
The University Senate

FACULTY · STUDENT · P&A · CIVIL SERVICE

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

P&A Consultative Committee (PACC)

March 16, 2023

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; Visit with President Joan Gabel; Civil Service Consultative Committee Report; P&A Subcommittee Reports; P&A Chair and Chair-elect Reports]

PRESENT: Adolfo Carrillo Cabello (chair), Whitney Taha Frakes (chair-elect), Toni Abts, Chelsie Bohlman, Scott Creer, Amanda DeLisi, Stacy Doepner-Hove, Marti Fasteland, Monica Kocon, Nancy Sims

GUESTS: Tony Fussy, chair, Civil Service Consultative Committee/Civil Service Senate; President Joan Gabel; Kate Stuckert, director of operations, Office of the President

1. Welcome

Adolfo Carrillo Cabello, chair, P&A Senate/P&A Consultative Committee, welcomed committee members and began the meeting.

2. Visit with President Joan Gabel

[These questions](#), compiled by PACC members, were provided to President Joan Gabel for consideration prior to the meeting.

Carrillo Cabello welcomed Gabel and said that, given the time and location constraints of the meeting, he would share a report that he had hoped to discuss at today's meeting with her via Kate Stuckert. The report is regarding the composition and diversity of new P&A employees hired at the University between June 21, 2021, and June 29, 2022.

Marti Fasteland asked the president to comment on key areas that impact the retention of P&A staff on each of the five campuses, and how the University is working on improving its retention strategies. President Gabel said the University has to start with compensation and make sure that salaries are competitive. She noted that, given the different locations of the University's five campuses, compensation can sometimes be dictated by the city or location one lives in. Now that the workforce is moving toward a greater degree of hybrid work, the benefits and challenges of living in specific locations are changing, she added.

President Gabel acknowledged that some people working at the University could be earning higher salaries elsewhere, and to that end, the administration is working toward making sure

that other benefits like community and belonging, a sense of being respected, and an easily identifiable method for reporting when things are not going well are in place. This is an active partnership with the Office of Human Resources (OHR) and the work that the PEAK Initiative is engaged in. The intention is to create an environment where job descriptions, paths to promotion, and opportunities for raises in salary are clearly and transparently communicated.

Fasteland next asked if the administration will move toward a more definitive approach to assuring that hybrid work arrangements are part of the culture at the University than what is currently outlined on the [OHR Work. With Flexibility website](#). President Gabel said she appreciated the question, and that it is one she hears brought up frequently in discussions with other employers, groups, and organizations. Best practices around hybrid work environments are still emerging, and while the University is willing to be innovative, having best practices to refer to before writing policy would be helpful, she said.

President Gabel said she understands that there are cases when an employee and their supervisor may not agree on whether or not the employee's position and work can be considered for hybrid work arrangements. President Gabel said she would work with her staff to provide PACC with information that could be shared with P&A constituents regarding where to direct such concerns.

Carrillo Cabello shared that a particular pain point for P&A employees has been some of the language used in the Work. With Flexibility guidelines:

- The terms “business purpose” and “work related” are not well defined and this leaves room for a wide range of interpretation which could lead to perceived inequities.
- The non-specific nature of the hybrid work environment and flexible work opportunities at the University is hindering its ability to hire good candidates.

President Gabel said she believes that the demands of hiring and performing fundamental functions at the University will eventually lead to solutions and that more explicit and detailed policy around hybrid work options. In the meantime, she added, providing clarity around the terms “business purpose” and “work related” could start immediately.

Stacy Doepner-Hove asked President Gabel to comment on how she views the Regents Scholarship Program (RS Program) in terms of recruiting and retaining employees, and what she sees as successes and challenges of the program. President Gabel said she was saddened to learn that employees have experienced barriers to accessing the RS Program. She said she sees the RS Program as an important advantage to being a University employee and she wants it to feel like a “pure benefit” for everyone. She said she had not considered how it may affect employees differently based on their lived experience and she would appreciate deeper consultation with PACC members around that issue. President Gabel said she views removing the barriers to accessing the RS Program as one of the more doable and reasonable challenges that administration and PACC can work on together, especially in terms of creating a sense of inclusion and belonging. Doepner-Hove asked the president if OHR and the Office for Equity and Diversity (OED) were currently reviewing the policy and Gabel said that, because of PACC's specific requests and concerns, she would ask OHR and OED to begin looking at the policy.

Carrillo Cabello then asked President Gabel to comment on challenges and opportunities for enhancing transparency around the performance review process for employees. Carrillo Cabello said that he is aware of the numerous resources provided by OHR to assist supervisors in the review process, but there appears to be a disconnect between what is recommended in the resources and employee feedback about their experiences.

President Gabel said she realizes that, while valuable resources are made available, she does not always get feedback on how well or if they are being used. She suggested that her team and OHR could work to include (in the performance review information that is distributed to supervisors) a reminder of and clear instructions regarding the transparency and fairness principles that OHR has identified for inclusion in the review process. President Gabel said she would talk with her staff to see if a point person could be identified for employees who have concerns regarding their own performance review process. She said that for cases where employees may feel that their situation is unfair and causes attendant stress regarding their performance review process, there may be additional resources that the University can put in place.

Kate Stuckert noted in Zoom chat:

- I don't know of a hotline for local concerns re: whether employee roles are appropriate for hybrid or remote work, but anyone can reach out to their local HR director for assistance if having issues with their supervisors. If that is not comfortable to the employee, they can reach out to their central employee relations consultant in OHR. If anyone needs help identifying who that is, feel free to reach out to me anytime.

Carrillo Cabello thanked President Gabel for attending the meeting and moved to the next agenda item.

