

## **Special Report to Council–June 3, 2021**

### **FY21SP02–Professional and Scientific Council Year End Report 2020-2021**

**Presented by: Sara Parris, Professional and Scientific Council President, on behalf of the Professional and Scientific Council Executive Committee**

The Iowa State University Professional and Scientific Council is an active participant in the shared governance process and participates in shared governance. Council continually strives toward service, advocacy and representation of P&S Employees. As a part of this service, Council identifies the needs of our constituents, provides information and advice in response to those needs, and recommends policies and procedures to the administration that benefit P&S employees and assist in fulfilling the mission of Iowa State University.

Council fulfills its purpose in addition to its priorities of: Serving as the Voice of P&S Employees in the Shared Governance Structure, Investigating and Responding to P&S Employee Concerns, Providing Professional Development Opportunities for P&S Employees, Honoring P&S Employees, Representing P&S Employees, and Encouraging P&S Employee Engagement.

The 2020-2021 Professional and Scientific Council consisted of 52 members. Members of the Executive Committee:

Sara Parris, President

Amy Ward, Past-President

Chris Johnsen, President-Elect

Emily Dougill, Secretary/Treasurer

John Burnett-Larkins, Vice President for University Community Relations

Lindsay Moeller, Vice President for Equity and Inclusion

Barry McCroskey, Vice President for University Planning and Budget

Suzanne Ankerstjerne, Awards Committee Chair

Jamie Sass, Communications Committee Chair

John Odenweller, Compensation and Benefits Committee Chair

Jacob Larsen, Peer Advocacy Committee Chair

John Hascall, Policies and Procedures Committee Chair

Paula Burns, Professional Development Committee Chair

Jason Follett, Representation Committee Chair

The information provided below serves to document the ways the council addressed its priorities and strategic initiatives amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. Each individual committee and vice president year end reports are included in the appendices and are posted on the council website.

Council for FY2021 looked different than in years past; all meetings were held virtually, most staff were not physically on campus the majority of the time, and many staff were faced with new concerns and priorities as they tried to balance the demands of life in a pandemic both at work and at home. In acknowledgment of the uniqueness of the year before us, Council took a different approach when defining the Strategic Initiatives for 2020-2021, focusing on ideas that were meaningful to staff yet attainable and realistic given the nature of the pandemic:

*Support and advocate for solutions that directly address COVID-19 related concerns of Professional and Scientific employees, including flexible work arrangements, mental health support, flexible parking agreements, and accessible COVID-related employee resources.*

At the beginning of the fiscal year, the cost of parking permits was of particular concern given that many staff knew they would not be working on campus for several months. The Parking Division anticipated this and staff were able to turn in parking permits, with a daily parking option available to them as a lower-cost alternative when needed. Council communicated this to constituents in the monthly newsletter as many staff were unaware that this was an option.

As the pandemic stretched on, parents were faced with the realization that their children would not be returning to school and many were looking for immediate childcare options. Executive Committee members shared these concerns with Senior Leaders throughout the year; University Human Resources was quick to work on a variety of solutions, and Council spread awareness of these initiatives through social media and newsletters.

*Continue to advocate for meaningful supervisor training with a focus on the fundamentals of being a supervisor at Iowa State University that addresses basics such as supervisory processes in Workday, what policies and procedures supervisors need to be familiar with, where to locate Human Resources forms.*

The Executive Committee was contacted by a group of faculty and staff in the Emerging Leaders Academy (ELA) to explore the idea of developing a sustainable supervisor training for campus. Committee members who are supervisors met with the group and provided specific and honest feedback on where the greatest training needs were. The ELA group continued to communicate with the Executive Committee as work progressed. Council was asked, and agreed, to provide funding for a small award for graphic design students who collaborated on the project to produce video content. The final rollout of the training is yet to be determined but will hopefully be ready for implementation by Fall 2021.

The Professional Development Committee continued its Seminar Series events; while the sessions were not geared specifically towards supervisors, many were relevant to supervisors, such as: Roundtable Discussion: Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Efforts on Campus and Post-Pandemic Wellness and Resources for P&S Employees. In addition, the annual Professional Development Conference found a keynote speaker, Renee Smith, who spoke about making work more human. Participants were very enthusiastic in their praise of Renee, with 96.6% of post-conference respondents saying they were satisfied or very satisfied with her message.

*Make recommendations to ensure successful communication of the final phase of the Classification and Compensation Review, with particular attention to outlining employee rights, working titles, compensation structure, market equity, and helping staff to understand their options for career progression.*

Emotions were high at the beginning of the fiscal year as P&S staff anxiously awaited the rollout of the new Classification and Compensation structure. Several Council members served on the

Communications team for the Class and Comp project, providing feedback on the best methods for communication and trying to anticipate questions and pain points.

Initial feedback on the new classifications was rough, with many constituents voicing dissatisfaction. There was an appeal process put in place; UHR provided the Executive Committee with statistics that showed that more than half of these appeals were overturned, and that the turnaround time on appeals was also quick. Council heard from constituents that if the appeal was denied, there was no detail given as to why, which left staff feeling frustrated and hopeless. The Executive Committee talked with UHR to gain a better understanding of what options were available to staff post-denial, and UHR was advised that it would be beneficial for them to let staff know how they might get more information on their denial. Council also advised constituents via the meeting highlights that the Classification and Compensation team could be contacted with questions on appeals and denials.

*Represent the interests of Professional and Scientific Council employees while supporting the University's efforts to explore additional, temporary cost-reducing measures through active engagement in the discussion and decision-making process.*

With uncertainty surrounding the short and long-term financial implications of Covid, Council felt strongly about supporting the University in reducing costs through temporary measures. An anticipated \$100 million in lost revenue resulted in the University changing the tuition reimbursement policy and reducing the TIAA retirement benefit match by 2%. In August of 2020, Council passed a motion to support the University's efforts to explore additional, temporary cost-reducing measures while being actively engaged in the discussion and decision-making process in accordance with the University's shared governance approach.