

Operating Staff Council Meeting Minutes February 8, 2006

Members in Attendance: April Damon, Jennifer Dube, Charlene Hill, Steve Hunter, Julie Johnson-Dubois, Jeff Jones, Matty Leighton, Doreen Palmer, Lori Parent, Toni Searles, Jason Brodeur

Members Not in Attendance: Lisa Wilder, Geri Sanders

Guests: Lon Sattler, SPPC; Sharon Demers, Human Resources; Stephanie Higgs, Counseling Center

Agenda Items

Opening Remarks – Jason Brodeur, Chair

Jason noted that December's minutes do not contain any record of the OS Council elections and therefore need to be amended. Stephanie will handle this and submit the amended minutes to Jason for distribution.

Jason also announced that Matty will take over responsibility for recording the minutes.

Administrative Office Professional (AOP) Conference – Lori Parent

The 2006 AOP Conference is scheduled for two half-day sessions (8:00 AM – 1:00 or 1:30 PM) on March 15 and 16. The AOP Conference is an annual thank-you to administrative staff from the university, and this year's conference will include remarks from President Hart, a keynote speaker (Nancy Puglisi, USNH Director of Organizational Wellness), various professional growth and development workshops (educational, interpersonal, wellness, etc.), and special lunches provided by the MUB. Notices will go out soon and staff should plan to sign up early on the day registration for workshops opens, since they fill up very quickly.

Staff Personnel and Policy Council (SPPC) Updates and Q&A – Lon Sattler, SPPC Chair

Lon gave updates on the following SPPC topics:

1. **Fraud Policy** – Lon reported that the SPPC is close to approving a new system-wide Policy on Fraud (see Appendix 1 for complete draft policy). Steve Hunter raised a question about whether Standard 2.2 of the policy (methods of reporting fraud; prohibition of retaliation against reporters) provides true whistleblower protection, and Stephanie Higgs recommended that the policy be clarified to show a stronger connection between Standard 2.2 and Standard 3.2, which defines consequences for violating the fraud policy.
2. **Solicitation Policy** – Lon briefly recapped the new Policy on Solicitation, which was the subject of significant discussion at the Staff Council Retreat. He noted that the intent of the policy is to prevent abuse and leave room for management discretion, not to ban solicitation outright. The policy states that while "solicitation of faculty and staff by, or on behalf of, non-USNH entities during work hours and in the workplace is prohibited," "institutional level policy may permit the use of lunchrooms and/or other appropriate common areas for solicitation by, or on behalf of, appropriate non-USNH organizations so long as that activity does not interfere with the ability of faculty, staff, and supervisors to maintain a work environment appropriate to the conduct of USNH's work." (See Appendix 2 for the proposed policy in its entirety). This means that it is OK to leave order sheets in public areas such as mailrooms or lunchrooms, as long as a) employees do not feel pressured to participate, and b) management does not feel that this sort of activity creates an inappropriate work environment.

3. **SPPC Structure** – Because many of the newer council members were not aware of the SPPC’s role in the university’s council structure, Lonn took a few minutes to draw an organizational chart and outline the SPPC’s relationship with the staff councils, the USNH Presidents’ Council, and the Board of Trustees. There are three SPPCs, one for unionized faculty, one for operating staff, and one for PAT/EE staff and non-unionized faculty. The three SPPCs act as conduits **from** their corresponding staff councils at the USNH campuses **to** the Presidents’ Council and the Board of Trustees. See Appendix 3 for a copy of the organizational chart.
4. **Crime Victims Policy** – Lonn gave a quick overview of the new Crime Victim Policy, which states that if an employee or a member of an employee’s family is a victim of a crime, the employee may use leave time for crime victim proceedings. When the employee is the victim, the time used may be sick time or sick pool time **without** the prerequisite use of five days of personal/acrued or Earned Time. When the employee’s family member is the victim, family leave may be used. A maximum of 10 days from the sick pool may be used. After some discussion, the council concluded that there is a need for better staff education on this policy, particularly around how and when to use it, and that this should be provided as a complement to communication updates HR is planning.
5. **Compassionate Leave** – Although the Compassionate Leave Policy was discussed at the last meeting, Lonn reminded the council that the policy, which was piloted at UNH Durham, has now been implemented system-wide. There was significant discussion around the intent of the policy, which is to accommodate those who wish to **donate** time and not those who wish to **receive** it. Concern was expressed about potential recipients who could benefit from donations but who do not wish to have co-workers know that they are in need; since the program is based upon word-of-mouth communications, those who are not willing to share information about their situation are unfortunately not able to reap the benefits of the policy. The discussion highlighted a couple of more general concerns:
 - a. Alternative methods of communicating information about HR policies to non-e-mail and non-Internet-using staff. Despite bulletin board postings, hard-copy mailings, etc., these staff members still seem uninformed about policies. It was pointed out that this is a problem across all types of staff, even those with technical savvy and computer access, and a certain amount of it is due to the fact that people do not pay attention to policies until they are directly affected by them.
 - b. HR representative information. Because supervisors are not always informed about how to use benefits, it is important that all staff members know who their HR rep is and how to contact their rep. Perhaps the council and/or HR could look into ways to better publicize this information.
6. **Cost-Benefit Containment** – Lonn informed the council that current information indicates staff will face another 2% increase in the cost of benefits next calendar year. On the positive side, the university is considering benefit enhancements such as health savings accounts (HSAs) and consumer-directed medical plans. In the case of consumer-directed plans, the university may even consider an employer contribution. There was a brief discussion regarding having a choice of medical plan providers (vs. Cigna as the single provider). As Sharon mentioned at the retreat, the university always takes bids from multiple plans/networks, but it has proven most cost-effective to stick with one plan because plans offer the university significant monetary incentives to use their network exclusively.