3. Civil Service Consultative Committee Report

Tony Fussy, chair, Civil Service Consultative Committee/Civil Service Senate, shared points from a written report provided by Matthew Verkuilen, chair-elect, Civil Service Senate/Civil Service Consultative Committee. The written report can be found on this [document](#) (for information only).

Fussy noted that the Board of Regents approved the inclusion of Juneteenth as “an observed holiday to each University calendar systemwide moving forward.” Committee members had a robust discussion around what is meant by “reduced operations” referred to in the memo sent by Ken Horstman, vice president, OHR, and Mercedes Ramírez Fernández, vice president, Office for Equity and Diversity regarding the added holiday. Scott Creer shared language directly from the email: *As with other observed holidays, the University will move to reduced operations, meaning no classes are held and only essential employees are required to work as directed by their supervisor. Employees paid on an hourly rate who are required to work shall be paid at the rate of time and one-half for the hours worked.*

Fussy noted that P&A and civil service employees have different requirements when “reduced operations” is referred to.

4. P&A Subcommittee Reports

Monthly subcommittee reports can be found on this [document](#) (for information only).

Nancy Sims noted that the Benefits and Compensation Subcommittee (B&C) had received concerns from constituents regarding the University's new Employee Assistance Provider, Lyra Health. Sim shared [this article](#) with the committee. Concerns were voiced at the most recent B&C Subcommittee meeting about Lyra Health being a "metrics-focused" provider which has a practice of terminating therapies for patients/users whose cases are described as "too complex". Sims said there are also concerns regarding adherence to patient/user HIPAA requirements, how much information is being collected, and how that information is being used and distributed. Sims added that she had sent an email with questions to Ryan Reisdorfer, health programs manager, OHR, and had not received a response yet.

Carrillo Cabello asked Sims if she would recommend sharing this information with the Faculty Consultative Committee (FCC), to determine if other constituent groups are experiencing similar issues. Sims said she felt other groups should be made aware of the information.

5. Chair and Chair-elect Reports

Carrillo Cabello's report can be found on this [document](#). In particular, Carrillo Cabello noted the following:

- P&A Senate letter to the Board of Regents (BOR) re engagement opportunities:
 - The letter will include endorsements from the P&A Senate (72 senate members endorsed) and P&A serving on the University Senate (20 P&A University senators endorsed)
 - Carrillo Cabello and Taha Frakes are working closely with the University Senate Office and the BOR Office to determine when to send the letter to maximize effectiveness.
 - The letter will be submitted shortly after the new BOR members are appointed.
- Regent Farnsworth will attend the April 7, 2023, P&A Senate Meeting.

Carrillo Cabello asked if PACC members had topics or questions to share with Regent Farnsworth for consideration prior to the meeting. Creer suggested that since the Regents Scholarship Program is associated with a Regents policy ([Board of Regents Policy: Employee Development, Education, and Training](#)) that could be a topic for Regent Farnsworth to consider.

Committee members had a robust discussion regarding the pros and cons of asking the BOR to consider adding tuition benefits for children of University of Minnesota employees to the RS Program; from it being a valuable perk for recruitment and retention of employees to the potential of further alienating Minnesota tax payers and an already reluctant legislature when it comes to funding the University of Minnesota.

Creer added that he hopes the original requests and recommendations regarding barriers to access, discussed in the report titled *Regents Scholarship - Summary of Access Barriers for P&A Employees* (RS Summary), do not get overlooked. Carrillo Cabello said he appreciated that perspective.

Carrillo Cabello then reminded PACC members that the resolution titled *Workforce Reinvestment: Rebuilding a Better U for Employees* (CCL Resolution), authored by the Consultative Committee Leadership (CCL), and which contains references to the RS Summary

will be discussed at the March 30, 2023, University Senate Meeting and presented for a vote at the April 27, 2023, University Senate Meeting. Carrillo Cabello invited PACC members to reach out to him or the P&A senators serving on the University Senate with questions or concerns. He thanked committee members for the discussion and said he would share information from today's meeting with the CCL Resolution authors.

Carrillo Cabello moved the discussion back to possible topics and questions for Regent Farnsworth to consider. Doepner-Hove asked for further clarification about how Carrillo Cabello sees Regent Farnsworth contributing to the April 7th meeting. Carrillo Cabello said he hoped that Regent Farnsworth could address the following:

- Is information coming from governance constituencies helpful to the BOR?
- Is information coming from governance constituencies used to inform the decisions the BOR makes?
- How does the BOR view such information and how would it like to receive it?

Carrillo Cabello noted that this is in keeping with the ongoing discussion regarding the BOR's engagement with the public, and Doepner-Hove agreed that the approach did go hand in hand with what is presented in the P&A letter about engagement that will be sent to the Regents.

Committee members recommended that Regent Farnsworth be made aware of the letter prior to his visit to the April 7th P&A Senate Meeting, if the letter has not been sent to Board members by that date.

The committee discussed possible ways to move the information in the Regents Scholarship resolution forward based on administrative response to today's discussion with President Gabel:

- Table the resolution for now and make future decisions based on how the administration follows through on steps President Gabel committed to at today's meeting.
- Change the resolution to a letter or statement to show support for the administration's efforts and to remind the administration of its stated commitment.
- Craft a letter now that expresses gratitude for the administration's commitment as stated at today's meeting; reiterate what was said, and share with administration that P&A leadership would check in on progress in fall 2023.
- Carrillo Cabello expressed concern about tabling the resolution now; saying that he is particularly familiar with the content of the report/resolution and pushing it to the fall may place unrealistic expectations on the incoming P&A chair.

Carrillo Cabello suggested another possible process would be to create a work plan for moving the requests in the RS Summary forward and outlining milestones and check-in points to track with the administration.

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

Geanette Poole
University Senate Office