

**OPTN/UNOS Policy Oversight Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
December 18, 2018  
Conference Call**

**Jennifer Milton, BSN, CCTC, MBA, Chair  
Alexandra Glazier, JD, MPH, Vice Chair**

**Introduction**

The Policy Oversight Committee (POC) met via teleconference on 12/18/2018 to discuss the following agenda items:

1. Update from December 3-4, 2018 Board of Directors (Board) Meeting
2. New Staffing Structures
3. Strategic Plan Metrics
4. Brainstorming: Improving Stakeholder Awareness of Ongoing Committee Projects
5. Other Significant Items

The following is a summary of the POC's discussions.

**1. Update from December 3-4, 2018 Board of Directors Meeting**

The OPTN/UNOS Board met on December 3-4, 2018 in Dallas, Texas. The chair provided the POC with an update of the Board's actions.

Summary of discussion:

The chair noted that the Board voted to approve the Acuity Circles model for liver and intestine distribution and the continuous distribution model as a geographic framework for future organ distribution policies. The Board also supported proposals from the Pancreas Committee, the Membership and Professional Standards Committee, the Pediatric Committee, and the Histocompatibility Committee. The chair asked the POC for any questions. There were no questions.

Next steps:

No next steps were discussed.

**2. New Staffing Structure**

UNOS staff presented the new staffing structure of the UNOS Policy and Community Relations (PCR) department. The purpose of the new staffing structure is to ensure that all committees have the support that they need to be as effective as possible. UNOS staff had previously communicated the new structure to all committee members.

UNOS staff noted the many different types of support that UNOS staff provide to committees. This work has been spread across different departments, but there was always the committee liaison who was the main point of contact and organized the many different tasks. In the new staffing structure, the responsibilities of the committee liaison are split across multiple positions.

UNOS staff also mentioned that two departments – Policy and Regional Administration – have historically overlapped in their responsibilities during the policy development process. As part of the restructuring, these two departments were brought together to form the new PCR department. UNOS staff presented the new organizational chart of the PCR department to the POC. Each of the positions in the new department were explained to the POC.

A POC member asked how each committee will interact with UNOS. UNOS staff explained how each team in the PCR department is assigned to a number of committees and regions. Each committee will still have a dedicated team consisting of a policy analyst, a transplant community administrator, a policy associate, and an administrative coordinator.

UNOS staff presented the responsibilities of each of these positions. Policy analysts will lead committee policy projects. The policy drafter will focus on drafting policy and bylaws. Transplant community administrators will focus on building relationships among the transplant community, will be the main point of contact for the committee, and will run regional meetings. They will also be responsible for roster development. Policy associates will do some work on policy analysis and some work on community relations.

UNOS staff also noted that the vice chair of the POC has resigned and a new vice chair has been appointed. The new vice chair will become chair of the POC in July. The chair asked the POC to think about anyone that may be interested in becoming the vice chair in July.

A committee member asked if there will be any changes to in-person meetings or the purpose of the POC. UNOS staff stated that there will probably not be any changes to the meeting structure but the conversation about strategic plan metrics may help shape the future of the POC.

#### Next steps:

Committee members were asked to think about who the next vice chair of the POC should be.

### **3. Strategic Plan Metrics**

UNOS staff presented information on the 2018 OPTN Strategic Plan. The 2018 OPTN Strategic Plan contains new metrics that previous iterations of the strategic plan did not have. The POC could own some of the metrics that are related to policy development and oversight. UNOS wants the transplant community to help create the strategies used to accomplish the metrics because they involve important tradeoffs. For example, in order for projects to move faster, there may need to be less analysis or more meetings. UNOS staff envisions the POC monitoring these metrics and providing recommendations back to committees on how the policy development process should change.

UNOS staff highlighted some of the key initiatives in the strategic plan that the POC can impact. These initiatives include:

- Pursue policies and system tools for more efficient donor/recipient matching to increase organ utilization.
- Improve equity in transplant opportunities for multi-organ and single organ candidates.
- Develop a common policy framework for applying principles of geographic distribution to allocation policies across all organ systems.
- Reduce the time that policy projects take.
- Improve volunteer workforce satisfaction and engagement survey.
- Increase racial, ethnic, and professional diversity on the Board and committees to ensure a variety of perspectives are offered in the policy development process.
- Increase opportunities for volunteer engagement and awareness of OPTN/UNOS Board and committee opportunities.
- Improve member and public engagement in the development of equitable allocation policies.

