

COMMITTEE ON COMPENSATION

Block 1 Minutes

September 12, 2011

Present: Pam Butler, Joan Ericson, Karen Klein, Dianne Knight, Paul Kuerbis, Chad Schonewill, Patti Spoelman, Diane Westerfield, Barbara Wilson, and Dan Johnson (chair)

The meeting opened with introductions of all members. While all staff members of the committee are returning from last year, only one faculty member is returning from last year.

We reflected on which of our salary and benefits recommendations were adopted last year, and concluded that very little of what we suggested, whether for faculty or staff, whether regarding salary or benefits, was adopted. Most frustrating was the lack of feedback about reasons for the lack of agreement with our suggestions. We spent some time talking about how to communicate more effectively this year, and to encourage more effective communication with us in return.

In particular, we agreed that we would try to communicate with the Budget Committee in person, to inform the budget process at a point in their deliberations where we could be helpful. That would mean proposing salary plans in early October, to inform their deliberations later that month as they prepare for the Trustees' meeting in early November. Then we agreed to invite the Budget Committee to send representatives back to our committee in November so that we could understand any input they might have, in time for us to revise our suggestions, meet with faculty and staff more broadly, and submit new recommendations before the budget is approved by the Trustees in early February. Dan volunteered to initiate conversation with the Budget Committee.

We also discussed our ability to host public information sessions in the past, to inform faculty and staff about the decisions to be made, about who is making decisions about the absolute size of the compensation pool (the Trustees, with recommendation from the Budget Committee and President), and the division of that increase among competing priorities (decisions which still seem rather unclear to us, but presumably reside effectively with the Dean for faculty salaries, with division heads for staff salaries, and with the president and VP Finance for employee benefits). In the past, information sessions have been well-attended by faculty and by staff, and we should repeat those events while asking Staff Council and the Faculty Executive Committee for guidance in organizing them.

In order to facilitate a prompt set of salary proposals to the Budget Committee, we decided to stay the course with last year's salary proposals. For faculty, that proposal emphasizes the role of the progression system and market corrections at each faculty rank to match our peers. For staff, the proposal emphasizes the balance of parity in raises with faculty, cost of living increases based on a base salary adjustment plus an across-the-board increase contingent upon performance, performance-based pay not added to base salaries, and market-based corrections to salaries. As we received no objection to last year's proposals, but did not see them implemented either, we will re-propose them and ask for clarification about how/if they will be implemented. Dan volunteered to start the calculations immediately, in order to enable a meeting with the president, another meeting of the entire committee early in Block 2, and a meeting with the Budget Committee in Block 2.

In those recommendations to the Budget Committee, we intend to make a few minor changes to last year's proposal:

- a) specific dollar figures for each objective of the staff salary proposal, rather than just percentage increases;
- b) a recommendation for even greater clarity in salary letters to both faculty and staff, so that the reason for any raise is unambiguous;
- c) a recommendation that the adopted salary model be communicated to faculty and staff at general meetings in Block 7 or 8, rather than individually via salary letter over the summer; and

- d) a recommendation that staff provide “brag sheets”, or annual activity summaries, to their supervisors in order to facilitate merit-based pay decisions (much as faculty already do).

Meanwhile, Dan will forward three other documents created by the 2010-11 Compensation Committee to the current committee for comment: the drafted Compensation Philosophy, the proposal to gross-up same-sex partner salaries, and the proposal for vacation leave for non-exempt, less than 12-month employees. Subject to the committee’s approval, we may consider sending these to the Budget Committee along with the salary proposals early in Block 2.

Upon the recommendation of the committee, Dan will also ask to present to the Department Chairs’ Meeting about the proposal for staff vacation leave. However, he will wait to do so until the current committee has had a chance to re-read the proposal, formulate salary proposals, and prioritize this objective against salary objectives.

The meeting adjourned at 5pm sharp.