

Operating Staff Council Meeting Minutes Wednesday, September 10, 2008

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

Members Not in Attendance: All present

Guests: Sharon Demers, Human Resources; Lonn Sattler, SPCC; Kathy Stilwell, Constituent and Guest of Slava Bruder

Agenda Items

Approval of August Minutes – Matty Leighton

The minutes from the July meeting were approved by acclamation.

Parking Fees – Matty Leighton

Rumors about a possible increase in the parking fee have swept across campus, and several council members asked to add a discussion of the increase to the agenda. To start of the discussion, Matty updated the council on the history of the “proposed” increase. At a retreat earlier in the year, the Transportation Policy Committee conducted a brainstorming exercise that asked them to address a scenario where gas prices rose to \$8.00 or more. The members of the committee were asked to come up with a variety of ideas for encouraging faculty, staff, and students to utilize mass transportation while also addressing the shortfall of funding for transportation services that would result from such a rise in gas costs. One of the suggested solutions was a graduated increase in the cost of staff parking that would take place over 4 or 5 years. The increase would raise the cost of parking from \$50.00 to \$235.00 per year over five years. This idea never got past the discussion phase, but somehow some staff members became convinced that the increase was approved and will be implemented next year.

The council agreed that some action needed to be taken to counteract the negative sentiment aroused by the rumors of an increase. The decision was to take the following steps:

1. Contact the chair of the Transportation Policy Committee to find out exactly what plans, if any, there are for an increase.
2. Communicate the facts to constituents.
3. Reiterate the council’s firm opposition to an increase, if needed, and include alternative suggestions (i.e., a tiered fee system based on salary).
4. Invite Dirk Timmons, Director of Transportation, and Steve Pesci, Project Director/Special Projects, to our next meeting.

Task Action Groups

Upward Review – Laurrie Anne has contacted several of the identified comparator institutions and has come up with some interesting information. The University of Connecticut, which is unionized, does not have any type of upward review procedure, nor did it prior to unionization. The University of Colorado, Boulder does have a 360-degree review procedure available, but it is totally voluntary and somewhat complicated. There have been problem with implementation, and confidentiality requirements have caused some issues. Colorado has a state employment law that requires identification of the source when a certain level of negative feedback is included in a performance review. This means there is the possibility that reviewers’ identities will be revealed, creating a fear of retaliation among subordinates

who are asked to participate in the process. Matty commented that she contacted a friend and colleague who is employed at CU-Boulder, and that person said the process is rarely used for this very reason. Laurie Anne wants to gather additional information about institutions and private employers that may employ upward or 360-degree reviews, and she asked for the council's help in identifying potential contacts. Sharon Demers also told the council that she is having Janet Doty solicit some feedback from an HR listserve they use to find out about other colleges and universities that may have upward review processes in place. In fact, Sharon would like to create a task force that brings together PAT, Extension Educator, and OS representatives to explore the possibility of implementing upward review. Laurie Anne volunteered to represent Operating Staff on this task force.

Mediation Board – Janice distributed an initial document, “What Is Employee Mediation,” (included as Appendix A) that attempts to define the intent and process of mediation. She and the rest of the task group are about three quarters of the way done with their review of mediation boards at peer institutions. However, they are having difficulty making contact with private companies, so Janice asked the council members to provide any contact information they may have with large local employers or with people who have gone through the mediation process at other institutions or companies. Matty, Lon, and Patrice thought they might be able to help with contacts at Liberty Mutual, Timberland, and Frisbee Memorial Hospital. Janice has also made contact with the PAT Council, and they are interested in participating in this initiative.

Communication Boards – Patrice MacNevin

Patrice distributed a copy of the new quarterly focus piece for the communication boards. It's called “Learn About Learning at UNH”, and it includes information about learning opportunities through CIS and Environmental Health and Safety, Cooperative Extension, Continuing Education, and the various USNH campuses. The following changes were recommended:

- Add a section at the end with specific steps on how to register and pay for classes
- Remove section on CIS
- Add Staff Development Grant information
- Remove advice to contact council rep for help with forms; add HR link

Matty will make these changes and circulate the edited draft to the council and to Sharon Demers. Once the final draft is approved, it will be submitted to the Campus Journal, placed on the web site, and put up on the communication boards across campus. The edited copy is included as Appendix B.

Benefits Fair – Matty Leighton

The benefits fair is scheduled for Tuesday, October 28th, from 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM in the Granite State Room. Once again the OS Council will have a booth. Those of us who are available will sign up to provide staffing, and Matty will design a new display and provide the representatives with business cards using the design updates approved at the last meeting. After a brief discussion, the council decided the booth display should include:

- A list of representatives, with their photos
- The current 2008 council goals
- A “Do You Know Your Benefits?” list highlighting the many different benefits to which we have access

To attract traffic to the booth, the council decided to hold a contest soliciting ideas from constituents to save money or make improvements to the university. The council will review the ideas via e-mail immediately after the conclusion of the Benefits Fair and choose a winner. Criteria will be: 1) Is the idea implementable and practical? 2) Is the idea creative? and 3) Does the idea benefit staff members?

