OFFICE STAFF EMPLOYEE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING
10/29/08 MINUTES

Present: Dymph Alexander, Amy Barnes, Sue Coffey, Tracey Mason, Ed Mays, Cathy McElhannon, Loretta Persinger, Nellie Rice, Wendy Richards, Martha Rowsley, Cree Sherrill, Mary Katherine Snead, Denise Watts.

1). Introductions

Amy introduced Mary Katherine Snead and Jeff Hanna and explained their roles at the university.

2). Work/Life Initiative

Amy asked the committee for feedback on the work/life presentations. Amy explained that the audio, PowerPoint and other communication pieces are available on a work/life website (http://www.wlu.edu/x25114.xml) for those who were unable to attend the 8 October meetings. Feedback from committee members included:

- I thought what he had to say was good; but was lengthy (20 min attention span and spoke for an hour)
- I enjoyed that Q&A at the end
- It is helpful that presentation materials are available online
- There was some concern that the presentation was 'walking over the same old ground' and that the administration should 'put their money where their mouth is.' Amy clarified that this is an initiative in excess of $6M over a period of years.

Questions about the Work Life Initiative included the following:

Q) Why is the classification system not going into effect until 2014?
A) There has been a great deal of misunderstanding about the 2014 date. 2014 is the date by which we plan to address salary deficiencies. The University has committed $1.5 million to achieve salary benchmarks in deficient areas by 2014-15. These funds, which will be in addition to regular staff salary increases, will need to be phased in over that period of time. Some adjustments were made last July and will continue to be made each year to bring salaries up to market.

Q) When will we see changes to the classification system?
A) Amy explained that quite a bit of work had already been done on the classification program when she arrived but that she had asked to slow down the work a bit to ensure that the new classification system was aligned with the other HR programs and to increase opportunities for staff involvement. Work on the classification of staff jobs has resumed and will continue as part of a comprehensive plan that includes a performance development program for staff. This plan will address career planning, coaching, feedback and evaluation. It will also look at ways to recognize and reward exceptional performance, and to enhance career mobility. A Design Team has been formed to work with HR and with Mercer on the program and we plan to include opportunities for staff and supervisor input at various stages. The estimated timeline from Mercer is about 16 weeks but Amy estimates it will take longer as scheduling has already proved difficult.

Q) When you say 'below market' – what is the market?
A) Amy explained that usually, staff salaries are based on local market because that is where we are recruiting staff from, but W&L has decided to look at top 25 liberal arts schools as the market. This is the same market we look at for administrative and faculty salaries.

Q) We want to see the benchmarking and market data in black and white.
A) That information will be shared once it is all gathered and is in a format that can be made public. As you can understand, we need to present the data in a way that protects individual salary data.

Q) President Ruscio kept using the term 'benchmarking.' What does that term mean?
A) Benchmarking means that we compare salaries for W&L jobs to the salaries paid in the market for similar positions. In other words, we want to see how our salaries compare to the salaries paid for similar jobs at similar institutions. While some positions are relatively easy to compare, there are others that may be unique to W&L. In those cases it is necessary to make some assumptions about how these jobs fit into the data. The data will be shared once it is complete.

Q) What happened with the PIQs that we filled out?
A) Mercer spent a lot of time reviewing the PIQs. This information will be used to group jobs appropriately in the classification system

Several committee members expressed appreciation for Steve McAlister's e-mail on the state of the economy and the impact on W&L. Amy added that many of our peer institutions are freezing positions (not filling vacant positions), reducing travel budgets, etc. W&L seems to be in a better position than some of our peer schools. Amy added that HR is working with TIAA to schedule some information sessions about investing during volatile times.

<u>Communication Preferences</u>
Jeff Hanna, Washington and Lee's new executive director of communications and public relations, joined us to discuss internal communications. There was much discussion about a number of topics outlined below. A committee member pointed out that while email is good for some, not everyone has email. Discussion centered on the following methods of communication:

- **Informational sessions** are helpful – especially with new policies, benefits, etc.
- **Newsletter** suggestions include:
    - Allow people to opt for an electronic version and make it available in hard copy for those who want it
    - Consider putting the newsletter in newspaper stands like the law school does
    - The electronic version should be a link – *The Watercooler* was too large a file to send in an e-mail
    - Some felt the newsletter should be published monthly; others thought quarterly would be sufficient
    - Include benefits/pay information – HR issues are "need-to-know" and should be included.
    - Include information about personnel changes, births, deaths, etc.

