

SENATE COMMITTEE OF FINANCE AND PLANNING (SCFP)
November 24, 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 represents the views of, nor are they binding on, the Senate, the Administration, or the Board of Regents.]

[In these minutes: ESUP Upgrade; Job Family Study]

PRESENT: Chair Dan Feeney, Emily Meyer, Sarah Chambers, Catherine Fitch, Bob Goldstein, Tracy Peters, Michael Korth, Sandra Potthoff, Karen Seashore, Kara Kersteter, Lincoln Kallsen, Jill Merriam, Paul Olin, Varun Sood, Jennifer Gunn

REGRETS: Pamela Wheelock, Fred Morrison, Eric van Kuijk, Karen Ho

ABSENT: David Fisher, Laura Kalambokidis, Richard Pfitzenreuter, Michael Volna, Aavid Boddupalli

GUESTS: Kathy Brown, vice president, Office of Human Resources; Patti Dion, director, benefits and compensation, Office of Human Resources; Patty Franklin, chief of staff, Office of Human Resources

OTHERS ATTENDING: Duane Orlovski, Terri Wallace, Patty Franklin, Ian Ringgenberg, Ann Hagen, Candice Kraemer

1. Welcome and ESUP Upgrade discussion - Chair Dan Feeney welcomed members and guests. He explained that a previous meeting had occurred with the Civil Service Consultative Committee (CSCC), the Faculty Consultative Committee (FCC), the P&A Consultative Committee (PACC), Kathy Brown, vice president, Office of Human Resources (OHR), and Patti Dion, director, benefits and compensation, OHR to discuss the Job Family Study (JFS) process and implementation. He explained that the focus of the meeting would be on SCFP specific issues related to the JFS. Feeney then asked members to introduce themselves with their name, department, and whether they were a civil service (CS), P&A, or faculty member. He then introduced Brown.

Brown began by explaining the upgrade made to the human resources (HR) system, PeopleSoft, over the last three years. She said there was a large upgrade available for PeopleSoft, which would allow the program to be easier and less costly to maintain. She said OHR policies and business practices were evaluated to allow them to merge successfully with the new system. Brown said that OHR is still in a learning mode with the new system and one year is the typical time period for adjustment. She said institutions of comparable sizes to the University are experiencing the same types of successes and frustrations within similar time frames.

Brown provided a copy of a weekly email message OHR sends to the users of the system. She said OHR has been sending such messages regarding upcoming system updates, trainings, and seminars for many months. Patty Franklin, chief of staff, Office of Human Resources, said the weekly message is found on the myUportal page, in the upgrade section of the University

website. She said people could also email her to be added to the email list. Brown explained that people who use the system every day and understand it very well have been pulled into a group called “super users.” These super users are continually identifying and prioritizing problems and corresponding fixes in the system. Franklin said the super user group is a great place to identify and contribute to system issues and gain an understanding of how HR work is being carried out at the unit and department level. Franklin said there is a super user help desk to assist people with troubleshooting the system. The super users are employees who are chosen by their department leadership, Franklin said. Brown said the OHR focus is to ensure that the new system meets the needs of the entire institution, and such a process can take time. Meeting institutional HR needs includes improving the hiring process through reducing the number of hiring steps and ensuring high data integrity, resulting in less payroll problems, Brown said.

Professor Karen Seashore asked for the temporary and long-term implementation costs of the upgrade and the permanent cost of operating the system over time. Brown responded that OHR is in the process of assessing the costs. She said OHR would see increased operation costs due to the regular upgrades occurring. She noted that there is also an increased cost of maintenance over the first year, but expects these costs to even out. Seashore asked about specific costs at the college and department level and emphasized the need to understand how to control costs at every level of implementation. Brown responded that such data is currently not being collected. She said she is hopeful that once the learning curve levels off, OHR can collect data related to college and department level costs.

Feeney said that in his communication with various departments, he has heard feedback that the administration’s goal of cutting \$15 million per year from the budget, combined with the associated costs of this system upgrade, has affected each department’s ability to execute its mission properly. He said the departments have been told to cut their budget while simultaneously asked to do more work. Frustration levels are rising with the announcement that the Board of Regents wants to continue on the current pace of cuts despite being ahead of schedule with meeting budget goals, Feeney said.

Feeney asked Brown about departments that have incremental salaries and how to determine base salary versus augmentations to pay. Brown said in the old system, determining base pay required a hand calculator and a lot of time. Franklin said the new system would calculate the base pay and additional pay (augmentations, etc.), with a feature to separate base pay away from additional pay. She said a payroll validation report would be introduced soon, simplifying the evaluation and validation of payroll. Feeney emphasized the past difficulty with determining augmentation changes and merit pay increases with the old system. He said the old system added a layer of work and potential for errors. Brown pointed out that this is an area where upgrading PeopleSoft to be more generic and easier to use is beneficial. Franklin said the super user group has recognized this problem and is working on it, as well. She said she would bring the committee’s feedback to those addressing this topic.

