

PROFESSIONAL STAFF EMPLOYEE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING
10/22/08 MINUTES

Present: Amy Diamond Barnes, Mary Katherine Snead, Beverly Lorig, John Jacob, Julie Knudson, Mike Young

1. Introductions

Amy introduced Mary Katherine Snead and Jeff Hanna and explained their roles at the university. The committee members introduced themselves and their work areas within the university.

2. Newsletter – Communication Preferences

Jeff Hanna, Washington and Lee's new executive director of communications and public relations joined us for the first part of the meeting to discuss internal communications. A few main topics emerged from this discussion:

- Campus Notices have become unwieldy; however they are read by many members of the community. Additionally, broadcast emails are understood to be 'very important.'
- Newsletter – suggestions include the following:
 - Have both a print and electronic option.
 - include community news, personal items, etc.,
 - Do not rehash information that has been published elsewhere.
 - should be used for more strategic communication (not just a morale booster) but could also include 'nice to know,' for example, faculty offices moving into Baker
 - include a Q&A section that could function for rumor control
 - Frequency of publication should be monthly or bimonthly.
- A comprehensive calendar in which all campus events were listed. The current calendar is not coordinated between departments and thus people do not necessarily utilize it.

Q) What happened to the "Quick Reference" directory? Could it come back?

A) Amy reported that next year we will be eliminating the printed directory all together. The online directory will be improved and employees will have the option of printing a 'quick reference guide' or the full directory so that employees who want a printed version may have one without the expense of printing a large publication for all employees.

Jeff provided some general information about coming communication strategies. The website will increasingly showcase more news. The interactivity capability of the web will also be utilized, for example, FAQs will be posted that with the ability to gather additional questions to answer and post. Another way the website may be used is to host monthly chats where different people around campus could submit questions about a topic to the resident expert and

receive answers. The chat could then remain posted with this information. We will continue to see audio and video files of presentations, etc.

3. Work/Life Initiative

The committee discussed the Work/Life presentations President Ruscio gave on October 8th.

In general, the feedback was positive. Some important points made by the committee were as follows:

- A new staff person liked how it was presented and found President Ruscio approachable and open.
- a lot of feedback centered on CTO – (see CTO section of minutes)
- A concern was raised that the Report of the Committee on the Status of Women’s was not addressed during the presentation in a discernable and clear way; this person felt that while there are initiatives that address gender issues, there should have been more emphasis on this point.
- One representative commented that it is sometimes difficult for older employees to understand the needs and expectations of younger faculty/staff members for institutional support in these areas, as previous generations were responsible for finding their own child care solutions without the benefit of employer assistance. Amy pointed out that in previous generations it has not always been necessary or desirable for both parents to work and that there has been a shift to an increasing number of dual career couples in the workplace.

4. Combined Time Off (CTO) Program

Amy updated the group on the status of the CTO proposal. The proposal has been to the President’s Council and while they were inclined to go with the flat accrual (since all employees have the need for flexibility and for additional time off), the feedback that Amy got from the EACs regarding graduated accrual rates was considered. The latest graduated accrual schedule is a compromise that will accelerate the accrual while still recognizing years of service.

The new CTO accrual schedule is:

Years of Service	CTO Accrual
0-2 years	20 days
3-5 years	25 days
6+ years and all exempt	30 days

There will be additional discussion at a future meeting about how seniority can be honored other than through leave time.

Q) What does the campus community know about CTO?

A) Minutes of the last EAC meetings were posted online along with the proposal. There will be a broadcast email about the upcoming informational sessions to explain CTO. There will be

sessions for supervisors first, and then subsequent meetings for employees. Amy also plans to go out to various areas after the meetings to meet with staff and answer any outstanding questions they may have about CTO or other issues.

Q) Can the supervisory meetings be combined with staff? In the past there has been miscommunication when these meetings are separate.

A) Amy feels it is important to communicate with the supervisors first, to give them a chance to understand the policy as they will likely be asked a lot of questions by their employees. However, Amy added that supervisors are welcome to attend the meeting with their employees if they prefer.

Q) Many people are concerned about CTO. Many employees seem to think that they are getting less because of the change to the sick policy. There are also concerns that the change is to address abuse of the previous system.

A) Amy explained that the primary goals of CTO were to give staff more flexibility in the use of paid time off (for example, to allow staff to use time off to care for members of their family who needed their care) and to standardize leave administration across the university. The CTO program will actually give more days to the majority of people. It was not designed to be a “take away” or to correct abuses of the current sick leave policy.

Q) Why would you keep more than 10 days in SLR?

A) Most people will want to keep most of their time in CTO because it is more flexible and is payable on termination of employment. SLR will primarily be used as a place to “bank” CTO that staff would have otherwise lost because they were at their maximum accrual. In addition, you might have an need for intermittent leave or a family illness that does not qualify you for the W&L extended sick leave benefit.

5. EAC Charge

The charge for the Employee Advisory Committees is as follows:

The Employee Advisory Committees promote effective and direct communication between all non-faculty employees and the administration. The Executive Director of Human Resources chairs the committee meetings which serve as forums for discussion. Committee members provide advice and input on a variety of human resource issues and may make recommendations for consideration by the appropriate administrative unit of the campus.

There are three employee advisory committees:

- Operations Staff – comprised of hourly employees from Athletics, Dining Services, Facilities Management and Public Safety;
- Office Staff – comprised of hourly, non-exempt employees working in administrative and academic offices; and

- Professional Staff – includes professional, managerial, and Information Technology employees.

Committee members are appointed to ensure a broad representation of the different functional and organizational areas of the University. Members will each serve a two year term and are appointed by the Vice President for Finance and Administration upon recommendation of the executive Director of Human Resources.

It is important that people understand the role of the committee as advisory rather than policy making. Some discussions will become proposals, but not everything discussed in the EACs will happen exactly as that group might design it. For example, the feedback of the employee advisory committees resulted in having graduated levels of CTO rather than one flat rate.

We need to determine who will rotate off the committee at the end of this year. Since there are 9 members of the committee, we will need to have 4 members, whose terms will be set to end in June, 2009.

This discussion will be revisited at the next meeting.

6. Mercer Design Team

A Design team is being put together to review the compensation/classification/talent management areas in conjunction with Mercer. Louise Uffelman is the representative from the professional staff. There will also be focus groups for additional feedback. This process is targeted to take about 16 weeks but Amy anticipates it will take longer due to scheduling.

7. Other Business

Q) Is it true that an employee can retire from W&L but be ineligible for the EMERITI retiree health savings because the person has not been enrolled in the University's health insurance plan for 10 years?

A) After further discussions, the decision was made to allow eligible employees 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) Is the Performance Evaluation still in place?

A) The current program is still in place, but will likely be replaced by something new as part of the work we are doing with Mercer.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Mary Katherine Snead, Human Resources.