

University of Minnesota Morris Digital Well
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Consultative Committee

Campus Governance

2-21-2013

Consultative minutes 02/21/2013

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Recommended Citation

Consultative Committee, "Consultative minutes 02/21/2013" (2013). *Consultative Committee*. 41.
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Consultative Committee
Moccasin Flower Room
February 21, 2013
9:00 – 10:00 a.m.

Committee members present: Co-chairs Brook Miller and LeAnn Dean, Chad Braegelmann, Jim Hall, Nancy Helsper, Bonnie Tipcke, Zach Van Cleve, Heather Waye

Minutes:

The minutes for 2/7/13 and 2/14/13 were approved with minor corrections.

Negative Work Environment:

Brook asked committee members what they wished to do about the issue of a negative work environment at Morris. He distributed copies of a handout with a list compiled from member emails telling of behaviors either experienced by members themselves or reported to them. The first paragraph is an issue that was brought to LeAnn last fall, the second and third paragraphs were issues from Brook's contacts, and the rest were from committee members' reports.

Brook noted that the reports are vague. Do we want to use these to communicate to Sarah, Jacquie, or another group? Jim thought the reports should be shared in some way. Brook added that it is a concern that only 36% of Civil Service/Bargaining Unit (CSBU) staff in the audit were not worried that there might be retaliation for reporting bullying. Bonnie said we need to address this. Some staff have resigned from the University because of bullying.

Brook asked the committee if it would be okay to report on this issue to Sarah Mattson and Jacquie Johnson. Should we invite them to a meeting or have the co-chairs go meet with them? There was agreement that they should be invited to a Consultative Committee meeting. Brook asked about a memo on this topic. Should we a) build our own list from information gathering, or b) use the list as it now appears. One idea is to send out an email about the "Troy initiatives." Another approach would be to elicit suggestions for how to improve things (see paragraph at the top of page two of the handout).

Bonnie asked about the current state of Troy's initiative. Brook said he is pursuing this through MASA (the P&A employee group organization). He has in mind a civility book club, and has looked at programs being used in corporations and in the classroom. One of the ideas from Troy is to send out "25 rules of considerate conduct" in a piecemeal fashion, similar to the weekly recipes sent out by Angie Berlinger for wellness. We would need to introduce the conversation and the need for sharing the 25 rules first. Troy liked the idea of targeting allies or witnesses and the "Apples" training that is on the web. Sarah had talked to him about that.

Nancy commented that it might be difficult for people to know how to respond to the survey question on page two of the handout about resources and processes that we need on this campus. Perhaps we should do some research and come up with a list of suggestions from which the respondents could choose the ones they thought would be most effective.

Chad wondered if we might also have a problem with people who are too sensitive and take offense when most people would not. Is there training to de-sensitize people to have a little thicker skin? Heather agreed that we need to sort out when someone is making too much of a behavior. Who would be the person to do that? Chad said in his capacity as coach, he looks to see if one person is complaining about a bunch of people or if a bunch of people are complaining about one person.

Bonnie said part of the problem is that people who do make a report feel that they haven't been heard. She has worked with staff with problems of this nature and they felt they were fighting the administration along with the perpetrator. Nancy noted from her experience many years ago as an Entry Level Sexual

Harassment Officer, that the law restricts what information in an investigation or resulting action that can be shared with the complainant. In most cases, nothing could be shared at all.

Heather suggested that the committee needs to make the problem clear and then attempt to find a way to increase the will of various groups to deal with the issue. We could ask groups to deal with the matter from within their own organizations/units. We would need to give them tools, but first they need the will to confront the issue. Bonnie agreed that we need to get the message out that this type of behavior is not acceptable.

Jim said he was not sure what the next step should be so that we make an impact. Heather thought that targeting allies might be a good step. We would also make people aware of a problem they might not know about. LeAnn mentioned that the committee's role would include building a sense of community here. Heather said an email on this would assure people that they are not alone if they are having this type of problem at work.

Brook said he wants to make this issue visible, but he is also aware that what we know is rather vague. Bringing some suggestions for resources might be a good idea. We need ways to generate the will to improve this as well. We could meet with Sarah and Jacquie a little later and say what initiatives we would like to see happen. We could say that we do think there is a problem and explain what action we are proposing.

Chad wondered how much of a problem there really is. Is it large enough to merit our time? Sometimes people hear about something and hone in on it, making it larger than it really is. Jim thought the low 36% in the audit who thought they would be protected if they reported hostile behavior is a concern. The results of the latest PULSE survey pointed to bargaining units reporting the most hostile behavior across all five campuses. Bonnie noted that bargaining unit issues tend to be somewhat invisible on campus. It is difficult to find Teamsters willing to serve on campus committees. We could talk to supervisors about that.

Nancy wondered if the committee should just put its support behind Troy's MASA initiatives, rather than to try to figure out some actions separately.

Brook said he is hearing support for bringing these concerns to Jacquie and Sarah. He is not hearing a consensus in favor of a survey. We need to brainstorm the initiatives that would be supportable. We are not the group who will ultimately do the work on this. He would propose the following:

- 1) We hold off on doing an employee survey.
- 2) Brook talks to Troy to see what we could do to get behind his initiatives.
- 3) The committee meets with Jacquie and Sarah to brainstorm how to address a range of issues from incivility to bullying to morale.

Jim suggested that the committee needs to meet with Troy to see if we do support his initiatives. Brook said we could meet with Troy first and set up a meeting with Jacquie for later on. Nancy suggested that it might make sense in this context to invite Sarah and Troy to meet with us together, so we are all on the same page. There seemed to be agreement for this idea. Brook said he would invite Sarah and Troy to a meeting soon, and then we would send an email to Jacquie.

Jim noted that he and Colleen would be reporting on the audit at the next meeting, and do an overview of audits, what was covered, what was in the audit report (share the PDF), and compare it to the last one. They will also share results and action plans. This will probably take an hour.

The meeting with Sarah and Troy will be scheduled on March 7, if possible.

The meeting adjourned at 10:00 a.m.

Submitted by

Nancy Helsper