2. Job Family Study – Brown said the JFS is complete for all 18 job families and approximately 9,000 P&A and CS staff. She said the University job classification system was very out of date and needed to be reorganized and streamlined. Brown said that for years, many employees went without any sort of job description to follow or define their job duties, responsibilities, and expectations. The purpose of the JFS was to create a system to accurately describe the work performed in each job description, she said.

Brown said the same process of classification was used for all 18 job families. OHR received no instruction to use the JFS to reduce cost or to classify people into a certain category. Brown said only the position descriptions that employees self reported to OHR were used as a basis to change an employee's classification. She emphasized that the work being done in each position was not changed and there was an appeal process employees could follow if they were dissatisfied with their classification. Brown said 10% of the 9,000 employees affected by the JFS filed appeals. Appeal panels consisted of individuals who were knowledgeable of the position and worked within the job family in question; and these panels reviewed all appeals and made the final decision on appeal outcomes. Brown said if panels found a cluster of employees they felt were misclassified, OHR would gather data and reevaluate. Supervisors were involved in the appeals process and employees had a full opportunity to accurately describe the work they were doing. Brown added that of the appeals filed, 40% were granted and job descriptions are eligible to be reevaluated in six-month intervals. At that time, if the work performed changed, the classification could be changed.

Brown said decisions on the classification each job description fits into are based on the Fair Labor Standards Act, which defines what is exempt and nonexempt work. Exempt work is paid as a salary and is not eligible for overtime. Also, exempt employees are asked to use more individual judgment and discretion in their work. She said classification changes were made to be compliant with federal law. Brown said the lines between the classifications can be vague, and a "no new entry" classification was created for situations where someone was close to retirement or it did not make sense to reclassify them. No new entry positions will be reclassified once the positions are vacated and posted, she said.

Feeney discussed specific instances of individuals who have a high degree of multi-tasking within their positions. Feeney said that in some cases, one multitasking position performs the work of many positions. He said such individuals with various talents were being forced to fit within a specific job title and category. He asked if the University was making it difficult for smaller departments to employ a few multitasking employees at a higher rate rather than multiple employees at a lower rate. Brown said the classification system accounts for multitasking in positions, and positions are classified according to where the majority of the responsibility is.

Seashore provided examples of frustrations from within her department regarding both implementation of the JFS and the appeal process. Brown responded that OHR fully values both the employees and the work performed within the University. She said the JFS created a system allowing OHR to consistently perform regular job reviews within each classification. Brown said the previous job classification structure at the University made it very difficult to perform gender and equity studies to ensure various demographics are properly represented in each job family; and, once the JFS is completed such studies can occur. Brown said the goal of was to create a system of classifying positions correctly on the front end of hiring while considering experience and educational training. OHR wants a job classification system that works for the University, is sustainable over time, and accurately reflects the work employees perform, Brown said.

Feeney said he was under the impression that once an appeal had been denied, there were no other avenues to protest an employee's classification. He asked for clarification because, he said, Brown seemed to be saying there were other options for appeal. Brown said if an

employee's work changes, they could always seek a review of their classification. She said that employees could go to HR leads in their colleges or departments, or directly to central OHR to discuss individual concerns. Brown said OHR's main focus should be recruiting and retaining the best employees at the University and if this is not happening, OHR wants to discuss concerns with employees. Brown said that previously, there was no clear career path for employees and the JFS is attempting to create standardization in job descriptions and job paths so that employees understand how a job change might advance their career.

Brown explained the shift of employees within the various classifications and provided preliminary numbers:

- 9,152 employees went through the JFS
- CS to P&A: 1,088
- P&A to CS: 383
- P&A/CS to labor represented: 83

Ms. Kara Kersteter asked if identifying data was stripped out of the decision making process, as there was a concern of gender bias in the process. Dion said the individual position description OHR reviewed had the employee's name, ID number, department, and supervisor's name. She said there was no information collected about gender, pay, age, or ethnicity. Brown said protected classes were not considered in the reclassification process. Fitch said that the IT group, which is typically male, had large numbers that moved up in classification. She said the administration family, which is typically female, had large numbers move down in classification. Professor Sandra Potthoff expressed that there is a lot of mission critical work done by females that does not show up in job descriptions. Professor Jennifer Gunn added that when she read the descriptions in her unit, she thought they had no connection to what the employee "actually" did. Dion reiterated that each job description came from actual position descriptions employees self submitted to OHR and the descriptions do not cover the full range of work performed. She said OHR is working to create more specific and accurate descriptions.

Seashore asked if data other than the engagement survey was collected to assess employee feedback regarding how they felt about the JFS. Brown said specific data was not collected related to how employees felt about the process. She said the focus should be the ongoing, systemic processes put into place that work to ensure people are properly classified when new employees are hired or their work duties change. Brown added that having employees in the same department, performing the same work, classified differently, and receiving different pay, does not foster satisfaction among employees, either. She said the JFS goal was the creation of a rational system, which can be sustained over time, allowing supervisors and employees to use it and apply it in an appropriate way.

Brown thanked members for their feedback. Feeney thanked everyone for attending.

Hearing no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Avonna Starck
University Senate Office