

CIVIL SERVICE SENATE MEETING  
Minutes of the Meeting  
June 24, 2015

[These notes 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 notes represent the views of, nor are they binding on, the Senate, the Administration or the Board of Regents.]

In these minutes: [Vote on CSCC candidates; introduction of chair-elect; chair's report; vote to reduce length of employment requirement for CS Senate service; open seats in CS Senate and plan; brainstorming session for 2015-16 topics]

PRESENT: Bill O'Neill, chair; Terry Beseman, Carolyn Davidson, Samantha Duke, Gordon Fisher, Jamil Jabr, Ray Muno, Leann Olson, Duane Orlovski, John Paton, Gail Pinola, Deborah Slavin, Terri Wallace, Jean Wang, Greg Hanson (for Cherie Lemer)

REGRETS: Lynn Hegrenes, Lori Payne, Jenny Nguyen, Douglas Magney

ABSENT: Michael Allen, Susan Cable-Morrison, Brent Engebretson, Maggie Flaten, Munir Nassar, Kim Sin

Chair O'Neill convened the meeting.

### **1. Vote on CSCC candidates**

The ballot for CSCC candidates was comprised of Terri Wallace, Ray Muno, and John Paton. Each of nominations passed unanimously.

Gordon Fisher took nominations from the floor. Jean Wang nominated LeAnn Olson. Olson stated she had been with the University for 17 years, and was currently a Human Resources generalist in the Academic Health Center. The nomination passed unanimously. Fisher asked that Olson submit her 250-word statement of interest to the University Senate staff to be distributed with the meeting minutes (below).

LeAnn E. Olson

I have been a civil service employee at the University of Minnesota since 1997. I started working in Central Payroll and moved to the Department of Neuroscience in 1999. I have always been interested in the University community and have enjoyed working for an educational institution with all of the benefits and "cutting edge" issues that we are surrounded with regularly. I have been on the Civil Service Senate since 2013 and have gained valuable insight into how Civil Service employees contribute to the University of Minnesota. I would really enjoy the opportunity to continue to be involved by being a member of the Civil Service Consultative Committee. I was at the June 24 meeting and feel that we came up with an important list of issues to be addressed in the coming year. Personally, since I am an HR employee, the ESUP project has consumed my life since April 20. Without going into great detail, I believe there are major flaws in this system and improvements have to be made. Until recently, this was not even

acknowledged by University leaders. I hope to be involved in the process to improve this system. I believe my “hands on” experience will be a great benefit to this process and hope to work with all concerned to make improvements.

## **2. Chair’s report**

O’Neill gave a brief overview of his activities the past several months:

- Continues to be involved with the strategic planning sessions, and the team has been focusing on the initiative of collaboration with the community
  - Continues to work on aligning CS with the strategic plan initiatives and engage CS in a meaningful way.
- The employee engagement survey has gone out, and information about the survey is being communicated, including plans to engage staff more thoroughly over the next year.
  - There will be one more survey next fall.
- Worked with several individuals through their departments and the Office of Human Resources (OHR) about how the job classification system redesign affected them
- The Compensation and Benefits subcommittee had been very successful the past year with Terri Wallace as chair.
- Continued to work to communicate to constituents what CSCC is working on and the need for subcommittee membership
- Two civil servants have been appointed to Committee on Committees
- Attempts to arrange visits to system campuses were unsuccessful
- The CSCC was working with OHR leadership to conduct listening sessions with CS constituents

O’Neill thanked the Senate Office for its help in working through the new directions and initiatives for Civil Service. He wished Fisher and Orlovski the best of luck in the coming year and said he would continue to serve in an ex officio role. Fisher expressed his appreciation for Terri Wallace and all her work as chair of the Benefits and Compensation subcommittee, saying those issues affected every single constituent.

## **3. Introduction of the 2015-16 chair-elect**

Gordon Fisher introduced 2015-16 chair-elect Duane Orlovski. Orlovski spoke briefly about the communications initiative, including the Twitter feed and the blog.

## **4. Open seats in the CS Senate and plan moving forward**

Fisher directed the senators' attention to a presentation illustrating the current state of Civil Service representation in University governance. Overall, there are approximately 30 open seats in the CS Senate. As well, there are openings on the Civil Service Consultative Committee (CSCC), which can only be filled from the CS Senate. There are approximately 22 open Civil Service seats on the University Senate, and seven additional openings on University committees.

Fisher noted:

- The CS Senate has suffered from a lack of action over the past 3-4 years
- There has been significant leadership turnover the last 3-4 years
- The organization of CS governance has fallen into disrepair

Fisher stated his belief that the right issues would draw in constituents to participate, and their priority must be increasing participation in the CS Senate. This, Fisher said, would stabilize the ability to represent constituents effectively.

Fisher noted one key action would be to lower the employee requirement for participation from two years to one year. A motion to this effect was passed in the CSCC. Further, Fisher said, the CS Senate must determine the issues that should be incorporated into its platform. To that end, Fisher said, the senators would participate in a brainstorming exercise later in the meeting to determine those issues. They would also develop listening sessions for Civil Service employees across campus. Fisher went on to say that once the issues are defined, they needed to:

- Engage constituents in under-represented areas
- Request explicit support from deans for staff participation in governance
- Visit all system campuses in the next year by CSCC members as able

Fisher said if these components all came together, they would be able to fill Senate seats by 2016-17 and move forward as a national model for engaging staff in governance.

