

Operating Staff Council Meeting Minutes Wednesday, October 11, 2006

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

Members Not in Attendance: Lori Parent, Geri Sanders

Guests: Slava Bruder, Council Candidate; Sharon Demers, Human Resources; Holly Hillsgrove, Prospective Council Member; Jody Record, Campus Journal; Lon Sattler, SPPC

Agenda Items

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

Jeff Jones requested that the “Open Forum with Dick Cannon” section of the minutes from September be changed to read “*Charter* buses have been discontinued by Transportation Services” rather than “*shuttle* buses.” The minutes were accepted by acclamation as revised. Jason introduced two visitors to the council: Holly Hillsgrove, who is interested in becoming a representative, and Jody Record, who will be reporting on council meetings for the Campus Journal (available online at <http://unhinfo.unh.edu/news/campusjournal/index.html>).

New Council Membership – Jason Brodeur, Chair

There were two issues to cover in the area of council membership:

1. Alternate Representative to the SPPC – Jeff Jones volunteered to serve as the alternate OS representative to the Systems Personnel and Policy Council. Jeff was voted in unanimously, and will attend some SPPC meetings with Lon Sattler, the current UNH OS representative. As the alternate, Jeff will be responsible for attending SPPC meetings and reporting back to the UNH OS Council in the event that Lon is unable to do so. The agenda from the Sept. meeting is available at http://www.usnhhr.unh.edu/pdf/2006/Sept06_SPPCAgenda.pdf.
2. New Member – Slava Bruder expressed an interest in joining the council, and she was voted in unanimously. Before the vote, she told the council a little about herself. She has been a UNH employee since 1969, when she started at the New England Center. In 1992 she moved to SHARPP (the Sexual Harassment and Rape Prevention Program) as office manager and was subsequently trained as an advocate. She is proficient in Ukrainian and has knowledge of various Slavic languages, and has used these language skills in her advocacy role when needed. Because of her long-time employment here, she feels an allegiance to the university and wants to help out in any way she can. She also believes in SHARPP’s goals and feels that membership on the OS Council can help her promote visibility of the SHARPP program. More information about SHARPP is available at <http://www.unh.edu/sharpp/>.

SPPC Update – Lon Sattler

Lon updated the Council on business from the most recent SPPC meeting held September 28, 2006. Three main issues were covered:

1. Draft Mitigation Strategy for the Implementation of the January 2007 Increase in Non-Union Employee Contributions to Medical Plans – Lonn provided the council with a copy of a draft mitigation plan to help UNH employees offset the increase in the cost of benefits starting January 1, 2007 (a copy of the draft plan is attached as Appendix A). The mitigation policy proposed to offset this increase in cost by:
 - a. Using approximately \$500,000 from the increased employee contributions to the Benefits budget to make a one-time payment of \$400 to all employees who make under \$40,000 per year.
 - b. Allowing any employee who earns Earned Time or Vacation days to “cash out” up to five days of accrued Earned Time.

Council members posed a number of questions:

- a. If an employee has not enrolled in the benefits plan, can they still take advantage of the mitigation plan?
- b. If the university has enough money to make payments to everyone, why can't they just use that money to keep the cost of benefits down?
- c. Is this in place of the additional 1% merit increase that was mentioned as a possibility later this year?

The council also discussed the tax implications of a one-time payment and whether it would be better to push for the 1% merit increase as a mitigation plan. Because one-time bonus payments are taxed differently than hourly pay, a significantly larger chunk of federal withholding tax is taken out of bonus pay. Usually the employee gets this money back in their tax return, but if the point of the one-time payment is to help employees who are strapped in the present, a tax return that comes next year is not going to be particularly helpful. However, the council came to the conclusion that since the majority of operating staff make \$40,000 or less per year, a one-time \$400 payment would be a better deal for them than a 1% salary increase. Therefore the council endorsed the one-time payment plan by acclamation.

