

P&A Consultative Committee (PACC)
March 18, 2021
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 represent the views of, nor are they binding on, the senate, the administration or the Board of Regents.

[**In these minutes:** Call to Order and Welcome; Discussion with President Joan Gabel; Civil Service Consultative Committee Report; P&A Consultative Committee Chair and Chair-elect Reports; P&A Subcommittee Reports; Demilitarization Resolution]

PRESENT: Erin Heath (chair), Scott Creer, (chair-elect), Leigh Allen, Emily Becher, Chelsie Bohlman, Adolfo Carrillo Cabello, Tracey Hammell, Missy Juliette, Monica Kocon, Maureen Long, Anna Milone, Noelle Noonan

GUESTS: Joan Gabel, president, University of Minnesota, Katie Stuckert, senior assistant to the president, Office of the President

1. Call to Order and Welcome

Chair Erin Heath called the meeting to order and welcomed committee members. She thanked President Gabel for attending the meeting and invited her to begin her presentation.

2. Discussion with President Joan Gabel

President Gabel thanked the committee for the invitation to meet with them and gave a prepared report that included the following updates:

- Dr. Calvin Philips joined the University on March 1, 2021, as vice president and dean of students, Office for Student Affairs.
- A new administrative position, senior advisor to the president for Indian affairs, is expected to be filled by the end of April 2021.
- A search for the vice president of Human Resources is underway.
- The University will conduct a national search to replace Chris Cramer, vice president for research, who will be leaving the University to join Underwriters Laboratories as that organization's senior vice president and chief research officer. Michael Oakes will serve as interim vice president for research.
- The [President's Initiative for Student Mental Health](#) (PRISMH) has started its work with Professor Tabitha Grier-Reed and Maggie Towle, senior associate vice president, Office for Student Affairs, as co-chairs.
- Gabel has appointed Dr. Kathy Quick, associate professor, Humphrey School of Public Affairs, and Dr. Mylene Culbreath, associate director, Diversity and Inclusion Consulting, Graduate School, as co-chairs of the newly formed M-Safe Implementation Team. M-Safe is tasked with more closely examining and implementing recommendations from Dr. Cedric Alexander's final report regarding safety and policing on campus.
- Michelle Behr will retire as chancellor of the Morris campus in the summer of 2021. Janet Ericksen will serve as acting chancellor at Morris for two years, with the support of

Mary Holz-Clause who will serve as acting executive chancellor of both the Morris and Crookston campuses for a period of two years.

Gabel then responded to questions that she had received from PACC members in advance of the meeting.

- P&A staff, who are able to work from home should plan to do so until at least August 2, 2021. Administration is planning as if the projections for vaccination distribution will be met, and everyone who wishes to be vaccinated before the fall semester will be. At this time, administration is preparing for a fully in person fall semester.
- Gabel recognizes that offering flexible work schedule options must be considered in order to remain competitive in recruiting and maintaining employees.
- Gabel understands that taking time off has been virtually impossible for many staff, and is working with the Office of Human Resources (OHR) to address staff reaching their maximum accrued vacation hours. Administration expects that staff should not lose earned vacation time.
- Administration has been advocating for faculty, staff, and students to be considered for a group vaccination application.
- Executive Vice President and Provost Rachel Croson has hired Professor Amy Pittenger in a quarter time position, to steward the academic affairs side of online learning, what it means regarding a possible culture shift on campus, and rolling out any proposed changes in the most effective way.
- The S/N grading modality will continue through summer. Summer in person classes will continue to require six feet of distancing in classrooms.

Scott Creer reiterated concerns from constituents regarding reaching their maximum accrual limit for vacation days. He said he believes the problem lies with deans and department heads not thoroughly understanding the workload pressures many staff are under. Due to time consuming budget modeling requirements, the higher than expected use of the retirement incentive option (RIO), layoffs, and hiring freezes, many departments are severely understaffed and overworked. It is unreasonable, Creer said, for deans and department heads to tell OHR that there is no need to offer the vacation deferral option in their departments, because they - deans and department heads - are telling their staff they can take time off whenever they like. However, Creer stated, there is no possibility for staff to take vacation days amidst such workloads.