- Include faculty/staff highlights; allow employees to submit information about W&L people doing something interesting.
    - The committee liked the idea of an 'Ask an Administrator' column.
    - Many on the committee said they enjoyed the *Colonnade*; the reviews on *The Watercooler* were mixed.
    - Include recycling tips, wellness articles, technology tips and tricks, etc.
- Jeff asked for feedback on **Campus Notices**?
    - Many felt that there are too many campus notices; many don't read them as a result.
    - Amy explained that once the campus has migrated over to Microsoft Outlook, the links in the campus notices will work and take you to just the ones you want to read;
    - One member mentioned that they wished that people would not put repeat announcements in Campus Notices.
    - Could there be both a daily and weekly addition?
- Jeff mentioned the possibility of a University portal system that would be password protected and include items that are only for an internal audience. In a portal you can design the screen so that you can see what you want to see.

Combined Time Off (CTO) Program

Dymph read a statement she had prepared regarding her feelings about the Employee Advisory Committee process and on the CTO policy changes. She does not feel that the discussion the EAC had last month was sufficient and was shocked that the policy came out before today's meeting. Further, she said that she originally felt that Amy would be someone who listened to their concerns but said she has lost faith that this is true due to how CTO was handled.

Amy responded by saying that she viewed the role of the Employee Advisory Committees as advisory and apologized if the process was not clear at the outset. She said that she took the feedback that she received from the three advisory committees and the Campus Benefits Committee to the President's Council. This feedback did result in changes to the proposal. She went on to say that the advisory committees are not truly representative (not all departments have a representative on the committee and while some members do go back to the areas for feedback, not everyone is doing that). There needs to be further discussion about the charge of the committee and the roles of its members (members agreed that there was confusion about their roles – sometimes representing their own opinions, sometimes representing others; the role of the committee has also changed over time).

Amy added that CTO was a difficult issue to begin the process with. First, the proposal was complicated and resulting confusion may have raised suspicion about the reasons for the change. Second, because of the need to implement the changes by January 1, there was not time for the breadth of discussion that Amy would have liked.

Another committee member added that she recalled Amy saying that the changes needed to be implemented by January 1 and that she would be meeting with the President's Council and would share the feedback with them. Others added that while they understood that they were the not the final decision makers, they wished they had had more time for additional input.

A committee member said that she would have liked advance notice that the broadcast e-mail that included the final policy was going to go out. Amy agreed that she should have notified committee members by email before the policy went out as a broadcast email. She added that the timeline on this has been very tight but said she would make an effort to keep committee members better informed in the future.

Q) Where did the idea for CTO come from?
A) Amy explained that CTO came out of conversations she had with staff about the need for more flexibility in the use of paid time off. CTO allows people to use time for whatever purpose they personally need, rather than specifying how much time can be used for each particular purpose. She also heard from staff that there were inconsistencies in how departments were administering the vacation and sick leave policies which meant that some employees were given more flexibility than others. Amy added that if supervisors have to circumvent the policy because it is not working, then she feels that the policy should be amended. CTO is a way for employees to manage their time off more effectively to meet their personal needs. A third goal was to automate leave administration.

Additionally, some staff complained that they were not able to carry over more than 5 days of vacation each year. The CTO policy will allow employees to accumulate more leave time (the equivalent of 1 ½ years of accrual) in addition to what they keep in SLR. .

Several committee members expressed their dissatisfaction with the new accelerated accrual schedule. They felt that they had to work so long to earn more vacation time and that it is unfair that new hires will get to the maximum amount after only 5 years of employment. Amy said that all employees, regardless of length of service have the need for work/life balance and time off and added that she would like to talk with the committee at a subsequent meeting to brainstorm ideas of other ways that W&L can to honor seniority.

Q) Did we not discuss grandparents? Why can CTO or SLR be used only to care for someone who lives in your home?
A) Amy reminded the committee that the CTO proposal was amended after the Office Staff EAC asked why the family member had to live in the employee's household. That is no longer a requirement. She added that staff will be able to use CTO or SLR to care for other family members if the employee is the primary caregiver for that individual. Exceptions will be considered on a case-by-case basis by HR.

Q) Why are our floating holidays being taken away? Couldn't they just remain separate?
A) While floating holidays were originally given to employees to replace other holidays that are not regular paid university holidays, most people have been using the floating holidays as extra vacation days. By building them into the CTO program, staff can use them in whatever way works best for them.