Note: The PAT Council's discussion of this issue was reported in the Campus Journal: <http://unh.edu/news/campusjournal/2006/october/101106pat.html>

2. Longevity Payments – The staff of Keene State College have proposed that USNH's longevity salary benefit for operating staff be increased. The current plan (attached as Appendix B) allows for the following additional pay, which is computed after any annual or merit increases are made:

10 - 14 years service – Employee receives an additional 2% of salary
15 - 19 years service – Employee receives an additional 4% of salary
20 - 24 years service – Employee receives an additional 6% of salary
25 - 29 years service – Employee receives an additional 8% of salary
30 years or more of service – Employee receives an additional 10% of salary

The KSC staff feels that there should continue to be incremental increases after thirty years of service. While initial investigation has shown that UNH's longevity plan is more generous than those of other local employers, the SPPC plans to investigate the possibility of expanding the plan, not necessarily by adding more dollars, but by adding other incentives such as merchandise, gift certificates, office accessories, household and recreation items, travel, timepieces, etc.

3. Communicable Diseases – Lonon provided the council with a draft of a new communicable diseases policy. The current policy deals almost exclusively with HIV/AIDS, while the new policy addresses broader threats such as an avian flu pandemic. The new policy (which is attached as Appendix C) was endorsed by acclamation.

Performance Management Initiative Information Session – Jen Dube

Jen recently attended an information session for the Performance Management Initiative, and she heard some disturbing comments from employees that she wanted to bring to the attention of the council. She was shocked to hear that some employees do not have confidence in the integrity and fairness of the evaluation process. For instance, people indicated that they had been asked to change comments they made in their portion of the evaluation about their supervisor or their work environment. People at the info session also raised the concern that supervisors will be able to change employee comments if/when we go to an electronic submission format.

Jeff Jones suggested that the HR department consider implementing a 360 evaluation process, where employees evaluate their supervisors. Jen pointed out that this was a good idea in the long run but that it would take a long time to implement system-wide, and she was concerned enough about what she heard that she was hoping to see some action taken now. She wondered if there was any sort of ombudsman or other resource available, since HR is not an advocate for the employee in these situations. It is HR's job to balance the interests of the employee and the institution.

Sharon closed the discussion by telling the council that she would think about what could be done about the level of discomfort, fear, and distrust that Jen had noted in her meeting. In the meantime, any employee with evaluation issues should be encouraged to work with the HR partner. If their issue is not resolved after working with the HR partner, they should contact Sharon directly at 2-0511 or sharon.demers@unh.edu.

Benefits Fair Recap – Jason Brodeur, Chair

Jason thanked everyone on the council who helped out, either by preparing or staffing the booth (or both). He asked council members to mention any questions or comments that they had fielded from constituents while staffing the booth. The majority of comments concerned displeasure with the increase in benefits costs, but there were also some thank-you's for our service and for getting comprehensive and readable minutes out to constituents in a timely manner. Our prize winners from the Benefits Fair were:

Karen Schwendeman/WSBE – UNH Blanket

Thelma Sidmore/Classics, Russian, and German – Dunkin Donuts Book

Kathy Mandsager/Coastal Response Research Center - WSBE Mini-Maglite and Laser Pen

Dina DiTulio/Purchasing – UNH Whittemore School College T-Shirt
Lynn Rouselle/Housekeeping – Potted Plant

Michael Paul Phillips/Admissions – UHS Dining Card for Ten Meals (Lunch for Two x 5)
10 Gift Certificates to Bonici's Italian Eatery, MUB Food Court - Lunch with Fountain Soda
Pat Carr/Purchasing
Claire Rheaume/BSC-NEC
Eric Potter/Printing
Patti Cleary/Center for Academic Resources
Judie Harvey/Co-op Ext-Taylor Hall
Holly Hillsgrove/Political Science
Renee Vannata/OISS
Carol Main/Purchasing
Tim Buzinski/CEPS
Chare Powell/Registration

Forum with Dick Cannon, VP of Finance – Jason Brodeur, Chair

A tri-council meeting will be confirmed for Wednesday, October 18. Matty Leighton did receive one concern from a constituent reiterating Lori Parent's complaint regarding Enterprise Rental's current service within the University. Jeff Jones requested that Matty forward the complaint to him so he can address it with the Regional Manager at Enterprise; however, the issue will still be raised at the forum. Jason has requested that council members or constituents e-mail him with concerns at jason.brodeur@unh.edu.