OS Council Flyer – Lori Parent

The OS Council flyer that is distributed to all new OS hires at orientation needs to be updated. Areas that should be revised:

- ▶ What the OS Council has done lately

► Contact information (from Stephanie to Jason)

Ideally we should have the revisions completed and the flyer ready for distribution at the council's table during the AOP Conference March 15 and 16. During this discussion it was also noted that we should investigate whether the council is still receiving a list of new hires and how that information can be used more effectively.

Follow-Up from Joint Council Staff Retreat – Jason Brodeur

Jason asked each of the council members to review the table-blog summaries from the retreat and indicate briefly what goal or topic they would like to work on.

Jeff Jones – Communication, within the council, with the other councils, and with constituents.

Julie Johnson-Dubois – Withholding out-of-state taxes from staff paychecks (the PAT council is already doing some work on this subject and she will follow-up and see about attending their committee meeting).

Doreen Palmer – Tri-council coordination, particularly at the Manchester campus.

Lori Parent – Giving employees paid time to do volunteer work, or even having the university make a donation to a charity when an employee performs a certain number of volunteer hours.

Matty Leighton – Involving constituents more. Jason suggested that one tactic that was not discussed at the retreat would be to invite non-council members to serve on task forces for a defined (short) period of time.

April Damon – Giving employees paid time to do volunteer work.

Jennifer Dube – Involving constituents, particularly using focus groups.

Charlene Hill – Representation for non-status employees and examining inequities such as pay during periods of curtailed operations (HR is currently investigating this issue).

Lonn Sattler – Instituting a better tuition benefit for families where both parents are university employees.

Toni Searles – Communications and out-of-state tax withholdings.

Steve Hunter – Using Blackboard to communicate within the council, with the other councils, and with constituents.

Jason Brodeur – Involving constituents.

Wrap-Up

Stephanie and Jason broached the subject of working with the PAT Council's established committees rather than "reinventing the wheel" by creating our own committee structure and addressing the same issues. With the exception of the additional time commitment required for those who attend the PAT committee meetings, this seems like a win/win situation, giving us more resources and building collaboration between the councils. There was a suggestion that committee meetings might be held outside normal work hours to accommodate council members who are not able to get away easily during the day.

Jason asked if the current OS Council meeting time was still OK for all members present, and the answer was a unanimous yes.

Jason informed the new members that he will bring copies of the council handbook for them at the next meeting.

Sharon answered a question, relayed from a constituent, regarding the source of longevity pay. Longevity pay comes out of each department's payroll budget. However, she further clarified that an employee should not feel that receiving longevity pay makes them a liability to the department.

Meeting adjourned at 2:30 PM.

Appendix 1 – Policy on Fraud (Draft – Latest revisions in bold italics)

BOT III: Administrative Policies

K. Fraud

1. Standard of Conduct

1.1 The University System of New Hampshire and its Board of Trustees and executive leadership are committed to the highest standards of ethical and professional conduct.

1.2 Every person working on behalf of USNH – including faculty, staff, student employees, and volunteers – has a basic responsibility to safeguard and preserve the assets and resources of USNH and its component institutions ***and to conduct work duties in an ethical and professional manner.***

1.3 This basic responsibility includes the following components:

1.3.1 The use of any USNH equipment, supplies, or facilities for any personal, unlawful, or improper purpose is prohibited; **(see also Conflict of Interest policy, USY.V.D.7) Reasonable personal use of technological resources as permitted by institutional policies (See USY VI.F.4)**

1.3.2 The assignment of any employee or volunteer for any personal, unlawful, or improper purpose is prohibited; **(see also Conflict of Interest policy, USY.V.D.7)**

1.3.3 Managers shall ensure that reasonable and appropriate controls for the prevention, detection and punishment of fraud are in place and enforced in the offices and departments for which they are responsible.