Q) Can staff carry over more than 5 days?
A) This year, as in the past, you can carry over up to 5 days. By special request, you may be allowed to carry additional days over.

Q) Why would you want to move time in SLR?

A) You probably don't want to move time from CTO into SLR unless you might otherwise lose those days (i.e., you are reaching the maximum accrual). CTO provides more flexibility than SLR, so it's to your advantage to keep it there. SLR is designed to be a place to transfer time that you will lose because you are reaching your maximum accrual. By putting hours into SLR, that time will be available at a later date should you need extended time off to care for a family member who needs care (under current policy that time would be charged to vacation), or for the first 10 days of a personal illness. SLR can also be used for doctor appointments for the employee or family member, which leaves more time in the CTO for other uses.

Q) Can you use SLR if you have CTO available? Do you have to exhaust CTO before you use SLR?
A) No, you do not have to exhaust CTO before using the SLR.

Q) Will everyone receive 5 days of SLR??
A) Yes. Everyone will be a one time allotment of 5 days in SLR on January 1, 2009.

Q) Can employees still make up time if they have to leave early or come in late due to an appointment?
A) Supervisors will still have the flexibility to adjust work schedules. If an employee has an appointment during the day and then works extra during the same work week and this does not have an undue effect on the department that is certainly acceptable. Remember, though that any hours in excess of 40 must be paid at time and one half.

Q) How much accrual will we get each pay period?
A) Days will be converted to hours. To see what your accrual rate will be you can go to:
http://www.wlu.edu/Documents/humanresources/CTO%20Accrual%20Table.pdf

Q) Aren't you really taking away some of our sick time?
A) Cree stated that she looked at the administrative assistants in the Williams School to see how much time they earned last year and how much they took. She said that everyone in her area will come out better under the new policy. Additionally, if you are not sick very often, you will be able to use those additional CTO days for vacation or other personal reasons.

Amy said that it was not intended for CTO be a take-away, however there are differences in the way some sick time will be handled. She said that if anyone is disadvantaged by the transition to this program, they should contact Kim Austin in HR. HR will work staff on a case by case basis to ease the transition. She added that prior sick leave use will be considered.

Q) How will people know what they have in CTO?
A) Employees will be able to see their balances on the web time entry screen. We are also looking at printing the balances on the direct deposit advice. We had hoped we could add it to the pay stub, but there is not currently enough room.

Q) The policy says we can go into the negative in the first year. What about after that?
A) We have decided to allow employees' balances to go negative in future years as well since some employees do need to use their full amount of time off each year to cover time when their

office closes during breaks. Those employees will be able to go into the negative as long as they don't exceed the full allotment for that year.

Q) What if you're on FMLA - will you accrue CTO?
A) You will accrue so long as you are being paid. If you are on a leave without pay, you will stop accruing.

Q) Is bereavement included in CTO?
A) Family bereavement is not included. However, employees can use CTO if they need more time than is allotted under the bereavement policy or to attend a funeral of an individual not covered by the bereavement policy.

Q) Will exempt staff be on web time entry?
A) Beginning in January exempt staff will enter their time off on-line.

Q) When you enter leave, what codes will be available?
A) CTO, SLR and Other (for bereavement, WC, etc.)

Q) Why does one of the CTO meetings for supervisors start at 8am? That's before people start work.
A) Actually there are different shifts, so some supervisors are at work at 8 am. Many exempt staff are in their offices before 8:00. People may attend whichever meeting is most convenient.

Q) Could our pay advice show our hourly rate?
A) Next year the salary letters will quote an hourly rate, so you'll have both numbers. We realize it's confusing given that people work different numbers of hours per week.

Q) Could we put the EMERITI program on our agenda?
A) Yes. Amy added that the folks from EMERITI will be coming back to do additional sessions and to answer questions. There were some questions that were asked by employees at some of the sessions that needed clarification and we plan to put out an FAQ with the answers. One point that has been clarified is that eligible employees will be able to enroll in the EMERITI program even if they have not been insured in the University's health plan for 10 years. Spouses who have not been in the health plan are not eligible.

Q) What happens to life insurance on retirement?
A) Amy explained that employees can convert their life insurance to an individual policy but added that it is expensive.

The committee tabled the discussion on the charge of the Employee Advisor Committee until next month, as the meeting ran long. Further discussion of the Emeriti insurance program was also requested for a future meeting.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Mary Katherine Snead, Human Resources.