Presidential Search – Jason Brodeur, Chair

Jason passed out an article that appeared in the Campus Journal (for the text of the article, see <http://unh.edu/news/campusjournal/2006/october/101106pres.html>) and updated the council on the status of the search. The committee identified three groups of candidates – one group that was clearly qualified, one group that was clearly not qualified, and one that was on the bubble. From there, the committee was able to narrow the field to those candidates that they wished to interview. The committee will conduct “airport interviews” with 10-12 candidates and from there will identify 3-4 for campus visits. The search is still on schedule to name a president by the beginning of 2007.

Wrap-Up – Jason Brodeur, Chair

Jason quickly named a number of future projects for the council:

- ▶ Elections for next year – chair, vice chair (which we don't currently have), recorder, and perhaps some subcommittees.
- ▶ Review of bylaws – It's been at least five years since the council has reviewed the bylaws and there are some that we are not sticking to as closely as others, so it may be time to update.
- ▶ Survey of OS staff – Jason is still committed to doing this as part of strategic plan goal of communicating better with our constituents.
- ▶ New web site – There have been some delays, but it is moving forward now.

As a final thought, Jason called the council's attention to the three words on the front of the new brochure – advocating, collaborating, and communicating. This is what we do - we act as a bridge between the administration and the OS, looking out for the best interests of both.

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/>

Appendix A

DRAFT MITIGATION STRATEGY FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE JANUARY 2007 INCREASE IN EMPLOYEE CONTRIBUTIONS TO MEDICAL PLANS

Background

A strategic plan for the management of the cost of employer-paid benefits has been developed for the period covering FY 06 through FY 09. The goals include continued reduction in the rate of growth in benefit costs and enhancement of the ways in which faculty and staff have knowledge of benefits and incentive to partner in the cost management issues. Over the last three years, USNH has reduced overall benefit coverage in tuition, long term disability and retirement; increased the employee contributions to medical plans from an overall average (i.e. the combined and averaged impact of contributions based on selection of single, two person or family plans) of 4% of the medical premiums to 12% of the premiums, increased employee co-pays and deductibles in medical plans and competitively bid out its workers comp, life insurance, long term disability insurance, flexible spending account, medical plan COBRA administration and employee assistance plan.

The level of reductions already sustained by employees over the 4-year period prior to January 2007 is significant. An employee contribution to an HMO family plan in 2001 was \$208. In 2006 it was \$1955 annually and will be approximately \$2500 in 2007. The proposal for mitigation is aimed at providing a one-time softening effect for the 2% increase in contribution rate which will be implemented as of January 2007. The increase in contribution associated with the 2% increase in level of contribution is equal to approximately \$275 annually for a family HMO plan, and grows to approximately \$550 in total employee contribution increase as of 1/1/7 when the 14.2% increase in premium is included.

Proposal

USNH would use approximately \$500,000 from the increased employee contributions going into the Benefits budget to fund one-time payments for those continuing employees whose annualized full-time equivalent salaries are below \$40,000. In addition, the Benefits budget compensated absence pool will support the option for all those who earn vacation or Earned Time to “cash in” up to 5 vacation or Earned Time days.

The proposal for one time payment would be:

- ▶ Any benefits eligible status employee with an annualized full-time equivalent salary at or under \$40,000 as of **June 30, 2006** and who is on the active payroll as of January 30, 2007, shall receive a one-time payment of \$400.
- ▶ Regardless of salary level, any employee who earns Earned Time days may “cash out” up to 5 days of Earned Time, so long as the employee has a remaining balance of at least 10 days as of 2-1-07.

