

P&A Consultative Committee (PACC)
January 21, 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; Civil Service Consultative Committee Report; P&A Consultative Committee Chair Report; P&A Subcommittee Reports; Communications and Event Planning Debrief; Report from P&A Members of the Benefits Advisory Committee]

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

REGRETS: Emily Becher

GUESTS: Christine Bakke, member, Benefits Advisory Committee, Shannon Farrell, member, Benefits Advisory Committee, Missy Juliette, chair-elect, Civil Service Senate/Civil Service Consultative Committee, Cynthia Murdoch, member, Benefits Advisory Committee

OTHER: Will Craig, representative, University Of Minnesota Retirees Association

1. Call to Order and Welcome

Chair Erin Heath called the meeting to order and welcomed committee members.

2. Civil Service Consultative Committee Report

Please refer to the [written report](#) provided by Missy Juliette, chair-elect, Civil Service Senate/Civil Service Consultative Committee (CSCC).

3. P&A Consultative Committee Chair's Report

Please refer to the [written report](#) provided by Chair Erin Heath.

Maureen Long asked Heath if she knew the reasoning behind the University hiring an outside efficiency consultant in times of fiscal uncertainty rather than relying on the expertise that is within the University system. Heath ventured her opinions:

- Having an outside consultant, in the eyes of some, lends legitimacy to the process.
- An “outside” set of eyes can be beneficial.
- While an institution seeks outside guidance, it is not required to follow that guidance.
- There is the potential for unintentionally signalling to University employees that their expertise is not valued or trusted.

Scott Creer mentioned his concerns about the [metrics](#) being used/presented as part of President Gabel's Systemwide Strategic Plan and said he was able to share those concerns at the January 21, 2021, Faculty Consultative Committee (FCC) meeting. Comments regarding the current version of the Systemwide Strategic Plan and accompanying metrics may be submitted directly to Bobbie Erichsen, University Senate Office staff who supports the FCC, or Brianne Keeney,

assistant to the president, Office of the President. PACC members recommended that the following questions be submitted:

- What is the overarching purpose of the metrics?
- Will the metrics measure where we stand currently and inform future action, or are they just a marker of where the University is right now?
- Are the metrics a public relations device?

Lastly, Heath spoke briefly about what she finds to be a missing element in the overall consultation process with PACC. When administrators, policy owners, or other speakers consult with PACC and solicit feedback, she would like to see better follow-up communication from them. Heath recommended the follow-up include answers to the following questions:

- How was feedback from PACC received?
- What, if any, changes were made based on that feedback?
- What is the communication plan/timeline for disseminating the information and how can PACC assist in distributing the information to constituents?

4. P&A Subcommittee Reports

Monthly subcommittee reports are linked in [this document](#).

5. Communications and Event Planning Debrief

Heath next recounted a meeting she had with Vickie Courtney, director, University Senate Office, regarding University Senate Office communications protocol and how it affects the rollout of new communications from the P&A Senate/PACC, like the Professional Development and Recognition (PD&R) Subcommittee's initial Policy Pop-Up event. Heath noted that as online engagement with P&A publications increases, creating a clear outline of processes and protocols in subcommittee documents will be extremely helpful for succession planning. Heath said the main take-aways from her meeting with Courtney included:

- Any first-time or newly developed event and accompanying communications plan has to be approved by the PACC chair in consultation with the director of the University Senate Office.
- Once a new project has been approved, only the PACC chair needs to sign off on future occurrences of that project.
- When a subcommittee develops a new process, project, or communication strategy, it should first be presented - by the subcommittee co-chairs - to PACC for review and approval early on in its development.
- Subcommittee workgroups should research to find out if the proposed information, project, or process is already being handled by another unit or department of the University so as not to duplicate efforts.

6. Report from P&A Members of the Benefits Advisory Committee

Next, Heath introduced P&A staff who currently serve on the Benefits Advisory Committee (BAC): Christine Bakke, instructor, University of Minnesota Crookston, Shannon Farrell, librarian, University of Minnesota Libraries, and Cynthia Murdoch, associate director, Institutional Analysis. She asked the BAC members to update PACC on issues that have been at the center of BAC's work during the 2020-21 academic year. Bakke, Farrell, and Murdoch shared the following:

- The BAC reviews employee comments and suggestions regarding benefits packages, shares that information with vendors, reviews the work and products of vendors, and finally makes recommendations to the various vendors as to improvements the committee would recommend.
- The BAC wrote a [letter](#) to Ken Horstman, interim vice president, Office of Human Resources, regarding its concern over proposed rate increases to medical insurance plans offered at the University. The committee held long discussions with Ryan Reisdorfer, health programs manager, Office of Human Resources (OHR), and Mary Rohman Kuhl, interim director of Total Compensation, OHR, regarding the reasons for the increases which included the rising cost of health care along with the rising utilization of medical plans by University employees.
- Discussions continue around the National Plan, how expensive it is, and the ethical components of either providing or denying coverage for certain types of illnesses.

PACC and BAC members then had a discussion as to the best ways to disseminate the information presented at BAC meetings to constituents. Bakke, Farrell, and Murdoch agreed that they would like direction from PACC regarding the most effective way for them to share information they receive at BAC meetings with P&A constituents, and if there are benefits issues or topics that PACC would recommend for inclusion in BAC meetings to let them know.

Creer then asked the BAC representatives if, each month, one of them would attend a meeting of the P&A Benefits and Compensation Subcommittee (B&C) to share information and updates. Bakke recommended that the BAC members or a designee alternate reporting monthly. Heath agreed that such a step would be beneficial and suggested that B&C could then present items to PACC for discussion and action if needed.

PACC members added, in the Zoom chat feature, a few topics they would like to see addressed:

- Has there been a discussion about having costs tied to salary levels in the same way that the furlough/salary reduction was approached? Perhaps, that might be a way to keep the plan funded but approach that funding with a more equity-based lens.
- Issues with coverage for mental health issues. Specifically, University medical plans pay lower rates than the going rates in the broader Twin Cities area, which has caused some patients to be turned away from some clinics/providers.
- The ongoing problem of medical insurance reimbursements for gym attendance and how that has been complicated by COVID-19.

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

Geanette Poole
University Senate Office