

Operating Staff Council Meeting Minutes Wednesday, September 13, 2006

Members in Attendance: April Damon, Jennifer Dube, Matty Leighton (Recorder), Patrice MacNevin, Doreen Palmer (UNH-M), Lori Parent, Lisa Wilder, Jason Brodeur (Chair)

Members Not in Attendance: Jeff Jones, Geri Sanders, Toni Searles

Guests: Lonn Sattler, SPPC; Sharon Demers, Human Resources

Agenda Items

Opening Remarks/Review of August Minutes – Jason Brodeur, Chair

The August minutes were accepted by acclamation without changes.

Benefits Update – Sharon Demers, Human Resources

Open enrollment is scheduled for October 2 through October 13, with the Benefits Fair on October 10th. This year, packets will be mailed to employees' homes rather than to their offices, and the mailing should go out near the end of September.

Benefits enrollment will be handled 100% on-line, with no hard-copy alternatives. Computer stations will be provided in the MUB for employees who do not have access to computers in their work area, and HR hopes to have staff on hand there to assist employees with the on-line enrollment process, if needed.

Employee health insurance costs will increase in 2007 due to two factors: 1) an increase in the premium cost, and 2) a 2% increase in the percentage of employee contribution. Nevertheless, the university continues to bear the majority of the cost. For example, the employee contribution for the family plan will increase from 19% to 21%, however, the University's contribution is 79%. In addition, the switch to Harvard Pilgrim has cut the premium increase significantly from what it could have been with Cigna (nearly 30%). For more information on benefits costs, go to <http://www.usnhhr.unh.edu/open-enrollment.html>.

The university understands that health care cost increases can cause hardship for employees and is looking for a creative way to mitigate the impact of the increase. For instance, one suggestion has been to allow employees to "cash in" up to five days of earned time for use in offsetting increased benefit costs. Nothing final has been decided, but HR will continue to look at options.

The university is also considering having some sort of benefits offerings for non-benefits-eligible employees. Currently these employees have access to a health plan, but the university does not make a contribution to the premium cost and the quality is not very good. Thus the plan is not utilized by many employees, and the ones that do tend to use it are long-term employees. One option that has been discussed is offering these employees the choice of a lower wage with the university making a contribution towards health care benefits, or a higher wage with no

contribution, but no changes are scheduled to be made at this time.

Jennifer Dube asked why the positions of longer-term employees who wish to have benefits cannot be converted into regular, budgeted employee positions. This is a possibility, according to HR, but the fringe benefit cost for budgeted employees is 43%, making it a financial challenge for many departments.

Jennifer also suggested that HR show employees what the savings are with Harvard Pilgrim by choosing a popular plan option (say, Harvard Pilgrim HMO, Family, Bi-Weekly) and listing the cost for that option vs. the cost if the university had stayed with Cigna.

At the end of her presentation, Sharon distributed a hard copy of recent additions/edits to USNH Policies for:

- ▶ Compassionate Leave - Renamed “Compassionate Donation”
- ▶ Crime Victims - Allows the use of sick pool/sick leave/family leave for qualifying situations
Non-Work-Related Solicitations
- ▶ Involuntary Reductions in Appointment Time - Requires 90-calendar-day notification for PAT and 30-calendar-day notification for OS when reduction is more than 10% or affects benefit eligibility
- ▶ Pay-By-Hour Policies – Clarification of work schedules, rest periods, and meal breaks

These policies have been distributed by e-mail and will also be mailed to all employees. She also distributed a draft of the new Performance Assessment Form, which will be implemented during the next evaluation cycle, which begins in January 2007.

Wildcat Chat – Patrice MacNevin

Patrice showed the council a copy of “Wildcat Chat,” a newsletter designed to reach staff without computer access in Hospitality Services, Printing and Mailing Services, and other departments. This newsletter is published monthly, and last month it included the OS Council meeting minutes.

The council discussed the possibility of publishing a similar newsletter or providing more reader-friendly information about council proceedings for publication in “Wildcat Chat.” Matty will draft some bullet points from this month’s minutes and see how they are received. Doreen Palmer mentioned that UNH-M also has a publication, “Campus Connections,” which might also be a venue to distribute information from the minutes.

Benefits Fair – Lori Parent

The annual Benefits Fair is scheduled for 10/10 from 10:00 to 2:00 in the Granite State Room of the MUB. There is no cost for the OS Council to have a table. Every council member at the meeting was interested in participating on some level.

Lori will coordinate the council’s table, and Matty will work with her to create signage. Lori,

Lisa, and Matty can be available for set-up, and Matty will look into giveaways. We will repeat the raffle format from last year; Lori has some prize materials left over, and council members will solicit additional prizes that can be used to create prize baskets. If the flyer is ready, we will use it at the table. If not, we will create a one-page “What Does OS Council Do for YOU?” handout that can be used. We will also see if we can work with PAT to use their sign about discounts/deals open to UNH employees. In addition, Patrice suggested that we have a suggestion box that would allow constituents to submit topics/questions/issues for the council’s consideration.

Open Forum with Dick Cannon – Jason Brodeur

On October 18th at 3:00 PM we will be participating in a joint council meeting with the PAT and EE councils in Room 338 at the MUB. Dick Cannon, Vice President of Finance and Administration, will meet with all three councils to hear concerns/suggestions and answer questions. Jason would like the council to be prepared with questions prompted by our own experiences or submitted by our constituents. With the benefits fair coming up and this forum following a week later, this is a good time for council members to pursue more direct contact with constituents and solicit feedback.

Lori Parent voiced one concern: Shuttle buses have been discontinued by Transportation Services and the UNH Foundation is paying a lot of money to rent shuttle buses when alumni, VIPs, and potential donors visit campus. Although the university has identified Enterprise as a preferred vendor, their customer service is terrible and the Foundation has had to use a limo service instead. Jason noted that the Whittemore School Graduate Office has also had to rent shuttle buses from an off-campus limo service.

Announcements

The next council meeting will be October 11, 2006.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 2:30 PM.

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

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