- ▶ Regardless of salary level, any employee who is eligible for the standard vacation time accrual may cash out up to 5 days of vacation so long as the employee has a remaining balance of at least 10 days as of the date the cash-out is requested.

Institutional Mitigation – *Faculty*

USNH institutions may add a mitigation payment, either one time or continuing as part of compensation for any faculty not covered by collective bargaining who are not under \$40,000 in salary and/or not eligible for Earned Time or vacation payment.

Other Conditions

The definition of the \$40,000 salary level shall be based on the June 30, 2006 salary and mean that level of annualized full-time equivalent salary, excluding all supplemental payments.

The one time bonus will be processed at an administratively efficient time as determined by each institution, expected to be between January 1st 2007 and March 1, 2007.

Vacation or Earned Time buy-out is voluntary and must be elected by the employee by January 30, 2007 and paid between January 1st 2007 and March 1, 2007.

Eligibility

Those eligible for the \$400 are those benefit-eligible staff and non-union faculty in status positions on the active payroll on June 30, 2006 and on January 30, 2007 whose annualized full-time equivalent salary is at or below \$40,000.

Approval

The Chancellor has been authorized by Board of Trustee action on June 29, 2006 to approve a mitigation strategy. It is anticipated that he will do that after consultation with the Presidents Council at its August 29, 2006 meeting.

Appendix B

F. Compensation

7. Additional pay

7.5 Additional Pay -- Recognition, Recruitment, Other. These categories of additional pay shall have approval processes as described in USY V.F.7.2.

7.5.7 Longevity Pay -- Applicable only to status Operating Staff. An extra pay increment awarded to status hourly staff to recognize length of service to the University System. To conform to FLSA regulations, longevity payments are included in the regular rate for the purpose of computing overtime.

7.5.7.1 Increments. Longevity increments for operating staff are as follows:

- On completion of 10 years service--2%
- On completion of 15 years service--4%
- On completion of 20 years service--6%
- On completion of 25 years service--8%
- On completion of 30 years service--10%

7.5.7.2 Determination of Length of Service. For longevity purposes, a year of service will be equal to a calendar year of status employment, i.e. 12 consecutive months from date of hire equals one calendar year. If an employee held a flex-year appointment of 50% for 10 years, the total years of service for longevity purposes would be 10 years.

7.5.7.3 Calculation of Longevity Increment. The longevity increment, awarded each pay period, is calculated by multiplying the base pay for that pay period by the longevity percentage.

7.5.7.4 Beginning Accrual. Length of employment will start from the first day of status employment of at least 50% time.

7.5.7.5 Effective Date. Longevity increments shall be effective on the staff member's anniversary date of status employment.

Appendix C

PROPOSED REPLACEMENT FOR CURRENT USY V.D.10

D. Employee Relations

10. Communicable Diseases. The University System of New Hampshire recognizes the need to establish procedures for implementing infection control policies and procedures that help limit the spread of communicable diseases within its institutions and will comply with all federal and state laws applicable to students, faculty and staff with communicable diseases.

10.1 Definition. The Department of Health and Human Services and the Centers for Disease Control define diseases considered communicable. Such diseases include, but are not limited to hepatitis, meningitis, mumps, AIDS, whooping cough, measles, diphtheria, chicken pox, tuberculosis, avian influenza, and any other disease that could result in a pandemic.

10.2 Commitment & Responsibilities. USNH is committed to maintaining a safe work environment for faculty, staff members and students. Each institution shall have policies and procedures to identify a serious health situation due to communicable disease. Universal precautions must be observed.

10.2.1 The Center for Disease Control defines universal precautions as infection control guidelines designed to protect workers from exposure to diseases. Examples of these precautions are washing hands and wearing gloves.

