



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

Thursday, February 19, 2004 from 9:00 -1:30 p.m.

Human Resource Issues

Sue Chamberlain, Associate Vice President for Human Resources

UW System Administration has a new Assistant Vice President for Human Resources and Chief Academic Personnel Officer. Dr. Alan Crist will begin on March 1 and he will be invited to the next CASR meeting.

The voluntary dental insurance plan offered by UW System will have open enrollment March 1 - 19. The premium structure for Dental Blue will offer rates for single person, two person and family status. The premiums are offered on a pre-tax basis and coverage will apply to domestic partners. If you have questions about the plan, email Sue at schamberlain@uwsa.edu.

The individual and family life insurance plan underwritten by Minnesota Life will also be expanded, so that domestic partners may be included. This special open enrollment for insured employees to add a domestic partner, will take place from April 5 - 23.

Many of the unions have settled with the Office of State Employment Relations (OSER), but the largest union, WSEU, has not. This may affect the recommendations that the Compensation Advisory Board may make to President Lyall in regard to an unclassified play plan. In mid-March, the CAC will meet to formulate the recommendations, which will then be forwarded to the Board of Regents in April.

The health insurance premium paid by unclassified staff may need to be adjusted, as many of the unions have negotiated premiums that are less than what the unclassified staff have been paying since November.

The APBS -- Applied Payroll and Benefit System -- rolls out at the end of the year for all UW System employees. The project, begun more than two and a half years ago, under the leadership of Margo Lessard. Margo will address the CASR in April to describe in more detail the benefits of the system. For more information, consult the APBS website at: <http://www.uwsa.edu/hr/apbs/index.htm>

UW-Milwaukee's Chancellor Search and Screen has produced four qualified candidates. The candidates will be interviewed in the next few weeks and a selection will be made soon.

The UW System President's Search and Screen committee is receiving nominations for members. Regent President Toby Marcovich has sent out requests for nominees to all the academic staff chairs around the System. The actual breakdown of members of the committee is yet to be resolved.

Legislative Update

Margaret Lewis, Associate Vice President for University Relations

Doug Bradley, Special Assistant for University Relations

Doug Bradley, a seasoned employee of UW-Extension and Learning Innovations, will help University Relations. Doug introduced himself to the group this month. Welcome!

Assembly Joint Resolution 55 -- or TABOR (Taxpayer's Bill of Rights) -- raises concerns about available GPR funding and the subsequent impact on the UW budget.

Two publications describing the impact of a similar TABOR proposal on higher education in Colorado are available. One is the University of Colorado study:
<http://www.cu.edu/challenges.pdf>

Another is the Bell Policy Center in Denver. The Center has also provided information on the effect of TABOR in Colorado over the past ten years on all spending areas. That document can be found at: <http://www.thebell.org/Revisedt.pdf>

The Legislative Audit Bureau (LAB) has not yet released the audit of the UW System's Administrative Costs begun last February. The LAB audit disclosure has been delayed by requests for other audits, including that of the Milwaukee Brewers. As soon as it becomes available, UW System will share President Katharine Lyall's reaction, as well as talking points for use with your legislators.

Attached is an article from the Chronicle of Higher Education entitled "Tying Tuition to the CPI: Why It Doesn't Add Up."

Margaret and Doug discussed the presentation of the Office of Policy Analysis (OPAR) to the Charting a New Course for the UW System Partnership with the State Working Group. The presentation details the need for UW System to solve accessibility issues and increase financial aid. It is available at:

<http://www.uwsa.edu/opar/presentations/Partnership%20with%20the%20State%20-%20Financial%20Aid.pdf>

Budget Issues

Freda Harris, Associate Vice President for Budget and Planning

Melissa Kepner, Director of the Office of Budget and Planning

UW System is gearing up to prepare requests for the 2005-2007 biennial budget to improve UW System access, quality and affordability.

Changes suggested to financial aid would help the students in the lowest quintile of family income. UW System would also encourage replacing auxiliary reserve funds used for financial aid in 2003-05.

Another change is to rebuild the faculty with the Wisconsin Idea Fellows Program." This program would mandate the faculty teach nine months and perform research the three months during summer. The proposal would also request funding to provide access for an additional 1000 students.

The third change is the "Innovations Initiative," which would help institutions cover campus and regional needs.

In the last biennial budget, 650 positions were cut from the UW. Governor Jim Doyle indicated that more state job cuts would be included in the next budget.

Other problems on the budget horizon include a \$72 million general fund cash shortfall. This includes a \$32 million cash shortfall, as well as a \$40 million statutory obligation to have a reserve fund. Additionally, the federal government may not provide funding for intergovernmental transfers of aid, which would create a \$400 million hole for Medicaid.

To add to the concern, the Department of Administration has asked agencies to report the fund balances in Program Revenue (PR) accounts, which has led to mass speculation that these funds would be drained to address the predicted shortfalls.

Update on Academic Staff Representative Leadership Conference

The next conference will be held on July 29 -30 at UW-Stout. US Department of Education Secretary Rod Paige was invited. As he may or may not be able to attend, may send the Office of Postsecondary Education (OPE) Assistant Secretary Sally Stroup. The OPE "directs, coordinates, and recommends policies for programs that are designed to provide financial assistance to eligible students; improve postsecondary educational facilities and programs; recruit and prepare disadvantaged students for postsecondary programs; and promote the domestic study of foreign languages and international affairs, research, and exchange activities."