

P&A Consultative Committee (PACC)
May 7, 2020
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: Welcome and Introductions; Chair and Chair-elect Reports; P&A Subcommittee Reports; Scheduling June 2020 PACC Meeting; 27th Pay Period Follow-up Discussion; Processes for Working Groups/Sub-Subcommittees/Project Teams; Finance and Operations Planning Work Group Update]

PRESENT: Noelle Noonan (chair), Erin Heath (chair-elect), Ben Anderson, Emily Becher, Scott Creer, Fran Fabrizio, Tracey Hammell, Maureen Long

REGRETS: Lindsey Konerza

Welcome and Introductions: Chair Noelle Noonan began the meeting and called for a round of introductions.

Chair and Chair-elect Reports: Noonan and Erin Heath, chair-elect, reported on the following:

- Weekly meetings with the Finance and Operations Planning Work Group member Michelle Morrissey and Kate Stuckert, senior assistant to the president, Office of the President.
- Meeting with President Gabel on May 5th to preview budget information that would be shared with the Board of Regents (BOR) at its meeting on May 7, 2020.
- The nomination submission period for P&A Senate leadership positions has been extended and the election process will now take place at the May 15th P&A Senate meeting. Noonan asked PACC members to encourage people on their committees to consider running for leadership positions. A short discussion followed with committee members proposing ideas for the best way to run an election via Zoom.

P&A Senate Subcommittee Reports

Outreach

Co-chairs Ben Anderson and Maureen Long reported on the following:

- The review of the New Senator Welcome Packet was completed. PACC members were invited to review and comment on the proposed changes. Long added that there was some concern among subcommittee members that the document is too long and a bit overwhelming for incoming senate members. She recommended omitting repetitive portions to shorten the document.

Professional Development and Recognition (PD&R)

Co-chair Fran Fabrizio reported on the following:

- The winning unit of the P&A Senate Outstanding Unit Award is the Extension Center for Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources. PD&R is finalizing plans to present the award to the winning unit at the May 15th P&A Senate meeting.

Benefits and Compensation (B&C)

Co-chairs Emily Becher and Scott Creer reported the following:

- At its next meeting, B&C will discuss with Mark Sevenich, manager, Employee Relations, Office of Human Resource (OHR), non-renewals in light of COVID-19. P&A staff are reporting they are hesitant to use additional COVID-19 related resources, including additional time off, for fear that this information will influence non-renewal determinations.

Communications

Chair Tracey Hammel reported the following:

- The May 2020 P&A Senate Newsletter will be sent out next week.
- The subcommittee will continue its work through the summer as needed.

Noonan asked that co-chairs be mindful of P&A staff on nine- and ten-month contracts and make sure staff know that their participation in governance during the summer months is welcomed but not mandatory.

Scheduling June 2020 PACC Meeting: After a short discussion committee members agreed that scheduling a June PACC meeting was appropriate, given the number of unresolved major issues the University is currently facing. The meeting is scheduled for June 10th.

27th Pay Period Follow-up Discussion: Noonan told PACC that the 27th Pay Period Work Group had decided to complete its work without sending a resolution or request for action to the administration, and would submit its findings in a report to PACC in June. Noonan said having the work of the group documented and archived for future reference will be important, especially from a historical perspective, as the situation of 27 pay periods in one fiscal year will occur again. Noonan will report the work group's decision at the May 15th P&A Senate meeting.

Heath added that although the work group's attention to the matter is nearing completion, discussions with OHR representatives will need to continue. She said with the 27th pay period, the stated salary freeze, possible furloughs/salary reductions, and possible changes to benefits being considered as the administration addresses the financial climate of the University, employees will undoubtedly appreciate further explanations of how their paychecks will be affected.

Clarification of Process for Working Groups/Sub-Subcommittees/Project Teams: Noonan moved next to a discussion about how working groups, sub-subcommittees, project teams, and ad hoc subcommittees are formed, and what processes should be in place to ensure clear communication among these groups and P&A leadership. Comments from PACC members included:

- The importance of understanding what the reporting lines are. Having a stated charge or charter clearly outlining what the subgroup should be working to resolve, who to report to, and a timeline for completion are good first steps.
- The P&A Senate Bylaws do allow for non-senate members to participate in these smaller groups as long as they are P&A staff.
- Considering that putting an abundance of structure around the work of sub groups may stifle senator participation.

A robust discussion followed as committee members debated the best way to ensure that issues being presented by any faction of the P&A Senate (PACC, subcommittees, work groups, etc.) to administrative leaders were presented in a unified voice. Noonan summed up by saying she hears consensus from members for a *clarified process* for communicating within subcommittees but not necessarily additional rules or limits. Noonan asked committee members what steps they would like to take as the committee transitions to new leadership at the end of June. Committee members said they would like to:

- Formalize responsibilities within the executive group (PACC).
- Share best practices for how to structure subcommittee meetings.
- Schedule either an additional meeting or touchpoint for each subcommittee's co-chairs to meet with the chair and chair-elect, to keep them well informed regarding the subcommittee's activities.
- Continue evaluation of the current P&A subcommittee structure and possible changes.

Finance and Operations Planning Work Group Update:

Noonan then asked PACC members for some tangible thoughts and suggestions that she and Heath could take to their next meeting with the Finance and Operations Planning Work Group.

- Creer said if salary reductions or furloughs were to be imposed, he would hope that staff will be given some flexibility to manage their time in response to their household and living expenses (for example responding to changes in daycare provision, a spouse's employment situation, etc.)
- If and when staffing cuts are made, and in light of the hiring freeze in place, remaining staff will be required to take on the work of those who have been cut *on top of* their own reduction in salary or furlough. What provisions have been made on behalf of staff in this situation?
- Request that employees who are able to take a voluntary salary reduction or furlough be allowed to do so (Noonan cited the example of University of Michigan which allowed faculty and staff to submit themselves for a voluntary reduction and had over 2,000 faculty and staff respond.)

Committee members continued to discuss possible scenarios that, given the financial situation, the administration would be unable to avoid. Heath noted that she thought there would be much more concrete information once President Gabel had reported to the Board of Regents, which was happening at the same time as this PACC meeting. Noonan added that at a meeting with the president earlier in the week, Gabel gave assurances that any staff terminations initiated at this time in the unit level would require review by central OHR as well.

Creer asked if, in their meeting with President Gabel, she had talked about any operational savings that the University was considering or had already taken into account. Noonan responded that on April 27, 2020, an [email from the president](#) was sent to all faculty and staff systemwide containing a link to submit ideas for improving fiscal efficiency and asking that the ideas “focus on ideas that affect our operations, infrastructure, or administrative processes.” Noonan said some of the ideas the president shared at their meeting included:

- Shared services or job sharing
- Getting rid of all fax machines on campus and reverting to scanning
- Reducing the overall number of printers on campus by 50%

Committee members then discussed the range of possibilities for what fall 2020 would look like on campus. Noonan said what she had *not* seen thus far is a modeled scenario of how socially distanced teaching and learning would be achieved at the University. There was some discussion of freshman class numbers, and Creer said, regardless of the size of the incoming class, the sheer density of students and staff living close to campus in University housing will be problematic.

In the interest of time, Noonan adjourned the meeting.

Geanette Poole
University Senate Office