

## **P&A CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE MEETING JANUARY 26, 2015**

[In these minutes: Discussion with Vice President Brown, Updates, Discussion of the CLA Multi-Year Policy Proposal, Discussion with President Kaler]

[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 view of, nor are they binding on the Senate, the Administration, or the Board of Regents.]

**Present:** Katherine Dowd (Chair), Sherri Boone, Sandra Ecklein, Kevin Haroian, Candice Kraemer, Marilyn McClaskey, Cynthia Murdoch, Susanne Vandergon.

**Regrets:** Etty DeVeaux.

**Guests:** Kathy Brown, Liz Eull, President Kaler.

### **1. DISCUSSION WITH VICE PRESIDENT BROWN**

Kathy Brown, Vice President for Human Resources, joined the meeting to discuss updates from her office and answer questions. She said that her office is on board to solve issues in partnership with governance and employees.

**Q:** More than a decade ago there was an exhaustive effort to streamline the academic search process to speed it up and avoid losing top candidates. The Campus Climate report suggests that central EEO approval of hiring pools be added to reinforce the value of diversifying the campus. Do you think this is possible without creating a bottleneck and critical delays in the search?

**A:** As a member of the Campus Climate Committee, she was part of the discussion to look at ways to increase and support diverse hires. They know that the process for hires and searches needs to be improved, but that new employees also need support once they arrive on campus. The Provost is in charge of faculty hires, and her office and the Office for Equity and Diversity are working on staff hires. They all believe that another checkpoint in the process with a focus on diversity will be good and will not delay the process since they have already worked on partnerships to reduce the faculty and staff hiring process time by almost 40 percent.

**Q:** Are offers and their outcomes being tracked to make sure that diverse candidates are coming to campus and not just being made an offer?

**A:** They are looking at ways that this information could be tracked. There are many factors involved in accepting an offer when there is competition for a faculty member or when a spousal hire is involved. These factors mean that the most diverse candidate is not always the one who ultimately fills the position.

**Q:** How is Human Resources involved in faculty hires?

**A:** They are less engaged in the day-to-day operations of these hires but instead speak to candidates regarding benefit options, transitions, and spousal hires.

**Q:** Without knowing the final outcome and number of reclassifications from the Job Family Study, it seems a large number of civil service positions have been changed to P&A. If the civil service ranks are significantly diminished at the end of this process, might it make sense to

eliminate that classification? There is a vast array of vacation benefits for different categories of staff. Some start with low vacation accrual that increase with years of service and incorporate translation of sick leave to vacation and compensatory vacation accrual (V class), as well as allowing 2 years worth to be accumulated. Others start at a higher level as new employees but never increase and can accumulate only 1 year of vacation. Yet another group earns no vacation at all (9-10 month P&A). Do you see a way that this variation could be made equitable across employee groups and types?

A: As the Job Family Study has been done, it is increasingly obvious that there are points of overlap between civil service and P&A jobs. Both classifications have not drastically changed since they were created, yet the nature of the work being done is greatly different. The Job Family Study is being done to more accurately reflect and classify positions based on the work being done. The next logical step in the process is to examine the two employment classifications and redefine them. She can imagine one employee group – professional employees – with the distinction being between exempt and non-exempt according to federal regulations. The hardest part of any change will be managing terms and conditions of employment and benefits. She does not believe that benefits should be taken away if they have been earned by an employee, so a grandfather status might be needed, but uniformity in sick and vacation leaves would be a plus for employees and the University. She knows that this will not be an easy, pain-free process and it will require time and conversation. However this change would allow all employees to be more fairly managed. Once the upgrade and Job Family Study are complete, more focus can be placed on this process.

Q: Following the upgrade and Job Family Study, what is the next priority for your office?

A: Supporting engagement and leadership/talent management.

Q: Will there be a change in how leaves are funded for people paid through sponsored funds, such as by using the fringe pool?

A: Every parent should be entitled to two weeks of paid leave, and birth mothers should also have four weeks of paid sick leave. Her office is leading this discussion with Pam Webb regarding sponsored funding to make sure that there is a consistent approach.

