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Consultative minutes 10/01/2015

Consultative Committee

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Minutes of the Consultative Committee
October 1, 2015
Prairie Lounge
4:00 PM

Present: Brenda Boever, Dean Doneen, Julie Eckerle, Lisa Harris, Megan Jacobson, Jane Kill, Michelle Page, Ted Pappenfus, Elsie Wilson

Absent: Kelly Asche, Rita Bolluyt, Jayne Blodgett

Guests: Matt Zaske (MASA Steering Committee co-chair)

Approved minutes from 9/25/2015.

Co-chair updates:

The co-chairs collected feedback about the search committee proposed by Membership Committee and the feedback was forwarded to the Membership Committee.

Topic 1: P&A issues, with guest Matt Zaske (MASA Steering Committee co-chair)

An issue that keeps coming up on campus is concern about the new job classifications and how promotion is impacted by that. We wanted to get more feedback about this before we speak to any administrators or other people.

The Benefits and Compensation subcommittee of the P&A Senate meeting got postponed so there was no new information from that venue. Therefore, the discussion was rooted in recollections and experiences of committee members and Matt.

Following the job classification study, Matt had heard that some areas/units/job families have a more identified framework (level 1, 2, 3, etc.). This implies a promotional track. But to date, how that actually gets applied is determined by University of Minnesota Human Resources and individual units. The system presents the possibility of moving from one level to another but there is no consistent information on how that really works and what the criteria are. "I'm in this level—now what?" is a common question by employees. Responses and information seem inconsistent. A committee member asked, "Is there a plan of action to bring concerns forward?" The committee wondered what our role is in that process.

One example of how the process became inconsistent came from Matt's job family experience. The IT job family was the third of the more than 20 that were done. There were lots of different forms, specific forms, but as the process went along and other groups participated there became just one form. Initially, there had been a chart that said if you met certain requirements (in your survey) you were classified at a certain level. That also meant that there were other steps down the road. Employees asked how one progresses to higher levels and the response was to contact HR and it's negotiated. (Presumably the department head or supervisor would advocate for the employee and something would happen—but the "something" is a mystery). It sounds like the

employees who did the one form just got placed somewhere and there was little to no information provided about other levels and what they are and how to get there.

Locally, some units may have created a framework for promotion internally. But why would this be necessary if it is done by the classification system? Some members wondered if other units could create their own pathways and how this would be done.

PA Senate subcommittee on benefits and compensation is meeting on October 13 and it is possible that this body will discuss some of the questions that arose in the Consultative Committee meeting.

It seems unknown whether there is a system or not; if there is a system then it clearly is not transparent or well-understood or well-known. This seems to parallel the process itself where many employees felt that you filled out a form and it went into the “black hole” of the classification system and then months later you were just given a code that said what classification you are.

This new system does not address inequities within the classifications. If employees within a classification have radically different salaries there is no way to redress those inequities, to our knowledge. It is not evident how people are assigned to job families or to salary scales/tracks/buckets. It was clear that the people assigning folks to families did not really understand positions or what people do (for example, one UMM employee in our community outreach and events unit was compared to 4-H extension/outreach people though the position work and scope is very different). In Matt’s experience, he was in a “Developer II” group and was placed there again but his salary was below the range specified so it got brought up. There have been a few folks who received salary raises due to the reclassification, but that hasn’t always happened or turned out so well for others.

The P&A Senate are bringing forward some of these issues at the system level. It is uncertain what we can do at the campus level. We need to figure out what the channels are to make changes. MASA is thinking of doing a brown bag session and bringing in an HR person from the Twin Cities to talk about this. MASA has heard in meetings and forums that there is frustration system-wide. Shouldn’t the process be more localized because of familiarity with equity issues and job descriptions? (a committee member asked) If the process were completely local the argument would always be that there’s no money (UMM is under resourced). But on the other hand, local control does make some sort of conversation more possible.

The different job families were administered differently and this produced different reactions. Some of the early job families (Matt has heard) may go through the process again and do it the way everyone else did it.