We will solicit or create a prize for the best idea (one thought was to ask Transportation to provide a fee parking pass). We will need to consult with Chris van Horn on this, since there are new IRS regulations that make donations tricky.

Logo Ideas – Sandra Reynolds

The council reviewed a great selection of logo ideas submitted by Sandra Reynolds. After reviewing the ideas, the council agreed to have Sandra to create two versions for review at the next meeting:

1. A version with the pen and paper, with the blue and grey background, and the slogan “Building a Better Future for OS at UNH and UNH-M.
2. A version with the bridge, with the blue and grey background, using the same slogan as the first version.

Since it’s important to see how the logo will look when it’s smaller, Sandra will provide full-size and thumbnail-sized version of each logo.

Additional Task Action Group Ideas/New Member Interest – Janice Pierson

Janice distributed copies of the ideas from the brainstorming session at the retreat, and asked the council, particularly the new members, to identify any additional areas of interest or ideas for additional task action groups. Sandra Reynolds wanted to look into the issue of staff mobility at UNH. This is an issue that has been raised in the past by other council members. It appears to be difficult for staff members to transfer laterally, move from part-time to full-time, or move upward within the university. It’s unclear what causes this – is it an issue of visibility, a stigma related to the status of operating staff, a culture or look outside the university, or something else? Matty was willing to work with Sandra on this issue. Other council members are encouraged to participate as well.

Announcements

Sharon Demers announced that President Huddleston will be forming a task force for his Healthy UNH initiative and asked for volunteers from the council. Lisa Wilder, Laurie Anne Malizia, and Janice Pierson all indicated an interest. The task force will meet once per month, and Sharon will get back to the council with the President’s choice.

Sandra Reynolds announced that the juried Staff Art Show at the UNH Museum (in Dimond Library) will kick off with a reception on September 26 from 4:00 to 7:00 PM. The show will remain open until December 5, and Sandra has a watercolor in the show.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 2:35 PM.

The next OSC meeting is scheduled on Wednesday, October 8th at 1:00 PM in MUB Room 321. 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>

Appendix A

What is Employee Mediation?

The Employee Mediation Program is an informal, structured process designed to assist employees in discussing workplace issues and develop a more positive and productive workplace environment.

Mediators, or neutral third parties, assist individuals in working toward a mutually acceptable solution to their workplace issue. Mediation offers each party an:

- **Opportunity** to create an agreement that both parties are satisfied with.
- **Viewpoint sharing and issue identification** - Each participant is given an opportunity to explain their concerns.
- **Caucus** - An opportunity for the mediation board to speak privately with each participant
- **Generation of options** - The mediation board will help you move past communication barriers to generate alternatives to resolve your workplace issue. They will also offer an opportunity to develop new ways of handling their workplace issue.
- **Agreement** - The goal of the mediation board is to focus on positive future working relationships. If you reach an agreement in mediation, a member of the mediation board will write it up for you to sign during the session. You will each be given a copy of the agreement.

Any agreement you reach in mediation is voluntary. You will not be required to agree to anything unless you want to.

How Long Does Mediation Last?

There is no time limit on the length of the mediation process. However, sessions typically last two hours. The length of the mediation session is governed by the complexity of the issues and the participants' willingness to reach a mutually satisfactory resolution with the other party.

What is the Role of the Mediator?

Mediators do not determine the outcome of the mediation session and do not act as judge, jury, or arbitrator. As the "process expert," the mediator helps the participants' converse efficiently and effectively.

Benefits of Mediation

Confidential:

Members of the mediation board will not disclose what is said in the mediation session.

Control:

The mediators keep the lines of communication open, but do not make decisions about how the dispute should be resolved. Decision making power is reserved for the people affected by the outcome. The role of the mediator is to help provide creative solutions to help end an unresolved conflict between 2 or more persons.

Voluntary:

You choose whether you want to mediate. You can also choose to stop the mediation process at any time. You choose to reach an agreement.

Quick and Cost-Effective:

Mediation services are provided at no charge. Mediation board members can be assembled within one to two weeks at locations and times that are convenient for you.

Respectful:

Mediation respects differences in opinions, beliefs and backgrounds.

It Works!

Because participants are involved in creating their own solution research shows people are more satisfied with the result and comply with the terms of the agreement.

