

2016-17 UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

NOVEMBER 10, 2016

CIVIL SERVICE SENATE MINUTES: No. 1

The first meeting of the Civil Service Senate for 2016-17 was convened in 300 Morrill Hall on Thursday, November 10, 2016, at 10:02 a.m. System campuses were linked by video. Checking or signing the roll as present were 14 civil service members. Chair Duane Orlovski presided.

1. OFFICE FOR CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Director, Julie Showers

Discussion

Julie Showers, director of the Office for Conflict Resolution (OCR), joined the meeting to talk about her office and the services that it provides. OCR is a long-standing office at the University and provides assistance to employees who are involved in conflict in the workplace. She said that OCR reports through the Office for Equity and Diversity, but its work is independent from the rest of the University and any consultation it provides to employees is confidential. She also felt that the role she plays is multi-partial in that she can tell each party what she sees as the strengths and weaknesses in their individual positions.

She stated that her office has two ways in which it helps employees. One is a formal resolution process in which an employee files a petition and there is a hearing on the issue. Only a small percentage of cases go through the formal process. This is a low number each year, but is a time consuming process in each case. The second option is an informal process. It allows an employee a chance to be heard, and for OCR to provide support and options to resolve the conflict.

Julie Showers then reviewed the annual report numbers from 2015-16. OCR had 186 informal consultations in FY 16; 65 from faculty, 65 from P&A, 34 from civil service, 17 from students, and five from other types of employees. This represented a 20 percent increase in consultations from the previous year. Of the 186 matters, ten resulted in the filing of a petition..

The common issues that she sees at OCR include:

- An employee acting in a way that is disruptive to another employee
- For civil service employees, having a dispute about the Employment Rules or a concern about inconsistent application of the Rules.
- Salary equity
- Non-renewal for P&A
- Harassment or discrimination associated with a protected identity – employees can choose to use OCR or the Office for Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action (EOAA) but not both offices
- Discipline and discharge
- Poor communication or not receiving a response, either as there is no answer or because someone does not want to provide a response

She said that most people do not like conflict and the basic instinct is to avoid confrontation if possible. However, this does not help to resolve most situations and instead frustration can come through in unpredictable ways. It also leads to units not being able to retain or recruit staff, which has a significant toll on the productivity, health and well-being of other employees. Training on conflict resolution can help employees and managers to resolve situations before they are out of control, but training is not available or accessible for most managers.

Q: What does OCR do if an employee reports an illegal activity?

A: OCR is not an office of official report so her duty is to direct an employee to which office can receive a report.

Q: Is OCR available system-wide?

A: Yes. She does travel to Morris twice a year and needs to reactivate her presence at Duluth.

Q: What is OCR's involvement with the Bias Response Team (BRT)?

A: OCR is not part of the BRT and is not involved in its work. The BRT is focused on responding to incidents related to someone's identity. A situation may result in a formal complaint directed to EOAA for investigation. While employees can also bring concerns regarding harassment and discrimination based on harassment to the OCR, OCR also addresses employee concerns that are not connected to identity.

In conclusion she talked about how to deconstruct conflict by taking a step back from the incident that has created conflict and talking directly to the person involved in the conflict instead of co-workers. She then said that she is trying to recruit civil service employees who are willing to serve as advisors for other civil service employees going through the formal process. At this time there are no civil service advisors. If anyone is interested, she asked them to contact ocr@umn.edu.

2. CIVIL SERVICE SENATE ORIENTATION

Duane Orlovski then provided a short orientation for all Civil Service senators. He reviewed the structure of the University Senate and the role that the Civil Service Senate and Civil Service Consultative Committee (CSCC) play. He noted that meetings are run according to Robert's Rules of Order and the Civil Service Senate Constitution, Bylaws, and Rules. This body is in charge of approving proposed amendments to the Civil Service Employment Rules, after which they are sent to the Regents for final approval. He then reminded senators that attendance is taken for all CSCC and Civil Service Senate meetings, so members should contact Becky Hippert if they cannot attend.

3. CIVIL SERVICE CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE REPORT

Duane Orlovski provide the Civil Service Consultative Committee (CSCC) report. He began by thanking Ray Muno for running for CSCC chair-elect last spring. The October CSCC featured a lengthy discussion with members of the Bias Response Team (BRT). That group does not investigate cases of bias but instead serves as a referral service and record-keeper. The BRT website will launch in November.

