

P&A CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE MEETING (PACC) SEPTEMBER 28, 2011

[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: Steven Pearthree (Chair), Neil Anderson, Benjamin Clasen, Frank Douma, Scott Gilbert, Ann Hagen, Danny Sussman, Sarah Waldemar.

Guests: Liz Eull, President Kaler.

1. CHAIR'S REPORT

Steven Pearthree noted that he has been invited and attended many events this past month. They include the home opener football game with other University governance leaders, Provost candidate interviews, Senate Business & Rules Committee, and the Senate Committee Chairs meeting, convocation, and the inauguration of President Kaler.

He noted that the Senate Consultative Committee (SCC) is looking at the procedure for the four senates involvement in administrator searches. It was previously proposed that each of the four consultative committees would be involved in administrative searches. Professor Cramer, Senate Consultative Committee (SCC)/ Faculty Consultative Committee (FCC) chair, asked each senate consultative committee to consider using just the SCC, as leadership from each senate sits on this committee. The proposal is being drafted and will be discussed at the October SCC meeting.

A search committee was formed to identify Donna Peterson's replacement in Government Relations. After looking at the committee names, he noted that the only P&A involved is Amy Phenix.

Professor Chris Cramer, SCC/FCC Chair, will be speaking at the October P&A Senate meeting. He has been a supporter of P&A during his time in governance. Steve Pearthree asked that any questions be sent to him by early next week so that he can send an email to Professor Cramer in advance of the meeting.

Steve Pearthree then stated that he attended the September Regents meeting during which Vice President Brown presented employment data and ways it can be collected and collated. She also suggested that a new enterprise system might be needed separate from PeopleSoft.

2. SUBCOMMITTEE UPDATES

Benefits and Compensation (B&C)

Benjamin Clasen and Frank Douma reported the first meeting was held and a work plan was started for the year. Jackie Singer and Nan Wilhelmson noted that Human Resources is doing strategic positioning now and will be looking at its roles and goals. The faculty retirement plan changes were also discussed and will be part of the report to the P&A Senate in October.

The subcommittee also discussed how to tell the P&A story and ways to measure success since many current metrics do not address all the roles and ways the P&A help the institution. The subcommittee stated that it needs to know the audience to be able to accurately address the issue.

Concern was also expressed regarding UPlan open enrollment materials and cost increases not being accessible on the website, as well as some current HealthPartners users not receiving a

mailing regarding the upcoming changes. Benjamin Clasen has passed on this concern to Jackie Singer and is waiting for a response.

Communications

Danny Sussman noted that his subcommittee met for the first time last week. Its goals for the year include a survey of P&A to gather information for all the subcommittees, using the newsletter to highlight P&A stories that already exist, updating the New Employee Orientation (NEO) presentation to talk more about what is happening today versus the history of the organization, and using social media. On this last point, a P&A Senate twitter account was created and the first message was congratulations to the President on his inauguration.

Ann Hagen suggested that the Communications subcommittee consult with PD&R a P&A survey.

Outreach

Neil Anderson stated that the Outreach Subcommittee will have its first meeting today.

Professional Development and Recognition (PD&R)

Scott Gilbert said that PD&R will be meeting on Tuesdays the week before P&A Senate meetings. At their first meeting they will be developing their work plan.

It was suggested that a request be made again to include some P&A classifications in new faculty orientation.

Subcommittee chairs were asked to submit their meeting schedules for posting on the web and their work plans for the October PACC meeting.

3. APPROVAL OF OCTOBER 7 P&A SENATE AGENDA

The agenda was approved as presented.

4. DISCUSSION OF P&A SENATE MINUTES IN THE DIGITAL CONSERVANCY

Steve Pearthree said that the P&A Senate has been asked if it wishes to have its minutes included in the Digital Conservancy, which is a University Archives project to maintain permanent digital records for the University and have them in a format that is easy to find and searchable.

Members agreed that past minutes should be included but wished to maintain the current year's minutes on the P&A Senate site as a way to get more people to the new site. The minutes could then be uploaded to the conservancy at the end of the academic year. PACC will re-examine this process for next year.

