

Operating Staff Council Meeting Minutes Wednesday, April 8, 2009

Members in Attendance: Janice Aviza, Ann Boylan, Slava Bruder (Vice Chair) Monique Couillard, Matty Leighton (Chair), Patrice MacNevin, Laurie Anne Malizia, Janice Pierson, Sandra Reynolds, Toni Searles, Brian Tobin, Lisa Wilder

Members Not in Attendance: N/A

Guests: Jon Adams, PAT Council Representative; Sharon Demers, Human Resources; Karen Gilbert, PAT Representative; Jody Record, Campus Journal; Lon Sattler, SPPC Representative

Agenda Items

Welcome and Introductions – Matty Leighton

Matty introduced Jon Adams, a new member of the PAT Council who has volunteered to attend OS Council meetings as a liaison between the councils. He is also interested in serving on the Promotion from Within Task Action Group. Jon has been with UNH for 19 years. He started as an hourly employee, then became an OS employee, and finally moved to his present position as a PAT employee in the Graduate School two years ago when his position was reclassified. He is a General Information Technician III.

Approval of Minutes – Matty Leighton

The March minutes were approved by acclamation.

OS Liaison for PAT Council Meetings – Matty Leighton, Jon Adams

Matty asked the council representatives if there was someone who would agree to attend PAT Council meetings. This is part of the tri-council communication objective to increase communication between the councils as well as with constituents and with the administration. Monique Couillard volunteered to do this. PAT Council meetings are the first Wednesday of every month at the Alumni Center.

Promotion from Within – Matty Leighton, Jon Adams

Another tri-council objective identified at the retreat is increasing promotion from within. Matty, Jon and the rest of the council brainstormed about how to get started. Matty suggested surveying OS to see if they had ever applied for PAT positions and what the outcome was (whether they got an interview, etc.). Jon suggested that he could put together a survey for PAT to see how many have moved up from OS positions. It might also prove useful to talk to supervisors who hire PAT to see what their thinking is about whether or not OS are good candidates for PAT positions, and why or why not. Finally, one way to increase promotion of OS to PAT positions might be to create a mentoring program where PAT or PAT supervisors mentor OS who are interested in advancement. Sharon asked what the objective of the initiative was, because she was concerned that the outcome might be a system that creates “forced hire” situations. Matty replied that so far the task action group’s objective was to identify if there is even a problem, or if there is an erroneous perception that OS do not advance into PAT positions. If the impression is erroneous, then we need to document some of the success stories. If it’s correct, then we need to investigate how we can make OS more attractive to PAT supervisors, support them in moving up, and create a culture of promotion from within. A representative asked if there are minimum degree requirements for PAT positions, and Sharon replied that they usually require an Associate’s or Bachelor’s degree. Sandra Reynolds is also part of the task action group, which will begin drafting a survey in May or June.

Student ID Conversion – Jon Adams

Jon wanted the council members to know, if they had not already heard, that the conversion of student identifier from Social Security number to randomly generated ID number will occur. All students will be issued new ID cards with their new identifying numbers.

Paper Reduction – Patrice MacNevin, Janice Aviza

The Paper Reduction Task Action Group announced that Karen Gilbert from the PAT Council has agreed to join the group. The group has a lot of good ideas, including:

- Auto-cancel programming that automatically stops paper versions of publications when someone signs up for an e-mail version.
- Send single copies of certain materials to departments and circulate or post them.
- Get a student representative on the group, since students receive a large number of mass mailings, too.
- Create a comprehensive list of campus mailings, giving people the ability to opt in or out of them
- Use directed communication more
- Add a cell to the central HR record that shows whether or not the person uses a computer in doing their job, so they do not receive computer-related paper mailings
- Add a cell to mailing list pull programs that identify whether or not the recipient has a UNH e-mail address. Set the programming to eliminate any paper mailing to individuals with e-mail addresses and send the message via e-mail instead.

This issue has been very popular with constituents, and since President Huddleston explicitly mentioned paper reduction in his budget letter, the group would like to take action as soon as possible. Matty noted that the level of ideas is really exciting, but what is needed is more data, a central plan for the entire university (vs. trying to make changes here and there with various departments), and a strategy for implementation.

