

## **Staff Council Meeting – November 4, 2008**

**Attending:** Terri Akse, Millie Brence-Austin, Lee Dougherty, Nancy Luther, Dave Reed, David Ziemba, Penny Rains, Shaleen Prehm, Joan Taylor, Diane Cobbett, McKinley Sielaff and special guest Chad Schonewill presenting data on behalf of the Staff Members of the Compensation Committee

### **1. Staff Voices - Fall Edition**

The Fall Edition of Staff Voices will be on November 13, 2008, 9:30 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. in the Armstrong Theater. The agenda is going to be about what is Staff Council is working currently. Staff Council will acknowledge ongoing issues, not sponsored by Staff Council, and let the community know which specific committees are working on those issues.

Since we received so much criticism regarding Colleague Kudos last Staff Voices - this time we will post them all to the Staff Council website instead of using meeting time.

Additionally we will announce a new format of having one topic town halls throughout the year. This will begin in January and the meeting will be based on topics of primary concern to staff as determined by staff. The hope is to have these meetings once a month for about one hour, and will be open to the entire campus. The idea is to let people ask us questions and make it more of an open forum.

### **2. Ombudsperson**

The ombudsperson program was questioned by faculty. They want to understand what peer institutions are doing. The notion is still in play at this time.

### **3. Chad Schonewill - Compensation Committee**

Chad Schonewill gave an update on the work being done by the Compensation Committee. Some of the ongoing projects are Tuition Remission and Emeriti.

**Tuition Remission** – it has been decided that the program is going to change. Employees will be asked to either be grandfathered in or be responsible for 10% of tuition for ACM schools. It was noted that Staff Council was never asked to weigh in on this decision. More communication needs to happen between the Compensation Committee staff members and Staff Council. An open invitation has been made for a member of the Compensation Committee to come to Staff Council meetings to give updates. Staff Council was quite pleased that Chad presented updates on this important work.

**Emeriti** – There will be some forums coming up for campus input, as well as a poll conducted across campus. This information will be used by President Celeste to decide whether to keep the program as is or make changes. The Compensation Committee will publicize some of the feedback. Chad assures us that no data that could potentially identify an individual will be used.

Chad noted that the Health Care Committee is no longer a part of the Compensation Committee. It is now an Ad-hoc committee.

### **CPI/COLA**

The process, as it currently exists, is that Staff depends on data from HR and meets with HR a few times to develop a recommendation for CPI and then the committee develops a report.

Chad notes that Faculty on the Compensation Committee split off from Staff for these kinds of decisions and do not weigh in or guide the Staff recommendation. Since Staff count rather

heavily on the intellect and resources of the Faculty, this comes as something of a surprise and no small concern to Staff Council. We look forward to further dialog with Compensation Committee staff members and to learning more about their decision making process. It may be that engaging faculty resources more fully in the salary recommendation process would create a more positive reception to Staff recommendations for salary issues.

– Chad presented some ideas from the Compensation Committee about changing the compensation structure.

There was much discussion within the Council regarding this issue.

This past spring it was concluded that CPI would be calculated campus-wide using a December to December point measurement. This is the measure that the Faculty are currently using and Tom Nycum and President Celeste agreed that this measurement would be used for both Staff and Faculty.

**Compensation Committee Staff members seek feedback on two issues.**

**The first is that CPI is likely to exceed the staff salary pool of 4.25% this year.** The

questions surrounding this first issue are;

What do we do if/when this happens?

Does everyone get 4.25% and leave it at that?

Do we try to figure out other ways to pay staff the full CPI?

Chad proposed that we calculate CPI on a base line salary for lower paid employees (a salary range as yet not revealed). Everyone would get that amount only. Everyone above that range would have to rely upon receiving merit as determined by their supervisors in order to attain the full CPI.

The objections to this are;

- This arrangement is not fair to all staff. Why are some employees deserving of the agreed upon CPI and not others? Why should some staff have to count on merit to attain CPI and not others?

- This arrangement completely negates the progress made in the spring of attaching the staff CPI to the faculty CPI. We just achieved equality of treatment (at least in the CPI area) with the faculty (by attaching ourselves to faculty). If we attempt to redefine CPI treatment for staff only, we fall right back into the old system of using a measure that is both different from the Faculty treatment and (due to the fact that it's decided upon by an internal group) will most certainly no longer be recognizable as a valid reflection of true CPI.

- This creates salary compression issues.