10.3 Confidentiality. USNH is committed to maintaining a safe work environment for faculty, staff members and students. All medical information concerning faculty, staff members and students infected with a communicable disease or its related conditions will be treated confidentially as required by law.

10.4 Non-Discrimination. The University System of New Hampshire and its component institutions will comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), which requires that federal protection in housing and employment be granted to faculty, staff members, and students who are infected with a designated communicable disease. Retaliation against an infected faculty or staff member is prohibited.

10.5 Authority. The Board of Trustees has delegated to the Chancellor the responsibility to establish procedures to manage outbreaks of communicable disease within the University System. Such procedures should be based on CDC recommendations. The Chancellor shall delegate to the President of each institution the authority, in consultation with health professionals, to determine the need to:

- ▶ Close part or all of a USNH institution
- ▶ Send students home
- ▶ Determine essential services
- ▶ Declare curtailed operations

- ▶ Implement a temporary tele-working plan
- ▶ Address security issues
- ▶ Identify a key spokesperson and information data base (See also USY V.D.10.6)

10.5.1 The Chancellor's Office will provide consultation to the component institutions regarding financial, human resources, and/or any legal requirements related to campus procedures beyond those listed in policy.

10.6 Preparedness. Each component institution will develop a written pandemic plan which includes the communication of roles and responsibilities related to ensuring continuity of instruction and protection of students, faculty, and staff and a communication plan for use at the onset of a communicable disease. (See also USY VI.F.3.3.1.2.6 and Curtailed Operations policy, USY V F.5 and USY V.F.6.3.)

10.7 Education. The USNH encourages the development and implementation of educational programs concerning the transmission of communicable diseases. Such education should include topics such as routine infection control (such as hand hygiene, coughing and sneezing etiquette.)

THE ABOVE REPLACES THIS POLICY:

10.1 Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS)

The University System of New Hampshire and its component institutions will not discriminate against students or employees solely on the basis that they have been infected with HIV or AIDS. They will comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), which requires that federal protection in housing and employment be granted to faculty, staff members, and students who are infected with the HIV virus or have developed AIDS.

10.1.1 Commitment & Responsibilities. USNH is committed to maintaining a safe work environment for faculty, staff members and students. Medical and scientific opinions from the United States Public Health Service, Center for Disease Control state that there is no evidence that the HIV is casually transmitted in ordinary social or occupational settings. USNH will treat students or employees who have contracted AIDS as it treats students or employees with any other illness; and it will provide reasonable accommodations to students or employees as long as they are medically able to perform the duties of their position. All medical information concerning faculty, staff members and students infected with HIV/AIDS or its related conditions will be treated confidentially as required by law.

10.1.2 Employees of the University System shall not lose their rights to employment benefits solely on the basis that they have been infected with the HIV or have developed AIDS.

10.2 Hepatitis B Virus (HBV) The Hepatitis B Virus in blood borne pathogens can be transmitted through exposure to communicable materials.

10.2.1 Commitment & Responsibilities. USNH recognizes the need for safeguards to protect employees against the hazards of blood borne pathogens. The component institutions will adopt standards and enforce requirements that are at least as stringent as federal requirements. The

component institutions will inform employees of the risks of occupational exposure to blood borne pathogens and information on how to reduce the risks.

10.2.2 Exposure Control Plan. Each component institution will develop a written exposure control plan that must include:

- ▶ the exposure determination;
- ▶ the procedures for evaluating circumstances surrounding an exposure incident;
- ▶ the schedule and method for implementing sections of the standard covering the methods of compliance;
- ▶ Hepatitis B vaccination and post-exposure follow-up; and communication of hazards to employees and record keeping

10.3 Universal Precautions. Universal precautions must be observed. The employer and employee should assume that all body fluids are to be considered as potentially communicable.

10.4 Educational Programs. The USNH encourages the development and implementation of educational programs concerning the transmission of blood borne pathogens.