1.3.4 All revenues and expenditures shall be recorded and accounted for in the USNH financial accounting system in accordance with (a) procedures established by the Controller and (b) the relevant standards of professional practice;

1.3.5 All entries into the financial accounting system, ***the human resource information system, and the student information system*** shall be true and accurate to the best of the entry-maker's knowledge and ability.

1.3.6 All personal employment information and credentials shall be presented without misrepresentation.

1.3.7 All forms, such as leave forms and benefit information, and other paperwork shall be completed in a true and accurate manner to the best of the completer's knowledge and ability.

1.3.8 Conduct of personal affairs should be done in such a manner that it is not misconstrued as to being work on behalf of USNH.

2. Reporting of Fraud

2.1 USNH's ability to maintain the highest standards of ethical and professional conduct depends in large part on the willingness of each individual to report potential, perceived, or suspected instances of ***internal or external*** fraud.

2.2 USNH employees and volunteers are encouraged to make such reports to their immediate supervisor but may also report to more senior management, the Director of Internal Audit Office, the Controller, the General Counsel, or **to an anonymous USNH–designated hot**

line. Any person who receives a report shall in turn inform the Director of Internal Audit.
Retaliation against anyone reporting fraud is strictly prohibited.

2.3 Reports shall be treated confidentially to the extent permitted by law and consistent with the best interests of USNH.

2.4 All employees and volunteers shall cooperate fully in the investigation of any **alleged** misconduct, including fraud.

2.5 The Director of Internal Audit shall report annually to the Vice Chancellor and Treasurer, the Chancellor and the Board of Trustees Audit Committee on the reports, investigations, and findings of fraud occurring during the preceding year.

3. Consequences

3.1 Internal Audit will notify the campus Human Resources Office when fraud investigations involve employees.

3.2 Discipline may include oral or written warnings, reprimand, or suspension, or immediate termination. (see USY. V. C 8.2 and 9.10).

3.2.1 Such disciplinary actions are subject to the terms and conditions of the campus grievance policy. (See USY V.D.12.3)

This policy shall take effect immediately upon its adoption by the full Board of Trustees.

Appendix 2 – Proposed Policy on Solicitation

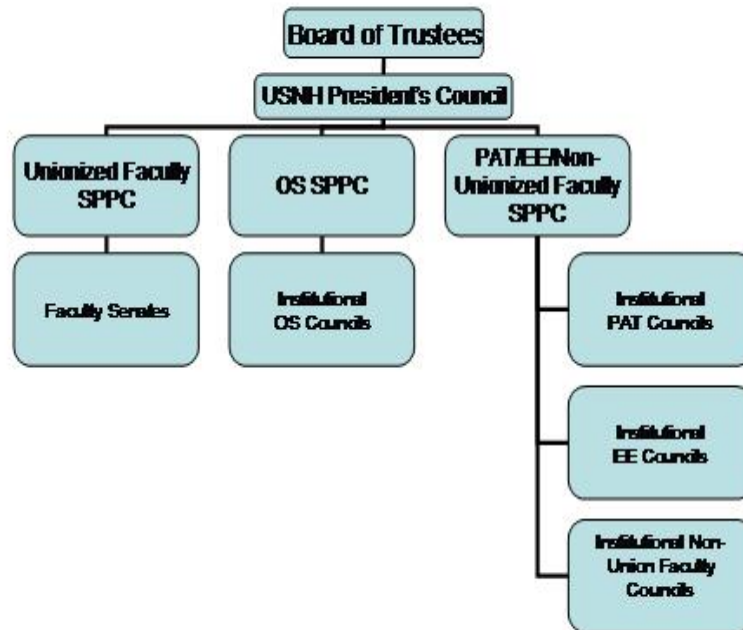
D.13 Non-Work Related Solicitations

13.1 The University System of New Hampshire also intends to provide a work environment free of non-work related interruptions. Faculty and staff are expected to engage in the work of the University System during work time and in the work place, free from interruption, disruption, or distraction from sources unrelated to their work.

13.1.1 As such, solicitation of faculty and staff by, or on behalf of, non-USNH entities during work hours and in the workplace is prohibited. Institutional level policy may permit the use of lunchrooms and/or other appropriate common areas for solicitation by, or on behalf of, appropriate non-USNH organizations so long as that activity does not interfere with the ability of faculty, staff, and supervisors to maintain a work environment appropriate to the conduct of USNH's work.

Appendix 3 – SPPC Structure Org Chart

SPPC Structure



Appendix 4 – Crime Victim Leave

19.2.1 Description. In compliance with NH RSA 275:61, a faculty or staff member will be granted leave time to attend court or legal/investigative proceedings associated with the prosecution of a crime in which the faculty or staff member was a victim or the faculty/staff member is an immediate family member of (1) a homicide victim, (2) a child under the age of 18 who was a victim, or (3) an adult who was a victim.