Appendix B



Learn about Learning at UNH

UNH offers benefits-eligible faculty and staff a wide variety of free learning opportunities on and off campus:

- Job-specific technical training through CIS and Environmental Health and Safety
- Credit and non-credit courses through Continuing Education
- Educational programs offered by Cooperative Extension
- Undergraduate and graduate degree programs

Job-Specific Technical Training – The CIS Training Center at 1 Leavitt Lane offers free training in UNH-specific applications including Banner Finance, Banner HR, Banner Student, Blackboard, WEBI Reporting, Outlook Applications, and Safe Computing @ UNH. For a catalog of courses, go to <http://cistraining.unh.edu/courses/>.

Environmental Health and Safety also offers job-related training for individuals whose positions require it, free of charge. Topics include Biomechanics of Lifting, Bloodborne Pathogens, Confined Space Entry, Office Ergonomics, Hazardous Materials Shipping, and much, much more. For a complete list of EHS training courses, go to <http://www.unh.edu/ehs/training.htm>

Credit and Non-Credit Courses – Continuing Education offers more than 2,000 credit courses and 250 non-credit workshops and conferences for individuals who do not wish to enroll in a traditional degree program. The non-credit certificate programs of UNH's Professional Development and Training are very popular with faculty and staff. Credit and non-credit courses may be paid for using the employee tuition waiver benefit. You can find information on all Continuing Education programs at www.learn.unh.edu.

Cooperative Extension – The mission of Cooperative Extension is to provide New Hampshire citizens with research-based education and information. CE maintains a network of professional Extension staff located in all 10 New Hampshire counties who design and conduct educational programs that meet societal, environmental, and economic needs. Many of Cooperative Extension's educational offerings are free of charge; for more information on upcoming workshops and other events, go to their web page at <http://extension.unh.edu/events/index.cfm?e=app.home>.

Degree Programs – The University's undergraduate degree programs welcome non-traditional students who have obtained a high school degree or GED. Non-traditional students are individuals who are 24 years or older, including full or part-time employees, caregivers, veterans, and those with an interrupted sequencing of education. Today, more than 10 percent of the undergraduate population fits this category. For more information about undergraduate degree programs at UNH, go to <http://admissions.unh.edu/>. Employees who already hold a bachelor's or master's degree from an accredited college or university may apply to the graduate school. For more information on graduate programs, go to <http://www.gradschool.unh.edu/>. Both undergraduate and graduate programs may be paid for using the employee tuition waiver benefit.

Employees may also use their tuition waiver benefit at Granite State College, Keene State College, and Plymouth State University.

How Do I Register and Pay?

CIS Training – Registration for all CIS classes is done online through the CIS training web site. There is no charge for UNH-specific application training such as Banner and WEBI Reporting.

EHS Training – Registration for EHS courses is done via phone or on Blackboard. Please go the EHS web site for more information. There is no charge for EHS training for those individuals whose jobs require it.

Cooperative Extension – Registration requirements vary by event. Some offerings do not require registration, others allow registration by phone, by US mail, or online. Please go to the Cooperative Extension web site for more information.

Continuing Education and Degree Programs – To register and pay for courses taken through Continuing Education or through a degree program, staff must:

1. **Register for the course(s)** online (through Webcat) **OR** using a paper registration form **OR** using a paper add/drop form
AND
2. **Complete a paper tuition waiver form** and take it to the Business Services Office located in the basement of Stoke Hall.

Hard copies of registration forms are available at:

Continuing Education Registration – <http://www.learn2.unh.edu/registration/regform.pdf>

Undergraduate Add/Drop – <http://www.unh.edu/registrar/regforms/adddrop.pdf>

Graduate Registration – <http://www.unh.edu/registrar/regforms/gradrf.pdf>

Who Is Eligible for the Tuition Waiver?

Faculty/staff members are eligible for the tuition waiver benefit if 1) they are employed in a benefits-eligible position, and 2) they have successfully completed their initial introductory period.

The faculty/staff tuition benefit covers enrollment in any regular, for-credit courses offered by USNH institutions. The total number of courses covered by the tuition benefit for full-time faculty or staff is no more than two courses per semester, term, or summer session, and is limited to five courses in a fiscal year. Employees who have less than full-time appointments should check USNH policy USY V.A. 9.2.1.3 to find the number of courses they may take per semester.

The tuition waiver benefit includes payment of 1) 100% tuition for for-credit courses and 50% tuition for non-credit courses, and 2) 100% payment of mandatory fees generally required of students. Coverage for non-credit courses is available **for employees only**, and non-credit courses are counted in the total number of courses permitted per year.

Tuition waiver forms are available at:

Business Services, Stoke Hall
Registrar's Office, Stoke Hall
Human Resources, 2 Leavitt Lane

For more information about the tuition benefit, please visit the UNH Human Resources web page or call 862-0501. If you require assistance completing your tuition waiver forms, please contact your Human Resources partner.