Committee (SRC) wrote when she was the chair in 2014. She explained the path the resolution took and said that the topic came to SRC because of its impact on researchers and labs. Gini said that SRC had initially asked OHR for specific numbers, such as the number of women who were in a unit that had to cover the cost of their leave as well as what such coverage would cost each unit. When OHR continually postponed, Gini said, SRC wrote the resolution to express the opinion of the SRC members despite the lack of data. The resolution addressed the members' concerns of charging parental leave to labs, the negative working environment created, and the encouragement of including parental leave for researchers into the fringe pool.

Gini had a meeting with current SRC Chair LaDora Thompson and OHR Vice President Kathy Brown in the summer of 2015. Gini relayed that Brown indicated she would be willing to discuss this topic but noted that it was difficult to address in a uniform way across all the classifications of employees. Thompson will be placing this topic onto the SRC agenda, as well.

Wassenberg provided members with a document comparing the different parental leave benefits across the various job classifications at the University. Burkhart asked how leaves were funded in classifications other than research. Morris said that each was different but that it seemed to be an ongoing issue across the University. Jenkins said that he is a P&A employee and is not grant funded. When he took parental leave his salary continued to draw from his unit's budget as it always had. He said they do not operate like other units that are able to draw from non-sponsored/unrestricted funds. Morris said that contracts are very specific regarding what funding can be used for and contracts typically do not write in parental leave. Morris felt this funding should come out of the fringe pool. She said that there is a line item for leaves in the University budget.

Gini noted that California law covers 50% of an employee's salary to provide paid family leave. Gini felt that if the State of California could implement such a law across the entire state, the University could offer it as well. Gini provided a comparison of other Big Ten institutions and their parental leave policies.

Wassenberg suggested that the committee write a letter of support for creating a comprehensive parental leave policy.

Jenkins said that when someone goes on medical disability the cost is taken away from the unit and given to central. He questioned why the same model couldn't be used with parental leave.

**2. Office of Equity and Diversity update:** Vice President Albert thanked the committee for inviting her to the meeting and provided members with copies of her presentation. She went on to give an overview of the Office of Equity and Diversity's (OED) diversity in hiring project and sought the committee's feedback. The project is called "The Big Lift."

Vice President Albert also gave a brief update on the Clear Initiative, which focuses on recruiting top-notch field shapers and diverse faculty. Colleges and units are being worked with to think about how they recruit, retain, and advance diverse faculty.

The Big Lift is being developed to parallel the Clear Initiative and will focus on the process of hiring diverse staff. Albert said she is working with Vice President Kathy Brown, Office of Human Resources, to design and implement The Big Lift process and goals. Albert presented the four goals of The Big Lift and their implementation strategy, metric, and estimated cost. The document can be found [HERE](#).

Albert said that the goal of increasing the diversity of hiring pools for student facing positions (working directly with students) by 5% has the highest return on investment for the University. Students of color have a more isolated experience compared to their white peers and by hiring based on this student experience, there is a stronger impact, Albert explained.

Albert said that the notion of inclusive excellence has a lot of mythology surrounding it. The common thought is that experienced, quality, diverse staff is not hired because they simply do not exist. OED is seeking to dispel this myth. OED will partner with OHR to hire diversity recruiters to work within the community and cultivate qualified candidates. Albert said that the concept of diversity recruiters is not new to the field of human resources, but it is new to the University. Albert said the initial phase focuses on hiring within groups that have been historically marginalized or under represented both nationally and within the University.

Albert explained that her goal is to receive feedback from the committee then return in a few months to report on the progress made and challenges experienced with the project. Albert said that the project was called the "Big Lift" because it is taking multiple entities working together to accomplish the goals. No one department is able to accomplish such a task alone; collaboration is required to lift this project up.

Albert said that there is not a firm timeline set for full implementation of the project. A FY2017 University budget request for the pilot project has been made, but it is not a sustainable source of funding. If the Twin Cities pilot program is successful, system campus chancellors are interested in bringing it to their campuses. This will require a sustainable funding source that has not yet been identified. Albert said that a timeline will be created and thanked the committee for making such a recommendation.

Professor Teddie Potter said that faculty and staff positions are different in terms of how they are recruited. She asked if recruiters partner with community colleges because community colleges contain huge talent to draw from. Albert agreed and said they will be working within culturally specific places, as well. The college preparedness model in Minneapolis schools and the pipeline into college was discussed.

The percentage of student facing positions held by people of color and the process of data mining was discussed. The goal to increase the number of diverse staff by 5% spurred the question of how many people that meant in terms of hiring. The current average at the University per unit is 14% employees of color. Albert discussed staff and faculty minority organizations that are new to the University. The new organizations membership focuses on staff and faculty who identify as GLBTQ, Native American, African American, and within other historically marginalized groups. OED and OHR are working to support the new organizations so that they can grow within both the University and the larger community.

Jenkins mentioned the cyclical nature of hiring in the University. Wassenberg built on that by saying career development needs to be remembered in the discussion of diversity hiring. Potential employees are applying to the University, not a position. There are opportunities to grow within the University once hired. Potter said that intentional mentoring is important for new employees who may be entry level to understand the University and the opportunities available within it.

Mr. Jude Fom was asked about his experience on the Morris Campus. Fom said that most of the African American students on campus are athletes and most of them transfer out before graduation. Albert said that the diversity on the system campuses is made up of international faculty and staff. Albert reiterated that chancellors are interested in bringing the pilot to their campuses if it is successful so that diversity in hiring can become a system wide experience.

**3. Martin Luther King Jr Day initiative:** Wassenberg gave an update on what she had discovered regarding her continued research into campus activities for MLK Day. She reviewed for the members that the MLK Day Volunteer Drive occurs every winter on MLK Day and has very limited participation. She communicated with the Alumni Association regarding their Day of Service that takes place near Homecoming Week in the fall and has global participation by alumni. Wassenberg reported that when she approached the Alumni Association regarding partnering with them to create one Day of Service on MLK Day, they said that they would be willing to help the committee build their event, but wanted to keep their Day of Service during Homecoming Week, since it is an important event for alumni.

Wassenberg provided a 2009 compilation of MLK Day activities at the University in comparison to other Big Ten Schools. The report made some recommendations, including a centralized MLK Day calendar to list all activities on campus related to MLK Day. A recommendation to build partnerships with other groups outside the University with the intention of hosting events together was also made by the report. A full-time, multicultural position dedicated to MLK Day and other diversity programming through OED was suggested.

Professor Keisha Varma said she thought there was a lack of clarity in the messaging of the MLK Day of Service. She said that the website is not clear that the Day of Service is in direct connection to honoring MLK and his legacy of community service and activism. Ms. Naty Lopez added that the School of Dentistry tried to organize staff and faculty to participate in a MLK Day activity and had a difficult time locating information. Potter said that the focus for MLK Day should be on how the University is advancing issues of social justice and addressing

tough social issues. Potter said the current Day of Service is not meeting the goal of bringing attention to issues of social justice. The service should relate to MLK's values and what he fought for. Varma said there needs to be an assessment of what is happening in the greater community, as well. Members decided a webpage that compiles University and community events related to MLK with a direct connection to MLK and his legacy should be on the University website. Professor Pricilla Flynn said there might be an advantage with connecting the Big Lift to MLK Day. The committee expressed interest in continuing to explore how to organize MLK Day activities on a webpage. Wassenberg will research who administers the University website and she will contact them.

Hearing no further business, the meeting adjourned.

Avonna Starck  
University Senate