5. DISCUSSION WITH PRESIDENT KALER

President Kaler said this is an interesting time for the University as it works to become more efficient and effective. He met this morning with a state legislator and asked for her opinion of the University. Her description was "arrogant, bloated, ineffective, and overly bureaucratic." This is the perception that many people have and it is a struggle for the University.

He will be looking at processes, policies, and procedures to find ways to make things happen faster while being creative and innovative. Academic programs will be assessed. He does know that P&A employees are essential to the work being done at the University. However, he would propose asking each employee to step back and select one thing that they currently do that they could stop doing and one thing that they should be doing.

Introductions of the PACC members, their units and roles, and their responsibilities within the P&A Senate was done. President Kaler responded to a comment made regarding the teaching award proposal approved by the Faculty Senate last spring. He feels that the current language is ambiguous as to who would qualify. He has asked the Provost to re-engage this discussion to either sharpen the language or create a separate award for P&A. He supports the concept, and believes that teaching P&A should be recognized, but he cannot support the current language.

Q: What is your decision-making process?

A: The Provost search would be an example of his decision-making process. Four candidates were invited to campus in mid-September. Dr. Kaler met yesterday with his senior leadership to discuss the candidates, will be reaching out to the candidate today, and hopes to have an announcement on Friday. He believes in consulting but not overanalyzing. He has assembled an operational excellence and organizational effectiveness team which meets weekly. He believes in assigning homework and establishing timelines as a way to create intensity and focus to move the institution forward.

Q: The message is out that the University needs to change. How will this be done and when?

A: Part of his operational excellence and organizational effectiveness team assignment was to bring forward previous reports in which many good ideas were found. There was no clear answer why these ideas had not been previously implemented. When asked what was needed to implement them now, team members stated that they needed someone to say yes and time to implement. His response in most cases was that they now only had one hurdle to cross.

His previous institution, Stonybrook, has a great reputation but has been on a starvation budget since 1970 which means that it is lean and effective. He believes that there is lots of money in administrative structures that can be used in other places.

Q: What is your long-term strategy to combat unstable state funding?

A: The University has done a poor job of telling its story to the state, and the people of the state can't then tell their elected officials. Most people do not understand how often and in what ways the University impacts their lives. If the University can tell its stories about education, science, technology, and life-saving innovations in a non-partisan way, we will deliver a positive message. The University also needs to focus on sharing stories with state leaders from the entire political spectrum in a strategic and mindful way.

Q: Is it a mistake or good strategy to talk about the University in terms of its economic impact for the state?

A: The state needs to understand the University's economic impact so it is important to tell and use University's economic impact to the state as a way to engage the state as a partner.

Q: What other metrics can be used by the University moving forward?

A: The University has a broad impact for the state and different areas need to be highlighted, such as the University's outreach in the arts, medicine, and extension, to show how the University is part of the state and its culture. Metrics will need to be determined to define programs that are in need of investment, maintenance, or should no longer be supported.

Q: How can P&A employees help?

A: Dr. Kaler will be asking for P&A feedback often and sincerely, and those in governance will be asked to tell the P&A story. He will also be asking all employees to reach out to their families, friends, and elected representatives and convey positive stories regarding the University. He will be looking for ways to sharpen processes and reduce complexities and bureaucracies, and would like P&A input.

Q: How are you responding to the concern regarding too much administration?

A: First he needs an accurate census of the number of employees, where they work, and what do they do. Without this information it is hard to respond correctly. He does know that he will be looking at the spans and layers at the University to determine what the right size is for both. He does not believe that one person reporting to one other person reporting to a third person is the correct span size and creates too many layers.

Q: While P&A believe in being more efficient, many are also overloaded at this point. What will be done for the work/life balance?

A: The University cannot afford to hire more employees. Since he believes that most people do work that they do not need to do, he wants to refocus the actual work so that people are not overloaded.

Q: In terms of operational excellence, will changes be implemented throughout the process or as a group at the end?