## **2. CHAIR'S REPORT**

Katherine Dowd said that the P&A Senate received a report on the Upgrade at its December meeting. That same month the Regents also heard about the Upgrade and the Job Family Study. At the January Senate Consultative Committee meeting, members were informed that the Upgrade go-live date has been pushed back and should be set for sometime in late spring semester. She will be traveling with Professor Rebecca Ropers-Huilman, Faculty Consultative Committee Chair, tomorrow to meet with governance leaders at the Rochester campus.

Regarding the Upgrade, Cynthia Murdoch stated that February 13 was the previous go-live date, but alternate dates are now possible between mid-March and mid-April. This shift has significant impacts on different areas within PeopleSoft. A new date will not be chosen until the University is 100 percent sure that it can be met.

## **3. SUBCOMMITTEE UPDATES**

### Benefits and Compensation

Marilyn McClaskey said that the subcommittee met with Jackie Singer to discuss the Roth 403B IRA option and how it could be implemented in the future. Karen Ross reported that the Benefits Advisory Committee was informed that the University is still out of compliance with

the Affordable Care Act which will require changes before the 2022 deadline. Patti Dion then spoke about the Job Family Study and Regents Scholarship numbers.

#### Communications

Sandra Ecklein said that her subcommittee has been focusing on the monthly newsletter as well as planning for a P&A survey of communication needs.

#### Outreach

Kevin Haroian stated that the Outreach Subcommittee has subdivided into work teams focused on tasks related to its work plan.

#### Professional Development and Recognition

Sherri Boone said that the Outstanding Unit Award process will take place between February 18 and March 12 this year. The next brown bag is planned for March 24 and will be hosted at Duluth.

### **4. DISCUSSION OF THE CAMPUS CLIMATE REPORT**

Members discussed the report that was released, the staff event on February 5, and the lack of much information concerning staff in the report.

### **5. DISCUSSION OF THE CLA MULTI-YEAR POLICY PROPOSAL**

Kevin Haroian said that the CLA P&A Board met with the interim dean last year regarding the issue of multi-year appointments who asked them to create a proposal. When the new dean candidates were interviewed, this topic was addressed. The person who was chosen, John Coleman, was at an institution that used multi-year appointments.

The proposal that was crafted is similar to the process for continuous appointments. It was reviewed by the dean and CLA human resources with positive feedback but they asked that it be vetted with other groups. The CLA P&A Board does not want to lose momentum, but wants to be sure that the proposal is well-reviewed since it could be a model for other colleges.

Members agreed that this proposal was a good start, but maybe it should be pushed at a system-wide level instead of just by individual colleges. This topic will be discussed again at the February meeting.

### **6. APPROVAL OF THE FEBRUARY SENATE AGENDA**

The agenda was approved as amended.

### **7. DISCUSSION WITH PRESIDENT KALER**

President Kaler then joined the meeting for his annual discussion with the committee.

Q: What is the biggest or most important change you feel we need in our governance area?

A: He is not unsatisfied with governance as it currently is, but he knows that there is more governance here compared to peer institutions. He worked last year with the Faculty Consultative Committee to reduce the number and length of meetings which has allowed them to be more efficient in the work that they now do. For any group, he prefers that a meeting be cancelled instead of creating agenda items just because a date and time is set. He knows that governance work is important but it should not be a full-time commitment. He also knows that time spent on governance is time away from an employee's regular work and can create a burden

on their department colleagues. He challenges all groups to look at what they could stop doing which no one would notice. He does appreciate the usefulness of meeting with each consultative committee as it provides a structure for voicing concerns and hearing about upcoming plans.

Q: The Campus Climate report was just released. What are your views on the report?

A: The University is not a diverse place, does not represent the diversity in the state going forward, and cannot be excellent without this diversity. Everyone needs to be exposed to people who are not like them and students especially need to encounter people who think in different ways and inspire innovation. The University needs to make progress in this area since the burden to represent diversity is overwhelming on the current faculty, staff, and students. The University needs to be attentive to retention and recruitment efforts, committed to growing diverse applicant pools and finalists, and tell its story better.