He said that civil service employees are still interested in 100 percent coverage for the Regents Scholarship program. Last fall the three employee consultative committees decided to work together on this issue but were then stopped by the faculty unionization effort. He noted that this item is still on the issues list but until the unionization effort is resolved the administration cannot make any changes to the program.

Lastly he and Ray Muno had a meeting Vice President Kathy Brown and Patti Dion from the Office for Human Resources (OHR). Numbers from the Job Family Study (JFS) were again discussed and he asked again about changes in numbers for minority, female, and senior

employees. OHR said that they did not track these numbers during the JFS and would not be recreating this data.

4. CIVIL SERVICE SENATE SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

Compensation and Benefits (C&B)

As Terri Wallace, C&B chair, was not at the meeting, Ray Muno provided a short report. He said that they had been speaking with OHR regarding the effects on civil service employees from the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) changes. Approximately 100 V-class employees who make under the salary minimum will be left as V-class but will now be eligible to receive overtime.

Rules

Jean Otto reported that the Regents approved changes to the Employment Rules last spring. She is working on another set of changes this year focused on vacation accrual, voting in elections, in-range salary adjustments, the JEQ process, references to 'classification in the same position', and unit seniority, layoffs, and bumping rights. If senators have other issues or sections that should be reviewed, please forward those to her.

5. NOMINATIONS FOR SENATE COMMITTEE ON COMMITTEES

There are two civil service seats on the Senate Committee on Committees (ConC). Dana Hurley is filling one seat and there is one open seat. Any civil service employee can be nominated to fill this seat. It was determined that nominations would be taken after the meeting.

6. ELECTION FOR 2016-17 CIVIL SERVICE CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE 1 Open Seat from Provost Area Action

There is one open seat from the Executive Vice President/Provost area on the Civil Service Consultative Committee (CSCC). Only members from the Executive Vice President/Provost are eligible to be nominated and elected to these seats. However, any Civil Service Senate member may make a nomination.

Michele Chilinski was elected to fill this seat.

7. TOPICS FOR 2016-17 Discussion

Duane Orlovski said that topics were collected last year from civil service employees but those have been exhausted. He asked senators for additional items that the Civil Service Consultative Committee (CSCC) should be working on this year.

Senators made the following suggestions:

- Standardization of performance reviews – if these are to be used for merit reviews then an online performance evaluation tool should be used for equity among employees
- Career progression – all job ladders move civil service employees into P&A classifications

8. QUESTIONS FOR CIVIL SERVICE CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE MEETING WITH PRESIDENT KALER AND VICE PRESIDENT BROWN

Discussion

Senators suggested the following questions for President Kaler:

1. What is the status of the system-wide strategic planning process? How can civil service employees be involved?
2. How can we better ensure that services funded through cost pool allocations are offered equivalently at the system campuses? What do we do if we feel that is not happening?
3. What is the current relationship between the Twin Cities and system campuses? There is some concern that there is a conflict of interest when you are both President of the University system and the chief person in the Twin Cities. Is there a way that this relationship can be changed?
4. How will your interactions with senior leaders change with the start of the new Senior Vice President?

Senators suggested the following questions for Vice President Brown:

1. How was the current job family ladder developed? Is there a rationale for every job family progressing from civil service to P&A as an employee advances? Does this limit an employee's ability to advance if there are disadvantages to moving from CS to P&A due to the benefit packages available to each classification?
2. What makes CS and P&A job classifications distinct now that FLSA changes have made some P&A overtime eligible and degree requirements for P&A positions can be waived?
3. What is OHR's vision for the job classification system in 5 yrs and 10 yrs? Do you envision that the percentage of employees in bargaining unit, CS, and P&A classifications will change? If so, how? How can the CSCC work with OHR to ensure that this transition goes smoothly for employees involved?
4. Do you believe that the CS Employment Rules are out of step with the current employment structure, or may be in the future? If so, what changes should be considered by CSCC?
5. How can CSCC better ensure that you are informed of business items being discussed and acted on by CSCC?

9. OLD BUSINESS

NONE

10. NEW BUSINESS

Ray Munro said that he has been staffing the civil service table at New Employee Orientation (NEO). The focus at the event is now on University governance with the inclusion of P&A and faculty. He asked senators who were interested in staffing the table to contact him.

11. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 11:30 a.m.

**Rebecca Hippert
Abstractor**