Gabel said discussing this problem with her cabinet and at deans council meetings would reach those people that Creer is recommending be brought into the issue. Gabel said she and her staff are definitely aware of the issue, but good solutions have not been arrived at yet. Heath added that addressing the inconsistencies of policy use from unit to unit and working toward a balanced approach would be a desired outcome of the president's talks with leadership.

Adolfo Carrillo Cabello shared with President Gabel concerns he has heard from instructional P&As. While these staff members have been engaged in the back to work/campus conversations, they feel they are not being heard when expressing their concerns about the potential risks to themselves and their families. The sentiment is, he added, that back to work/campus protocols are favoring tenured/tenure-track faculty. Gabel recommended speaking with Provost Croson

regarding this matter and said she and Kate Stuckert would reach out to the provost and assist in arranging a meeting with the provost and her staff.

Creer asked Gabel to consider and provide support for the population of faculty and students with small children (who will not have been immunized by the time fall semester begins) regarding return to work/campus policies. Gabel said there is no intention to ask anyone to risk theirs or their families' safety in regards to returning to campus. Administration will continue to work in step with the Minnesota Department of Health and will make recommendations as the situation continues to unfold.

In the interest of time, Heath said she would follow up on remaining questions with Stuckert after the meeting, and thanked Gabel for her time.

3. Civil Service Consultative Committee Report

A written report, provided by Missy Juliette, chair-elect, Civil Service Senate/Civil Service Consultative Committee (CSCC), is included in [this document](#).

After Juliette cited the main points of her report, Heath noted that she and Creer would also be meeting with Cherrene Horazuk to discuss a proposed initiative against bullying in the workplace, and it might be a good project for P&A and civil service leadership to work on jointly.

4. P&A Consultative Committee Chair and Chair-elect Reports

Heath used this time to ask committee members to review the [list of questions](#) provided to President Gabel prior to the meeting and respond as to which - if any - they felt needed further discussion or clarification.

PACC members had a robust discussion about the strong and supportive messages regarding transparency and consistent use of policy and procedure coming from the Office of the President. The frustration committee members share is that there are little to no measures in place to ensure that deans and department heads follow the president's directives, nor are there consequences when they don't. Heath said she would bring the committee's concerns to the Faculty Consultative Committee (FCC) leadership, Phil Buhlmann and Ned Patterson.

The committee then discussed the president's responses to the questions they provided previous to the meeting. Heath asked if there were concerns that the committee felt warranted further attention. After a long discussion, Heath said she would take the following concerns to Stuckert, OHR leadership, and the Office of the Executive Vice President and Provost:

- Student and staff mental health issues - what is the next level of support that can be offered beyond providing a list of on campus resources? How can we move from messaging that is created for over 25,000 staff, to paying attention to individual needs?
- What are the processes for a staff member who is not feeling ready to come back to campus full time? If a list of steps and processes for such staff were provided by either OHR or the Office of the President, could that be shared in an upcoming P&A monthly newsletter?

- How do we encourage deans and unit heads to prioritize a culture (and a budget) that supports mental health and well being?
- How can we address the perceived disconnect between messaging about staff well-being coming from the Office of the President and the Office of the Executive Vice President and Provost and what deans and department heads are actually expecting of their staff?
- Concerns from constituents that they will be forced to work in person commencement events whether or not they feel safe to do so.

5. P&A Subcommittee Reports

Monthly subcommittee reports are included in [this document](#). Heath thanked committee co-chairs for their leadership in advancing key priorities this semester, including the FMLA checklist, increasing engagement in governance, and the development of Policy Pop-up events, which assist P&A staff in better understanding changes to policies that affect them directly.

6. Demilitarization Proposal

The committee discussed the student demilitarization proposal that is to be presented at the March 25th University Senate Meeting for discussion, and again at the April 22nd University Senate Meeting for a vote. Heath said that P&A leadership has been asked to make a statement at the March 25th meeting, and that the message she was proposing would, in essence, state that while P&A leadership, on behalf of its constituents, supports the spirit and the intention of the proposal to balance taking action and the need for security, it cannot support the resolution as it currently stands.

In the interest of time, Heath thanked committee members and adjourned the meeting.

Geanette Poole
University Senate Office