

[In these minutes: Regents Scholarship discussion, Update on OHR issues, Retreat Planning, Discussion of low subcommittee participation, End of legislative session update]

## **P&A CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE MEETING MAY 21, 2014**

[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:** Cynthia Murdoch (Chair), Sherri Boone, Jodi Carlson Grebinoski, Katherine Cramer, Sandra Ecklein, Ann Hagen, Kevin Haroian, Scott Marsalis, Marilyn McClaskey, Christine Peper, Susanne Vandergon.

**Regrets:** Etty DeVeaux, Stacy Doepner-Hove, William Hellriegel, Michelle Hargrave, Candice Kraemer.

**Guests:** Randy Croce, Joseph Konstan.

### **1. REGENTS SCHOLARSHIP DISCUSSION**

Cynthia Murdoch welcomed Professor Joseph Konstan, Chair of the Faculty Affairs Committee (SCFA), and Randy Croce, P&A member of SCFA, to the meeting to discuss possible changes to the Regents Scholarship program.

Joseph Konstan said that Professor Will Durfee, Chair of the Faculty Consultative Committee (FCC), started a conversation on this topic with President Kaler. No response has yet been received, so it is up to the committees if they wish to move forward on a proposal in the meantime. Committees seem to agree that departments should be able to pay the 25 percent cost for courses that are professional development, and that this might be the first issue to tackle. This is especially true for new faculty who have training grants but cannot use those funds to pay the 25 percent at the University. They choose to take their courses elsewhere, to use the grant funds, instead of paying the 25 percent out-of-pocket.

However there is also the feeling that any course that an employee takes is a form of training, whether it is called professional development or not, and therefore 100 percent payment should be a future request. Additionally, many courses already have open seats that could be offered to employees at no cost.

Scott Marsalis felt that it might be better to ask for 100 percent coverage from the beginning. For P&A, the 100 percent coverage for a first bachelor's degree provides no benefit as anyone in this classification must already have a degree. This program is also forcing many people to go outside the University to take courses since employees do not have to pay 25 percent if the course is for professional development. The University will lose workers to institutions that offer 100 percent coverage for all courses as this is now a reduced benefit that has not been replaced by some other benefit.

Randy Croce said that he would support a proposal for 100 percent coverage as education is not just an individual goal but a common good that provides greater ties to the University for the employee.

Cynthia Murdoch said that at a meeting with Vice President Brown and Patti Dion they were not in favor of allowing departments to pay the 25 percent since it would create inequitable

conditions across the University due to some departments being able to afford the cost and others not able to. Instead, they are in favor of benefits that apply equally to all.

A member noted that equitable benefits is not a strong argument as there are already many benefits that are only used by some segments of employees.

Joseph Konstan said that this is an issue due to the budget model. Under the Regents Scholarship, enrollment pays tuition to the college offering the course as well as the 25 percent from the employee. Employees are then treated the same as any other student, but are likely not using the same level of resources as a regular student. Also, many employees are likely enrolling in courses with excess capacity, therefore one extra student per semester will not change the cost to offer the course.

Q: Why was this change made?

A: There was probably some feeling that employee benefits needed to be reduced in some manner, and that if employees had 'skin in the game' they would be more serious about taking classes. However, this is unfair to employees whose jobs require coursework.

Members made the following comments:

- More data is needed to make a successful case
- Work should also include civil service
- Faculty references should be minimal as their case is weaker since they have a terminal degree
- Graduate coursework is considered a taxable benefit so employees already have 'skin in the game' when taking these courses
- All three groups should make a joint data request

## **2. CHAIR'S REPORT**

Cynthia Murdoch noted the following meetings she has attended:

- May 1 University Senate
- May 2 P&A Senate
- May 9 Regents meetings
- May 10 Regents budget forum

She noted that subcommittees need to complete their annual reports so that she can write her report for the Regents.

## **3. SUBCOMMITTEE UPDATES**

### Benefits and Compensation

Susanne Vandergon said that Patti Dion has not been at the last two meetings so they have not made any progress on the Regents Scholarship issue.

## **4. UPDATE ON HUMAN RESOURCES ISSUES**

Cynthia Murdoch reported that she, Ann Hagen, and Katherine Cramer tried to write a letter to Vice President Brown regarding the issues discussed at the last meeting but instead they feel that an in-person meeting with her will be better.

Members noted the following issues that should be addressed:

- Regents Scholarship data

- Communication – no response to PACC concerns throughout the year, including the December letter
- Attendance at the P&A Senate and B&C meetings, either by Vice President Brown or Patti Dion
- Employee engagement data for P&A
- Who communicates P&A initiatives
- Job family study
- Inaccurate information from OHR staff that needs to be corrected by PACC later

## **5. TENTATIVE AUGUST RETREAT AGENDA**

Members made the following comments regarding this year's retreat:

- Topics can be the same as last year
- Circular tables would be better
- Vice President Brown should be asked to attend and questions can be sent to her in advance
- Expectations for members should be clarified, as well as consequences for non-attendance at subcommittee meetings
- Overview should be simplified

## **6. DISCUSSION OF JULY PACC MEETING**

Members decided that a July meeting be scheduling for final planning.

## **7. DISCUSSION OF LOW SUBCOMMITTEE PARTICIPATION**

Members discussed strategies that have worked, such as phone and video participation, and that have not worked, such as surveying all members to try and find a meeting time. It was agreed that more emphasis was needed on this topic at the retreat and that subcommittee chairs should come to the retreat with one or two possible meeting days/times so that only members who can attend the meetings will join.

## **8. END OF LEGISLATIVE SESSION UPDATE**

Jason Rohloff joined the meeting to provide an update on the legislative session which just ended last night:

- MnSCU and the University both received the same amount
- HEAPR is always a challenge for funding but without dollars it leads to a backlog
- Asset preservation was a theme in the Senate throughout this year
- Spending constraint was a written agreement not to spend over \$1 billion
- Capital Management will determine where HEAPER dollars are spent
- Advocacy this session focused on bees, invasive species, and the Crookston request in partnership with the Chancellor and support from that community
- There was support for spending at Duluth but there was not enough money in the legislative budget to cover it, so the only funds for the campus are through the STEM initiative
- Bell Museum had support from a St. Paul legislator who has advocated for this project over many years. A creative solution was found to fund the project – the University issues the full debt but the state pays the cost
- University received supplemental funding for a variety of other projects

He said that the University is on the right path with the legislature and the support for the University was phenomenal this year, especially from the students.

Q: Did the legislature continue to focus on the report from last year that the University has too many administrators?

A: This is part of the territory with the legislature and will never completely go away. It is being addressed by the administrative cuts being made and the credibility that President Kaler has. The University will be asked to show its cuts next session and where they have been reinvested. Last session the University also moved quickly to fulfill the legislature's study request which was appreciated.

Q: What percentage is this year's funding?

A: 17 percent which is small but an increase and more than institutions in other states are receiving.

## **9. OTHER BUSINESS**

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

Becky Hippert  
University Senate