Q: More than a decade ago there was an exhaustive effort to streamline the academic search process to speed it up and avoid losing top candidates. The Campus Climate report suggests that central EEO approval of hiring pools be added to reinforce the value of diversifying the campus. Do you think this is possible without creating a bottleneck and critical delays in the search?

A: Some people may feel that this process is cumbersome but he sees it as a necessary and knows that EEO can provide a fast turnaround. The University must move away from the status quo.

Q: What do you think is the biggest public relations challenge the U faces right now and how could ordinary staff help change that?

A: Since the Wall Street Journal article was released two years ago, the University has proactively used facts to show what it is doing. Due to the vulnerability in the P&A classification, he asks that staff aggressively talk about what they do at the University and how it translates into productivity and student success. One other factor is that costs for all aspects of the University have changed drastically in the last 50 years which leads to a vastly different experience for today's students. Since 1997, the University is spending 11 percent less per student. In that same timeframe, the state's portion has decreased from 70 percent in 1997 to 42 percent this year. So while the cost at the University has decreased, tuition rates have increased due to the shift from the state. He believes that the University is making progress on this topic with legislators.

Q: What is the status of Government Relations with its new hire?

A: Erin Dady was appointed in December as the Special Assistant for Government Relations. She comes from a position as Mayor Coleman's Chief of Staff in St. Paul and will be a Carlson graduate in May. She is well-connected at the legislature. Her deputies remain, as well as the people in federal and community relations. The Blue Ribbon Committee report from the Governor was good news for the University.

Q: Will the University benefit from the state surplus?

A: The Governor will release his budget tomorrow. In addition to the \$30 million he announced for the Medical School, the University is asking for \$65.2 million to freeze tuition for all in-state students. The February budget forecast will determine what else might be included. The wild card this year is the proposal to offer free tuition for two-year institutions.

Q: There are so many initiatives like Operational Excellence, Strategic Plan, Campus Climate, Employee Engagement, Community Fund (October) and currently Martin Luther King

volunteerism and Legislative activism. All are asking for something from the staff while we are still feeling the effects of the promised \$90M of administration reduction cuts. Where are all these initiatives and why do we start new ones before implementing and showing positive results from previous ones?

A: There are reasons to do each initiative since some have optional participation from employees. Operational Excellence, Strategic Plan, Campus Climate, Employee Engagement all comprise four elements of a healthy organization.

President Kaler then asked members what the administration can do better and what are pain points for employees.

Members made the following comments:

- The trickle-down of employee engagement results was very irregular in the first year
  - President Kaler stated that he agrees that there was no uniformity last year. When he spoke to the vice president and deans, he naively thought that it would happen. He has made this goal much clearer this year so employees should see results in the next few months. He wants to look for ways to more fully engage employees and is still dismayed to see results from employees who are fully disengaged. There is a need for better supervisors. He also knows that some employees are engaged but frustrated by business processes that prevent effective work.
- Great performance should be able to be incentivized but a two percent merit pay pool does not allow this to happen
- There is a rumor that the PEL program has been eliminated, in favor of a program for deans and chairs. This would leave no talent development for mid-level staff.
- Many P&A are supervised by faculty but there is no incentive for them to be a better supervisor since it is not considered during the P&T or annual review process

He then asked members what they are hearing about the Upgrade. Members said that employees are worried due to the postponement announcement but are looking forward to bringing the data together. President Kaler knows that there are big issues with the HR work stream since currently the system cannot pay everyone the right amount at the right time. The Regents understand that the University will not move forward until it can be done correctly. Employees need to be confident when the switch takes place that their work will be made easier.

Q: Is there a way for the University to have continuous improvement in IT instead of requiring big pushes at lengthy intervals?

A: This upgrade should have been done five years ago, then it would not have been such a dramatic technology update. The next IT area requiring attention is the wired and wireless backbone. He acknowledged that physical improvements get left behind as well

Q: Will this upgrade make future updates easier?

A: The hope is yes. This version had less modifications made by the University so it should be easier and cheaper to maintain.

Q: Will x.500 be retired in this upgrade?

A: No.

## **8. OTHER BUSINESS**

With no further business, Katherine Dowd thanked the members for attending and adjourned the meeting.

Becky Hippert  
University Senate