- No actual dollar figures have been presented with this proposal - it's impossible to know the actual size or impact of the issues without knowing what the real dollars are.

- Why is it that we are not talking about ways to accommodate the full CPI?

**The second issue the Compensation Committee faces is that there is little to no merit in the salary pool since inflation (CPI) is so high.**

Chad's idea for this is linked to the above proposal. He feels that the college will save a substantial amount of money by not paying the agreed upon CPI to a good sized portion of it's Staff members and that as a result there will be money left for merit pay as a bonus structure.

The objections to this are related to the above. In addition;

How can we say that we are treating all our Staff members fairly under this scenario?

Why are we not examining other ways to attain merit?

#### **4. Randy Stiles Emergency Plan**

Emergency Plan – each building would have a building captain which would be a staff member in each building assigned to assist with an evacuation plan in case of an emergency. Signs would be posted above light switches on the floors. There would be 1 – 2 staff members assigned this duty for each floor. Everyone at the meeting agreed it was a great idea.

#### **5. American Assn. of University Professors(AAUP)/Staff Council/Compensation Committee Staff Members Dialog**

The AAUP, Staff Council, and the Staff members of the Compensation Committee have opened dialog. This is being done in the interest of combining resources and knowledge on compensation issues as well as promoting general communication between the Faculty and Staff. A common interest between both committees is the need for Transparency. Apparently there has been some discussion already among Faculty on the subject. As a matter of interest it was brought up that the FEC recently passed a non binding resolution that the campus needs to move towards transparency as an institution. Staff council might consider examining the issues of transparency in a variety of areas – finance, policy, compensation, direction of the college etc. and using the AAUP as a resource.

#### **6. Cathe Bailie's letter**

In this letter Cathe is concerned that Staff Council is not doing everything that we should be doing. In Staff Council's meeting the group felt that everyone on Staff Council is doing the best they can, are here as a volunteer and are committing time outside of our jobs to this committee. However Cathe does bring up some valid points that the group can discuss and see what we can do about it.

Cathe's concerns and what she would like to see done;

- Yearly report for last year – summary report (we asked for volunteers to do this but don't have a volunteer yet. We'll keep this on the list until we get a volunteer).
- Minutes for last year posted to the website. (Later note: Stephanie Daigle has agreed to help with this)
- Anonymous feedback posted in the minutes. (It has been, and will be on the website when the minutes are posted.)
- Staff Council agreed in principle in a prior year to adopt the idea that each member of Staff Council would reach out to departments and be a representative. In practice, it appears we do not have the time to do this as a group. We discussed different ways in which we could achieve the same thing and settled on the idea of monthly single subject Town Halls.
- Election of co-chairs – currently the co-chairs are all exempt, as no non-exempt members stepped forward to volunteer for the positions. The bylaws state there needs to be an exempt and non-exempt co-chair. (It was pointed out that a vote was taken to write exception language into the By-Laws, recognizing that this is the ideal, but not always possible. As part of posting the minutes we'll look for this.) There was general recognition this is an important item and should be upheld where possible, and also that it is not always possible to do so.
- Updating Bylaws - If the bylaws have been changed they need to be posted. The Bylaws are out on (and have been out on) the website and have not been updated in several years. Everyone on Staff Council should be aware of the bylaws. Dave agreed to update the bylaws to reflect earlier voting and will solicit information on needed changes for the next meeting.

The question was asked; "How do we enforce participation without beating volunteers up?" That becomes a matter of motivation, which is driven by inspiration. Why is it we are not

inspired? That falls back to values, and knowing that we are moving towards a common goal. There seem to be a lot of conflicting priorities, and it's challenging to determine what priorities to work on first. An examination of values is in order. Staff Council does not currently have a set of values that were written by staff. The values, as listed on the Staff council website, were written by Faculty/Students and Staff and are Institutional values rather than the committee's values.

It was agreed that Staff Council needed to slow down and not make quick decisions based upon this letter and that thoughtful dialogue needed to happen.

**Anonymous feedback**

In regards to outsourcing Facilities, Joan followed up. There are Staff members who wish to remain anonymous who indicate that a meeting was held in Facilities this year in which it was announced that outsourcing might be a possibility. Facilities Management has indicated that there are no plans to outsource. President Celeste has indicated there are no plans to outsource. Whether a meeting was held or not, what appears to be clear, is that there are no plans on the table at this time to outsource facilities.

The meeting adjourned at 1:30 p.m.