SPPC Update – Lonn Sattler, Janice Pierson

Lonn noted that he had not received any significant feedback on the changes to the callback policy, which were minimal. He did inform that council that the Board of Trustees has declined to approve the gross-up in pay intended to offset the tax hit for same-sex couples who enter into civil unions to retain their partner's benefits. Because the Defense of Marriage Act explicitly prohibits pre-tax deductions for same-sex partner benefit premiums, the Board of Trustees would prefer not to subvert the intent of the federal law, especially since it sets a precedent of trying to redress a national-level inequity at the university system level in a piecemeal fashion. Instead, the Board authorized its Human Resources Subcommittee to make a commitment to advocate for federal marriage equality. The language of the resolution is as follows:

***BE IT RESOLVED**, that the University System of New Hampshire Human Resources Subcommittee concurs with the Presidential Council's assessment that the unequal treatment of marriage and civil union under the federal income tax laws is inconsistent with the intent of NH State law and creates inequitable application of employee benefits.*

***AND FURTHERMORE**, the Human Resources Subcommittee requests the Chancellor and Presidents, by whatever means they deem appropriate, to contact the New Hampshire congressional delegation and express support for equalizing the treatment of marriage and civil union under the federal income tax laws.*

More information on this issue is available in the February 18th issue of the *Campus Journal* at <http://unh.edu/news/campusjournal/2009/Feb/18civil.cfm>.

Lonn also mentioned that the SPPC was looking at the practicality of providing employees with information about facilities that offer more competitive prices on medical procedures and tests. It's possible that the university might be able to offer some sort of incentive to employees who use these less-expensive providers, thus reducing the overall cost of healthcare for UNH employees and allowing the administration to negotiate for better rates with our insurer(s). Any information that is provided about pricing would also contain reporting on quality; employees will not be expected to sacrifice quality to save money.

Budget Letter – Group Discussion

The council discussed the reaction they had received from constituents regarding the president's budget letter. The consensus appears to be that, while not an attractive option in any way, a wage freeze is better than having layoffs. There were some questions about how the \$40K cutoff amount was reached. Was it arbitrary, did the administration feel that families living on less than \$40K would be thrown into crisis, or did they have a target amount that needed to be carved off of the pool from which raises come, and freezing at \$40K reached that target amount?

There was also considerable discussion about the responsibility of the faculty and the police, who both have collective bargaining agreements and are currently negotiating new contracts, to voluntarily take some sort of freeze as well. It was suggested that the councils send a joint letter to the representatives of the faculty and police unions making this request. Matty reported that she had already forwarded a suggestion to the faculty from a constituent who thought they should support the staff by taking a voluntary wage freeze if they make over \$40K.

One representative asked about the status of the parking fee, and the council was unanimous in agreeing that there should be NO PARKING FEE INCREASE until austerity measures like wage freezes are ended. Matty will check with one of the Transportation Policy Council representatives to see what is going on with this. (Note: As of 4/30 Tracy Gagnon reports that the increase appears to be off the table. She asked Dick Cannon about this at the last TPC meeting and his response was that it "was quite unpopular last time we brought it up).

Finally, there were numerous questions about how furloughs might work, if and when they are ever implemented. Would they allow the use of earned time? Or would they be completely unpaid? Could they be accomplished through an incremental cutback in weekly hours, vs. forcing people to take a number of full days or weeks off at one time? Would benefits continue during a furlough? Sharon was not able to answer these questions, but she will research them for the next meeting. She did say that right now furloughs were a very distant possibility.

Release Time – Janice Pierson

Janice told the council that Donna Marie Sorrento, Director of Affirmative Action and Equity Office, has asked Operating Staff who are required to use earned time to attend university-sanctioned events or perform service activities to report this to the Affirmative Action and Equity office. Staff should use the "Report It" form on the AAE web site. She will review the case to determine whether bias has taken place.

Sharon notified the council that she is currently working on draft language for a policy that would encourage departments to allow release time for certain university-sanctioned events and activities, as well as identify activities for which release time may be used. If a department allows an employee to

attend one of the designated activities, then they will not be able to require the employee to take earned time to do so.

Announcements

Slava thanked the council for the donation to Shriners' Hospital in her mother's memory, as well as the prayer shawl and other kind gestures.

Laurie Anne told the council that the "Upward Review Task Action Group" that she headed has resulted in a new task force sponsored by HR, called the Multi-Source Review Task Force. Work on this initiative is under way and will be ready for review in December.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 2:35 PM.

The next OSC meeting will take place from 1:00 – 2:30 PM on Wednesday, May 13th in the Trustees' Board Room in T-Hall. OS Council meetings are open to all operating staff.

OS Council web site: <http://www.unh.edu/os-council/>

PAT Council web site: <http://www.unh.edu/pat-council/>

SPPC web site: <http://www.usnh.edu/hr/sppc.html>