

P&A CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE MEETING OCTOBER 30, 2012

[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: Ann Hagen (Chair), Marilyn Becker, Stephanie Bettermann, Jodi Carlson Grebinoski, Stacy Doepner-Hove, Cynthia Murdoch, Steven Pearthree, Kimberly Simon.

Regrets: Cathy Schulz.

Guests: Vice President Kathy Brown, Liz Eull, President Eric Kaler, Jean Kucera.

1. DISCUSSION WITH PRESIDENT KALER

President Kaler joined the meeting and went through the questions that were forwarded prior to the meeting.

Q: How is the University dealing with allegations that there are too many administrators?

A: All P&A being labeled as administrators is an unfair label, as many people within the University know that P&A do much of the heavy lifting. The University needs to be less polite when addressing why administrators are bad. P&A enable delivery of critical aspects of the University's mission. What is needed are new job titles that are more descriptive of the actual work being done. It is frustrating that he needs to spend time defending administrators instead of talking about University positives and priorities.

Q: How can P&A help with this message?

A: They can help explain the different roles that administrators play, such as the need for additional advisors when more students are admitted.

Vice President Brown said that Human Resources consultants have been to campus to evaluate the current process and will have a plan submitted by the end of the year to move aggressively spring semester on the job classification study. HR would like the new structure to accurately describe the work that employees do so that there is better data available for future decisions. She would like to have more clarity between P&A and civil service positions although there will likely be some overlap. Once the job classification study is complete, there can be a market analysis of pay and benefits.

Q: Many employees are experiencing low morale and stress from years of doing more with fewer resources and staff. What advice do you as the President have for these employees to make a difference going forward?

A: Most organizations are under stress at this time. University employees can all get control of their personal situations by talking with their supervisors about changes that can be made in their current positions to make them manageable. An aspect of operational excellence is that all work is evaluated to see if there are things that can be done differently or stop being done. Things cannot keep being done in the same way. Otherwise, the employee can find a job that better suits their talents.

Q: Is senior leadership supportive of employees who are tired from years of doing more with less?

A: Yes as all employees have the option to talk with their supervisors to make their positions more manageable and less stressful.

Vice President Brown noted that at the start of the recession, units experienced some departures and work was just reallocated to current employees when it was not possible to rehire. At that time no one thought about the workload, practices, or processes to make them more efficient, and in most units this still has not been done. Unit leaders need to take the time to look at business practices in a different way to make real changes.

President Kaler said that the opportunity to reshape and organize comes during these difficult times.

A member noted that he is happy to hear that the current work processes need to change and some things need to be discontinued. However, he does not believe that this message has made its way through the system from senior administration down to the unit level.

President Kaler realizes that the system is large and complicated, so he would appreciate employees spreading the message from the bottom with the goal that it meets the same message coming from the top.

Another member noted that her unit reviewed all its processes a few years ago, but this would not have been done if it had not been required by the parent unit.

Q: What resources and guidance are being provided to supervisors in this area?

A: HR has resources, consultants, and organizational development to support these conversations within a unit. The employee assistance program also has personal strategies for an employee to cope in this situation.

A member suggested that a category be included on the annual performance reviews for all classifications to ask about organizational effectiveness changes that the employee has made during the year. This might reinforce conversations and changes within units.

President Kaler agreed that employees at all levels need to be engaged in the process of rethinking the work being done.

2. CHAIR'S REPORT

Ann Hagen reported that in the last month she has attended a meeting with the chairs of the other Senate consultative committees to review the consultation matrix for Regents policies, a Business and Rules meeting to review the October Senate agenda, a Gopher football game, a Senate Committee Chairs meeting, the P&A Women's Council reception where Pam Stenhjem was presented an award, Regents committee meetings, and the Vice President for Research candidate interviews.

She was also at the October 2 brown bag for President Kaler. During the Q&A session, an AFSCME employee spoke against P&A employees. She then decided to also make a comment in response.

Amy Phenix attended the recent Senate Consultative Committee (SCC) meeting to discuss Senior Vice President Jones' portfolio and to ask for ideas on reporting lines once that office is dismantled.

Ann Hagen has sent questions to Mike Volna and Julie Tonneson regarding the 27 pay period issue and is waiting for a response. Vice President for Equity and Diversity candidate interviews are scheduled for this week. For upcoming meetings, Lori Lamb will be asked to attend the November PACC meeting, President Kaler and Vice President Studham are scheduled for the December P&A Senate meeting, and the February P&A Senate meeting will contain a legislative update and a report from the Faculty Affairs Committee (SCFA) P&A members.

3. SUBCOMMITTEE UPDATES

Benefits and Compensation (B&C)

Cynthia Murdoch said that Nan Wilhelmson attended the last meeting to discuss the senior leadership and compensation policy. B&C then discussed the early stages of the PeopleSoft upgrade, the advocacy documents, wellness points bank, and Benefits Advisory Committee (BAC) updates.

Communications

Cathy Schulz noted that they are working on a strategic communications plan that will focus on the message from the P&A Senate, different audiences, and tactics to reach them. The CAPA Facebook page was decommissioned. The newsletter will be sent the fourth week of each month and will look more like Brief. She encouraged all subcommittees to submit information for these newsletters.

Outreach

Stacy Doepner-Hove stated that the Outreach Subcommittee has formed a subcommittee to review the P&A Senate structure due to administrative unit changes.

Professional Development and Recognition (PD&R)

Jodi Carlson Grebinoski said that the recent brown bag had 15 people in the room and 21 online. The next date is November 21.

4. REVIEW OF ADVOCACY AGENDA

Jean Kucera then joined the meeting to discuss revisions to the advocacy agenda. Rearranging of items was done to match current priorities. Before more work is done, the work group would like to know more about the goals of this revision and if the final document is meant to be a working document for the P&A Senate itself or is it being written as a letter to someone.

Members discussed the draft and decided to hold another discussion at the November meeting once the old draft is circulated for review.

5. REVIEW OF MISSION STATEMENT

To ensure the highest quality of work life for P&A employees at the University of Minnesota through advocacy and proactive engagement with University initiatives and governance in order to further the University's mission of teaching, research, and service.

This discussion was tabled until November.

6. APPOINTMENT OF P&A TO SERVE ON THE RESEARCH OPENNESS SUBCOMMITTEE

A vote will be taken via email.

7. APPROVAL OF NOVEMBER 2 SENATE AGENDA

The agenda was approved as presented.

8. OTHER BUSINESS

With no further business, Ann Hagen thanked the members for attending and adjourned the meeting.

Becky Hippert
University Senate