Senate Committee on Faculty Benefits
Meeting # 1
September 10, 2013

Members Present: Susan Basso, Jo Anne Carrick, vice-chair, Gary Catchen, Linda Clark, Rebecca Craven, Lori Miraldi, Rajen Mookerjee, Chris Muscarella, Daniel Nugent, Robin Oswald, Ira Ropson, chair,

Members Absent: Jayant Acharya, Amy Dietz, Peter Jurs

Welcome and Introductions - Members of the committee and HR representatives introduced themselves.

Approval of Minutes - Minutes of the April 23rd 2013 meeting were approved as written

Old Business

Report from Officers and Chair meeting
Ira reported the discussion centered on a number of issues related to the wellness initiative. IT committee will be interviewing the Highmark/WebMD staff on privacy issues to assess the strength of assuring privacy of the wellness profile database.

Susan Basso reported that the VP of Information Services- Kevin Morooney along with Kathy Kimball have been involved in the assessment of privacy of data and security. There is also a factor of maintaining privacy by keeping some information as classified.

The Faculty Benefits committee were to focus on the issue. It was clarified that our focus is on the policy and how it is being executed. Ira reported that the senators from the commonwealth caucus are planning to propose a special meeting of the Senate to discuss this initiative specifically. It will be presented today at the Senate meeting. There will be a need of five senators to propose this and 50 to vote to confirm the meeting. The ultimate goal to request more time – they don’t feel there was enough discussion, clarity of objectives.

Susan discussed the initiative that really started as part the University strategic initiative for several years. However this has not been utilized by faculty and staff.

Discussion continued on the release of the wellness initiative in July, not being fully discussed in the Faculty Senate and why this occurred. Susan Basso discussed that she presented several different approaches to senior leadership but this was the approach that was selected. Discussion continued about the following:

1. We now have increased awareness of wellness – how can we best capitalize on this?
2. Is this committee the best way to inform and communicate to the community at large?
3. Moving forward how can we improve this to make this program better.
   a. Increase engagement with the positive outcomes
   b. Increase communication of numbers and financial implication
   c. Reduce duplication when physicals, lab work is done by a personal physician
d. Working with Highmark on requirements of the program—i.e. yearly biometrics
e. Suggest more opportunities to discuss the benefit initiatives.

Discussion expanded on the quality of our benefit plan and its comparison to other Big Ten Universities and businesses outside of Higher Ed. For example, contribution rate 17% and salary indexed. Lowest in the big ten universities. Still offering choice, no erosion of benefits. Our deductible is favorable in comparison to other universities.

New Business

Open Enrollment

Open enrollment booklet is finished and will be sent out sometime in October. HR is postponing implementation of the network tiering that is designed to steer employees to the Hershey Medical center. The plan is to roll this out next year. Disseminating information on our new benefit contribution rates will be forthcoming. Recommendations were made to issue a warning in the selection site related to confirming the surcharge selections related to smoking, and spouse partner alternative health coverage.

Note that this is the fist time everyone must select all benefits options (positive selection process). If not done correctly people will be subject to surcharges if they didn’t select correctly.

Action/Next Steps

- Dialogue will continue in this committee regarding the network tiering and use of HMC
- The open enrollment booklet will be available on the benefits website with new contribution rates for the next year.
- The committee recommended that HR to work closely with the commonwealth HR representatives to help faculty and staff to select options correctly

Review of Committee Priorities and Reports

Ira Ropson reviewed the Faculty Benefits priorities and reports for this academic year. Ira requested that HR provide the information and summary so we can compile a report, send it to committee for review and then submit to the Senate for the October meeting.

Action/Next Steps

- A one-page information summary of the Dependent verification report will be submitted for the October Senate meeting.

Other topics:

Retiree benefits

Susan Basso reported that progress has been made, she will be presenting to President’s Council and deans in October. More information forthcoming to the committee.
Dan Nugent provided the link for the full report and discussion ensued regarding our role with these two initiatives. The need to look at this quickly is important since the counting of the courses, credits and hours teaching to qualify for benefits.

Link for the full report: www.psu.edu/president/pia/planning_research/reports/10FtPt.pdf

**A-4 Fixed Term II eligibility for benefits**

Measurement for a FTII individual will start January 2014 and implemented in 2015

Examples of ways to measure exempt FTII faculty could be –

1 credit = 3 hours so 9 credits are less than 30 hrs/wk.

Equivalent of 10 credits teaching per semester is 30 hours/wk.

**Medical School Compensation**

Discussion at the medical school to implement a 25% salary cut if not bringing grants to cover salaries. This initiative has been postponed for at least one year due to implementation issues.

**Long Term Care Insurance Update** – will not know when the rate increase will occur until 5 years -2016. In January 2014 if you have the non-forfeiture benefit you can stop payment and retain some benefits

**Action/Next Steps**

It was decided that the committee will look at both A-4 and A-5 in the committee’s priority list.

**Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 10:55 am

Submitted by

Jo Anne Carrick, Vice chair, Faculty Benefits Committee