

January 15, 2008

In attendance: Cindy Christensen; Courtney Arnstein; David Ziembra; Karl Greis; Lee Doughty; Lynda Smith; Millie Brence-Austin; Nancy Luther; Sarah Withee; Kristi Salkil

As Kristi Salkil will be leaving CC, there was a vote for replacing her as co-chair. Joan Taylor was a willing nominee and her election was confirmed by vote.

A beautiful plaque from Staff Council, made by Karl Greis, was given to Kristi in appreciation of her service on Staff Council.

Cathe Bailie, from the Compensation Committee, asked a question about the Committee make-up. Council members were not sure about the placement of members, but Cindy will look into it. Cathe asked that we make a note for the next round of nominations that there are currently two non-exempt and four exempt staff members on the committee.

Cathe also provided an update from the Comp. Committee. The cost-of-living question with regard to salary administration is still an issue, and they think they've got the battle won so that the same figure will be calculated once January figures are in. Comp Committee and Barbara recommended .5% for merit, but have been told that portion is unlikely to be approved. There are also some subcommittees -- Tuition Remission is working on defining what the options are; Emeriti Review, which Cathe is on, found that only 5% of the schools that do Emeriti require employees to contribute. They will likely be sending a survey out soon; it's likely to be paper rather than electronic because a lot of explanation is required, as there is a great deal of misunderstanding about Emeriti. Based on the survey, the comp committee will make a recommendation accordingly.

Courtney Arnstein asked Cathe how many other colleges participate in Emeriti. Cathe wasn't sure (a subsequent email from Cathe indicated that as of 09/07/07 there were 47 colleges participating in Emeriti). Courtney asked whether they were still considering whether it should be mandatory. Cathe noted that every eligible employee has to be included to prevent discrimination, but it could be that the employee contribution is optional. The issue with beneficiaries is federal law, so we can't do anything about that. Lynda asked if there is an issue with using the benefits in certain states. Cathe wasn't aware of such a restriction.

Cathe discussed the "bulk payout" -- if you had worked for college for 3 years, and were 49 or older, there was a bulk payout into the Emeriti account when the program was implemented. It's actually a separate account, and is good toward the college's health insurance, but the rest can be used like flexible spending account.

In light of Joan's new position as co-chair, we voted for a new Secretary/Treasurer. Millie Brence-Austin was elected into the position.

Staff Voices – it was decided at the last meeting that the date will be April 17th. We decided on 9:00 am; we hoped that holding one each year in the morning and one in the afternoon would enable folks to at least attend one or the other. Given this is block break, it would alleviate the issue of academic staff being busy in the mornings as the faculty they support prepare for class.

Millie agreed to continue to work on the spring event; Karl and Millie agreed to help out. Millie is working on getting the minutes from the last Staff Voices typed up. We believe Joan is still spearheading Colleague Kudos and the promotion thereof; will confirm next meeting.

Staff Council Elections – Nancy will begin working on them; will work with Cathe Bailie if questions arise. We should begin soliciting volunteers in January.

Karl heard about someone who says they are on the Discernment Committee; no one is aware of what it is. Karl will follow up.

Chad Schonewill was recently contacted by Karrie Williams to attend a meeting regarding Vision 2010 campaign. They are looking for ways to inspire staff to give to the campaign. Chad shared some ideas with the committee; suggested it would be good to have a category to which folks could donate that benefits staff directly, perhaps help those who can't afford the children's center, contribute to staff raises, or fund parking. He also suggested they might consider providing incentives to staff, such as if a certain goal is met that parking will be free. To the average employee, CC is rich – they don't need "my donation," but staff members do. Chad expressed that more employees would give if they knew it was going to benefit someone on staff who needed it.

Staff Council has expressed our concerns; Dave and Kristi met with Karrie and expressed that this was bad timing, and that it could be bad for morale; suggested if you're going to do it make sure people don't feel pressured. There was discussion about whether we should intervene at this point, but consensus was that we'll see what happens. We agreed it would be nice to have a staff council fund that benefits staff.

Submitted by Kristi Salkil