19.2.1.1 Victim is defined as a person who suffers direct or threatened physical, emotional, psychological, or financial harm as a result of a crime or attempted crime.

19.2.1.2 Immediate family is defined in the statute as father, mother, step-parent, child, stepchild, sibling, spouse, grandparent, or legal guardian of the victim, or any person residing in the same household with the victim.

19.2.2 Process. The absence will be approved only for the period required for court or legal/investigative proceedings, inclusive of travel time. Documentation concerning hearings or procedures which require the faculty/staff member's presence shall be provided to the supervisor or Human Resources in advance for verification, not for retention. Confidentiality regarding the information will be maintained.

19.2.3 Pay Status. If the faculty/staff member is the victim, s/he may use up to 10 (ten) days of accrued Sick Leave or up to 75 or 80 hours of Sick Pool (without the prerequisite use of 5 Earned Time days) to cover absences due to crime victim proceedings. In the case where the victim is an immediate family member, the faculty/staff member may choose to access up to 10 days of Family Leave (see USY V.A.11.5.10 for Earned Time use and USY V.A 13.2.2 for vacation/personal leave use) to cover the absence. If more time is required, the faculty/staff member may use accrued vacation/personal time or Earned Time, or request leave without pay for the periods of absence.

19.2.4 Retaliation against anyone who uses a crime victim leave of absence is strictly prohibited.

Appendix 5 – Compassionate Leave Policy Draft

17.7 Compassionate Leave Donation Program

17.7.1 Definition. A USNH institution may establish a compassionate leave donation program which provides a means for status employees to voluntarily and anonymously donate annual leave or Earned Time to another employee whose absence from work qualifies under the Family Medical Leave Act and who has exhausted, or will exhaust, her/his applicable paid leave time. Compassionate leave does not apply to intermittent FMLA situations. The leave is donated directly to an employee, not a leave bank. The maximum total leave period is six months. This program will be coordinated by the campus Human Resources Office and may include the establishment of a campus oversight committee. Confidentiality of medical information for those receiving compassionate leave will be maintained.

17.7.2 Other conditions. The role of the institution is to facilitate the administration of the compassionate leave program, not to encourage or discourage participation in the program, nor disseminate information about those employees in need of donations of time. No employee may coerce, threaten, intimidate, or promise financial benefits for donations of leave time.

17.7.3 Eligibility. The leave will apply to any benefits-eligible employee whose situation is such that her/his FMLA absence from work is anticipated to be a minimum of 30 calendar days, including a minimum of five days of the 30 which would be unpaid leave, and the employee is planning to return to work for at least 30 calendar days following the FMLA leave. The number of compassionate leave hours/days an employee may receive per 12-month period will be limited to 20 work days per 12-month period. If otherwise eligible, employees are not eligible for compassionate leave if: (1) they are receiving USNH disability or Workers' Compensation benefits, (2) they are on a probationary status due to attendance issues, or (3) the leave is due to pregnancy without medical complications.

17.7.4 Donations of Time. Operating Staff may donate Earned Time in minimal increments of 4 hours from their Earned Time accrual and exempt staff may donate vacation/personal time in minimal increments of 0.5 days from their vacation/persona leave accrual. No Sick Pool or sick

leave may be donated. After donating leave, a donating employee must have a minimum balance of one week (e.g. 37.5 or 40 hours/5 days) of Earned Time/vacation time. Time may be donated to a status employee in any department and status employee type covered by this policy. Donated time does not count towards minimum usage requirements. Donations may be made to more than one employee, but no employee may donate more than a maximum of 10 days (75/ 80 hours) of Earned Time/vacation time in total per fiscal year. This maximum is pro-rated for percent-time employees. No compassionate leave donations may be made outside the employee's home institution.

17.7.5 Use of Compassionate Leave. An employee receiving compassionate leave will not accrue Earned Time/vacation/personal/sick time on compassionate leave time days. The recipient's home department will pay the cost of the employee's salary that is covered by compassionate leave. Any compassionate leave not used by the recipient is returned to the last employee who donated time. Compassionate leave use cannot extend beyond the end of the employee's appointment period.

17.7.6 Reporting. The institution shall establish a process to ensure that the donor and recipient time/leave are correctly recorded on appropriate time cards/leave records.

17.7.7 Termination of Leave. An employee's use of compassionate leave ends when one or more of the following occur: the employee returns to work; the maximum amount of compassionate leave has been used; medical documentation for the employee, spouse, child, or parent releases the employee to return to work; the employee terminates employment; there are no more donations of leave time to the employee.

17.7.8 Collective Bargaining Agreements. All provisions of this policy shall prevail except as modified by any applicable collective bargaining agreements.