Terry Beseman asked if the senate seats could be filled mid-term, and Fisher replied yes. Fisher said there would be an email communication from the chair to constituents regarding open seats, and guidelines for how people could participate in governance.

Jamil Jabr said there was a fear factor that ought to be addressed. He was in the Office of Information Technology (OIT) which was the first area for review with the job classification system redesign, and the CIO made it clear that if one stayed in civil service it was clear he or she was no longer interested in advancing. Jabr said the message from a University vice president was that being a civil servant was a major negative. Fisher acknowledged that kind of message would have an affect on people but added he felt it was a unique incident. Fisher said he didn't believe this was the message or attitude in other areas of the University.

Fisher went on to illustrate an alternate scenario:

- Survey tools would be used to further explore constituents' concerns
- Engage survey respondents to serve
- Continued engagement issues - survey constituents and gauge desire for representation
- Explore new models for representation

Wallace added that academics was considering unionizing again, and in CLA they would be going to multi-year contracts. O'Neill said it was important for civil servants to communicate with P&A to understand what they do and areas of crossover, and ways in which civil service and P&A complement each other. Fisher said that one issue that seemed to have surfaced from the job classification system redesign was if it served the University to have the different employee groups and different gradations. Gail Pinola said it was also important to pay attention

to what was happening with AFSCME, and that civil service salaries are based on what the unions negotiate. Fisher agreed, saying there was no harm in engaging AFSCME leaders in discussions, assuming they were willing to have those conversations. Wang noted there were a lot of civil service employees who had moved into union positions. Beseman asked about constituents filling positions that exceeded the at-large or other positions, and if those seats could be filled with people who were available and willing. Fisher said being that the Senate is a representative structure and according to the bylaws of the constitution, they could not. While there can be no representation from one group, the representation from another group cannot be increased. Fisher said there is a structured alternate position that existed for the different groups. For example, an at-large senator would work to cultivate an alternate. Beseman said he felt this structure was a major disadvantage and a goal that would be very difficult to attain. O'Neill said messaging from the President's office to deans and chancellors about the importance of participation was critical. Fisher said once civil service determined the issues to work on and there was something to actually promote, it was much more likely that people would want to be engaged. The main thing, Fisher noted, was they must come up with issues to rally around.

#### **5. Vote to reduce length of University employment requirement for Civil Service Senate service**

O'Neill said this idea had been percolating for the past year and the CSCC had approved the motion. Fisher pointed out that new employees could join subcommittees until they were eligible to serve in the Senate.

A motion was passed to lower the employee tenure for participation from two years to one year for civil service employees. Motion seconded. Hearing no further discussion, the motion to lower the required term passed unanimously. The motion will be submitted to the Board of Regents for approval at its September 2015 meeting.

#### **6) Brainstorming session: 2015-16 topics for Civil Service Senate and Civil Service Consultative Committee**

The senators then broke up into small groups to brainstorm topics and issues for Civil Service Senate. Upon reconvening, they then shared the results among the larger group, and Fisher summarized and prioritized the ideas.

The issues garnering the most votes were:

- Enterprise System Upgrade Project (ESUP) Feedback: the CS Senate believes there is room for improvement in the current PeopleSoft environment, and feels strongly that the increased time to perform job functions must be included in the measure of expense in any system enhancement. Opportunities will be explored to engage in a dialogue with University leaders over the course of the next session to develop improved efficiency and user satisfaction whenever possible.
- Merit Pay: the CS Senate has raised concerns about the effectiveness of the current system from two perspectives. The first is that the potential increases supported under the current merit pay system are more in keeping with a cost of living increase as opposed to a percentage that truly incentivizes or rewards employee performance. The

second issue is a concern that performance appraisals are handled differently from unit to unit. This means high-performing employees may not have equal opportunity to earn merit increases on the higher end of the scale simply because of their unit-level performance appraisal practices.

- Regents Scholarship: the CS Senate feels strongly that the Regents Scholarship benefit should fully cover the costs of all coursework at the University for all employees with a 75% or greater appointment. The current policy and the accompanying tax implications place continued coursework beyond a primary degree out of reach for many Civil Servants.
- Civil Service Rules: a dialogue with the Office of Human Resources will ensue to review the rules governing the Civil Service classification. This should be done with some regularity and will allow discussion of constituent concerns and requests regarding a variety of topics that have been submitted to the CS Senate over the last year. These areas of concern have included leave benefits, probationary policy and execution, and others.

Other issues receiving votes:

- Obtaining and distributing trends and metrics regarding the job classification system redesign
- Review of enforcement of HR rules (seek standardization and expose discrepancies)
- Improve access to and support from deans and the President
- Improve resources and communications directed to system campuses
- Review of UMN civil service benefits vs. those of other state employees
- Aligning P&A and CS family leave policies
- Changing the listing of who can be cared for under UMN CS benefits
- Sick leave paid out at termination
- Greater CS senate engagement in the sunseting of V class
- Improve the probation review process
- Wellness program: is the program effective? Is the program handling private data effectively?
- Improve ULearn ease of use
- Review the HR definition of CS and P&A classes? Are these still accurate/relevant?
- Increase bereavement leave

O'Neill thanked the CSCC and CS Senate for its work, and thanked Orlovksi and Fisher for their help during his service as chair.

Hearing no further business, O'Neill adjourned the meeting.

Mary Jo Pehl  
University Senate