One positive thing about what Matt went through is that there is something that differentiates the roles that IT people have. Formerly, everyone in IT had the same job title no matter what kinds of duties you had. The fallout from clarifying people’s roles has been positive—you can

identify people on other campuses, for example, who have similar roles as you. But other families are so big and broad that there isn't as much detail and differentiation available.

The Consultative Committee is trying to figure out what can be done and who should look at this issue here at UMM. We were previously told that we couldn't explore it until the process was done. It's now done, so what do we do?

Are people just trying to make it work? Or do people want to get back to what it was (a committee member asked). Reportedly, some people do want to get rid of the new classifications but many more are asking "now what?" The new system has provided some clarities for some areas but not for all and some areas have even more confusion than before.

A committee member commented that because it's a system-wide process, the hierarchy is system-wide. Some units have only one director and that director is on the Twin Cities campus. People here who are "directors" are classified as Managers (Manager 2). Some of this is determined by how much money you control. And that can limit people's mobility here on this campus—you can't change how much money you control (you are given the budget).

A committee member asked if raises are always tied to a promotion or change in classification. There is a salary range for each classification so there is room for salaries to grow but this is limited by campus resources—for example, here it would be the 1.5-2% raise that is typical. It is unknown as of yet whether the range changes (whether the floor raises with inflation, for example).

We've heard that a big frustration is that people feel stuck—the route to promotion is unclear and there may be limited possibilities for promotion, depending on how those criteria fit our campus and positions.

A committee member asked, "Could we fix the lack of transparency here? Can we establish what needs to be done for promotion here?" UMM HR is part of this, but it's really coming from system HR. Is Sarah Mattson a liaison or does Sarah have any authority to help? (it was asked). The understanding is that Sarah is a messenger and cannot change the system—the real authority for decision-making is at the UM system-wide level. There may be no message to convey because it hasn't been articulated at the system level, a member commented.

Some groups would like to see engagement survey results at an employee group/classification level. This could be helpful to bring about change or address specific issues. Kathy Brown got "grilled" on that at a meeting—she said that as long as she was in her role they wouldn't be looking at the data that way. This might indicate that even central HR doesn't know what they are going to do. The job classification project seemed to be a process that was reactionary to things in the media.

CC is happy to continue consulting on this issue. We hope there will be a followup report after the upcoming meeting of the Benefits and Compensation subcommittee and November P&A

Senate. If Matt finds out more he's willing to share it with the committee; he thinks the issues will need to be addressed centrally.

A committee member wondered if there will be press release about how much we've reduced our administrative staffing and expenditures (since the process appears to have been initiated in response to critiques in the press).

We could ask Sarah Mattson for the data on UMM movement—who/how many have changed classifications, what type of movement, what are impacts on salaries, etc.? A member thinks that this information exists for each group but we just need to find it through web sites and other resources like HR. For example, there used to be some data on the job family web site such as how many people were affected by the salary range but it no longer seems to be there. That data exists but we have to figure out who has it and where to get it.

Questions remain about how benefits roll over or are affected by the changes. Some individuals haven't yet received information about retirement plans or other benefits. Some people got to choose whether to be civil service or PA but there wasn't a lot of guidance about the whole process.

Topic 2: Campus governance & service, continued from last week

Jayne and Julie drafted an email to committee chairs about service and governance topics/issues and would like feedback from the committee. The committee brainstormed some ideas about how to get information.

A member is working on projects that will involve CAs in educating students about campus governance and also posters and other informational pieces. Jayne is bringing the topic to the MCSA Executive Committee and then they will bring it to MCSA as a whole. The student body president is reported to be excited about the discussion.

Generally, the committee recommended a change in language to one part of the memo; overall the committee liked the tone. CC wished to convey idea that concerns over governance and service have come to us several times and we are trying to gather and disseminate information, relay topics and tasks to other committees as appropriate, and trying to clearly articulate the issues so that we can decide upon a course of action.