UNOS staff showed a chart depicting the alignment of the current project portfolio with the strategic plan. They also showed a chart depicting the variance in strategic alignment over time. The variance generally moves towards zero, which is ideal, although there are spikes after Board meetings when new projects are taken out of the portfolio.

UNOS staff also showed which projects have been approved since July 1, 2018. UNOS staff will distribute a report on the strategic plan metrics and anchors of policy development. This will inform the POC of how UNOS staff has been monitoring policy development.

UNOS staff then asked: how can the POC help oversee how the strategic plan is being addressed in new policy development work?

The chair noted that she wants to help ensure that all committees are more cognizant of the strategic plan metrics. She also stated that the POC should be more aware of the strategic plan metrics when reviewing new projects and public comment reviews. This could also help reduce the amount of time that projects take to complete. A committee member stated that the POC plays an important role between the Board and the transplant community, especially during this controversial time. The committee member noted that POC members should be more supportive of proposals and work to keep the transplant community unified.

Another committee member noted that he or she had not seen many new projects denied by the POC and wanted to better understand how projects get prioritized. The chair stated that the POC does a comprehensive review of the project portfolio and spends time aligning the project portfolio with the strategic plan at their in-person meeting. The chair asked the POC members to think about how the projects that each of their respective committees are considering fit into the strategic plan. It is difficult for any organization to be perfectly in-line with a strategic plan, and the OPTN/UNOS is actually doing fairly well in this regard. The major misalignment between the project portfolio and the strategic plan is in Goal Four, which is to promote living donor and transplant recipient safety.

Another committee member mentioned that it is difficult to give an opinion and focus on exactly what is at hand during POC meetings. The committee member noted that the project approval process of the POC is vague on whether members should share their opinion on the process of the new project or the content of the project. The committee member noted that the POC is a great opportunity to build consensus among the vice chairs. The POC should do more to develop consensus among the transplant community.

Another committee member noted that he or she would like more of a direct mission in his or her role on the POC. He or she felt like the role of a POC member is important but they have largely just approved projects.

A committee member stated that the POC can take a larger role in informing the projects that committees should pursue when the situation allows. He or she wanted the POC to be more proactive in providing guidance to committees on which projects they should pursue.

UNOS staff asked how the POC can know if they are being effective in providing oversight of the policy development project.

#### Next steps:

No next steps were discussed.

#### **4. Brainstorming: Improving Stakeholder Awareness of Ongoing Projects**

At the Chair's breakfast at the Board meeting, it was noted that stakeholders outside of a project's sponsoring committee often feel like it is difficult to remain informed on the status of ongoing projects. The chair asked how the POC can help keep stakeholders more aware of the status of ongoing projects prior to public comment.

#### Summary of Discussion:

A committee member stated that it was helpful to hear each committee vice-chair present on their ongoing projects at the POC's in-person meeting. The vice-chair of the Pediatric

Committee noted that the Pediatric Committee has been invited to work on other projects which has been helpful in keeping the committee engaged. The vice-chair of the Living Donor Committee stated that her committee regularly asks their liaison to provide updates from other committees which they have found to be helpful.

Next steps:

No next steps were discussed.

**5. Other Significant Items**

UNOS staff discussed the role of the POC in continuing the work of the former Geography Committee. As the organ-specific committees move towards continuous distribution allocation models, the POC will take a central role in giving oversight to the organ-specific committees in how they will make this transition and ensuring that the move towards continuous distribution occurs uniformly across the organization. UNOS staff will be creating a work group underneath the POC to handle this responsibility. This work group will include the POC members from all organ-specific committees, some members of the Geography Committee, and other interested members of the POC. The work group will start in early 2019. UNOS staff asked POC members to inform them or the chair if they are interested in participating in the geography work group. A POC member asked for a member of the Board be included in the work group also.

Next steps:

Committee members were asked to consider participating in the geography work group. If they are interested, they should reach out to UNOS staff or their chair.

**Upcoming Meeting**

- January 15, 2019