A: Implementation will be done throughout the process to the degree that it can be done and to get some early wins. For each change, his team will need to assess if the current structure is able to support the change. This might mean that the team size needs to be expanded and divided into subgroups. He will propose a 30-day review period for feedback on changes.

Q: What is the University's approach to UMore Park and the faculty research being interrupted due to development?

A: He is sensitive to faculty research issues, but the development does not require plots to be moved for 15 years. The University has a fiduciary responsibility to use the property for the highest value, which in this case means mining the gravel and then restoring the land. He has asked Senior Vice President Jones to reengage the faculty in a discussion to use land nearby for their research. He agrees that the communication could have been handled better.

Q: Employees are asking about temporary salary reductions or a furlough. Is this being considered for this year?

A: He has not ruled out either option as the state budget forecast will not be released until November but there is no plan now. At this time, some of the extra state funding received during the latest biennium budget process is being kept as savings to buffer any possible cuts. He has been told by leaders at other institutions who have instituted furloughs, that they would never do another furlough due to the impact on employee morale.

Q: There are two kinds of changes to be done. One is structural and has been discussed. The second is cultural. How will this cultural shift be made?

A: Any cultural shift happens slowly and can be the result of structural changes. Supervisors need to tell their employees that things will be done differently and employees need to expect different responses to their questions. One example is that the University needs to increase its cultural tolerance for risk.

Q: Employees can be told centrally to stop doing one thing that they currently do and find one other thing to do, but what happens when supervisors are not supportive of these changes?

A: Sometimes changes require a person separate from the situation who can focus on the process of change and does not have sentimental attachments. Traditional bureaucratic models will no longer work.

Q: What is the University's position on competition from on-line learning institutions?

A: Most high school students do not want to continue living with their parents after graduation, and if parents have the expectation that their son or daughter will leave for school, that will happen. A student experiences many things when attending the University and there is no way for an online institution to compete in this area. Where the University does currently suffer from competition, due to its unorganized distance learning catalogue, is in niche degrees, non-traditional students, and people who want to take just a few courses. Progress will be made in the University's on-line offerings to be more competitive.

Q: Can the Rochester model be implemented more broadly?

A: Rochester is a great experiment and if the model shows positive student progress, then it should be used in other circumstances.

Q: The University has 22 million square feet of assignable space. In order to better manage it, is the University considering being more supportive of working from home or job sharing?

A: He is an advocate for creative thinking. If job sharing works well, it is great for work-life balance, but this option and working from home require a good supervisor for a well-managed arrangement. He would like to see more efficient use of space and taking down of some other older buildings.

Q: Do you see any glaring inefficiencies in the University's self-governance system? What would you do to make the system better?

A: He does not know enough to be certain but he would look for redundancies since, due to repeated state budget cuts, the University has worked to be more efficient in recent years but still has progress to be made. He realizes that there are costs to these governance meetings, mostly in terms of the people who attend instead of doing their regular jobs. While he supports class-level self-governance, he would challenge everyone to take an unemotional look at the time being spent by P&A serving and ask if that time is well-spent, impactful to the class, and useful for the University.

Q: What do you want to know about the P&A Senate?

A: He would like to know what the organization wants to do and work towards this year long-term.

Members answered that the P&A Senate works to make sure that P&A are treated equally, wants to support the University's response to having too much administration, and works with Human Resources to make sure that talent is better managed and retained as a valuable asset. Multi-year contracts are one way of retaining/rewarding P&As.

President Kaler noted that the University is a highly decentralized place, and talented employees can be a casualty of the decentralization as there is no ability to cross-train. He agrees that

revised, centralized job descriptions and advancement paths will help. Lastly he asked the P&A class to be nimble and adaptive going forward.

6. OTHER BUSINESS

Sarah Waldemar noted that the 27 pay period committee has met again and has proposed a plan for dealing with this issue in future years. She will report back at a future meeting once the committee has met again.

With no further business, Steven Pearthree thanked the members for attending and adjourned the meeting.

Becky Hippert
University Senate