



2003-04 University of Wisconsin System Council of Academic Staff Representatives Meeting Minutes

Thursday, April 15, 2004 from 9:00 -1:30 p.m.

Human Resource Issues

George Brooks, Associate Vice President for Human Resources

The Office of State Employment Relations (OSER) has the pay plan adopted by the Board of Regents. OSER Director Karen Timberlake has given George no indication on when the proposal will go to the Joint Committee on Employee Relations (JCOER).

The teaching assistants at UW-Madison may strike over salary increases and premium contributions for health insurance benefits. 75% of the TA's elect a single coverage plan in Tier 1 in which the employee health insurance premium would be \$9 per month. The UW System is concerned that if health insurance contributions are prospective (not retroactive to January) the precedent might cause our campuses to pick-up health insurance costs from base budgets.

The extra personal holiday -- in recognition of Veteran's Day -- for UW System unclassified annual employees was approved by the Regents at the April meeting.

Chancellors and Regents are working to increase the number of tenure track faculty in the classroom.

UW-River Falls Provost and vice chancellor Virginia Coombs has agreed to serve as the executive head of the institution until former UW-River Falls Vice Chancellor for Administration and Finance Virgil Nylander comes out of retirement to serve as interim chancellor on June 1.

Applied Payroll and Benefit System (APBS) Update

Margo Lessard, APBS Director

The project to create a new Human Resource, Payroll and Benefits System is on track to be completed by January 1, 2005. The current system is mainframe-based and the new system -- from Lawson Software -- is web-based.

One of the best features of this new system is the self-service component. Once the system is up and running, an employee may check on his or her payroll deductions, health care provider information, TSA account status or change addresses or other personal information.

The HR employees will be trained mid-summer on the software.

Legislative Update

Linda Weimer, Vice President for University Relations

Doug Bradley, Interim Director of Communications

The session is over and a number of bills still await the Governor's signature. University Relations will forward an end of session report after the final action by the Governor on pending legislation.

The Legislature has canceled its special session scheduled for April 27 - 29. One or more extraordinary sessions may be held between now and June (see below).

The TABOR (Taxpayer's Bill of Rights) proposal continues to be worked on in the Legislature. CASR members are encouraged to write to their legislators or to local newspapers and attend town meetings and forums to bring up higher education concerns with TABOR. TABOR negatively affected higher education in Colorado (and continues to do so) -- elected officials and the general public should be concerned about its effects in Wisconsin. Both the UW Board of regents and the Wisconsin Technical College System board have passed resolutions in opposition to TABOR.

Fall elections are quickly approaching. Be sure to ask all candidates about their position on funding/support for public higher education.

The "Pain Project" is underway. Weimer shared photos of some of the poor conditions in which students are forced to learn. Weimer encouraged Academic Staff Representatives to forward the stories about how budget cuts are affecting the quality of education throughout the UW System.

CASR members indicated that it was difficult to get information from the Chancellors, who are not willing to provide it for fear of having bad news affect recruitment efforts. Weimer indicated that unless UW System shows pain, the Governor and Legislature will continue to cut the budget.

Presidential Search and Screen Committee members

David Olien, Senior Vice President for Administration

Deborah Bowen, Lecturer, Occupational and Environmental Safety and Health, UW-Whitewater

Kathy Pletcher, Associate Provost, UW-Green Bay

CASR invited the academic staff members of the Search and Screen in to speak to the group, and drafted a number of questions, qualities and characteristics that the members should consider when interviewing candidates for the UW System President position. The Council expressed to their colleagues on the committee to be mindful of all candidates' knowledge of, experience with and attitudes toward academic staff. The ASRC also let the committee members know that a briefing paper about UWS Academic Staff for the candidates is being prepared by the Council and will be made available soon.