

Faculty Welfare Committee
Minutes
December 10, 2010

Members present: Terry Downs, Mark Fischler, John Kulig, Anne Lebreche (scribe), Daniel Lee, Sheryl Shirley, and Krisan Evenson (substitute Adjunct representative)

Guests: President Sara Jayne Steen and Provost Julie Bernier

Excused: Nick Sevigney

The regular agenda was tabled so that members of the Faculty Welfare Committee could meet with the President and Provost to discuss faculty concerns about the USNH benefits and compensation survey issue by Towers-Watson.

President Steen began by stating that participation in the survey is strictly voluntary. She explained from her perspective that the USNH Board of Trustees has a fiduciary responsibility to spend funds wisely and they want to ascertain what benefits are most important to employees. Are there benefits employees are less interested in, or do not make use of? USNH employees have the opportunity to share their preferences by taking the survey. Sara Jayne also said the Board was looking at all aspects of how the System operates and not just benefits and compensation. She agreed that the timing of the survey and its deadline for submissions was not the best, but did secure an extra two days for PSU faculty and staff to take the survey.

Members of the Faculty Welfare Committee then shared specific concerns with the President and Provost. These included: 1) questions about the reliability and validity of the survey since it used language that is unfamiliar to some people in higher education, and faculty were asked to choose from among benefits that were not offered to them (i.e. sick/vacation time); 2) concerns that the survey asked people to only consider their own preferences with no consideration of what might be best for the greater campus community; 3) concerns over equity and how the burden of benefits reduction would be shared among campuses given that PSU does not participate in collective bargaining; 4) questions over why such a survey was needed with the 2010 Mercer Report showed that USNH was not above the average in terms of benefits and compensation.

Sara Jayne explained that the Board would receive the results on January 19, 2011 and results would also be shared with the System Personnel Policy Committee (SPPC) during their scheduled January 20, 2011 meeting. There will be time for campus input after these results are released and the President encouraged the faculty to participate in giving feedback. She also said if faculty want to write a formal letter about the survey instrument itself, she would share it with the Board of Trustees.

For the second portion of the afternoon meeting, the Committee met with the Provost. Julie presented the Committee with a new list of comparator institutions and explained the process by which the list was determined. The Chancellor has approved the list and it will be shared with the campus soon.

Next, Julie shared salary information with the Committee. The Provost's office has made a concerted effort to raise salaries over the years whenever possible. For example, the two year waiting period for a salary increase after promotion was eliminated. There are plans to increase the base pay for each

professor rank. She explained how PSU negotiated with the Board for Health Savings Account money to be given to PSU employees to offset contract raises at Keene and UNH. Julie noted that salaries will always be higher in some departments due to market forces. Of course, any increases are dependent on the national and state economic situation.

The Provost and FWC decided that such efforts to raise faculty salaries should be shared more widely with the full faculty. We will arrange for a joint presentation in the spring.

The remainder of the meeting was devoted to formulating recommendations to the full faculty on the Towers-Watson survey. The plans were to email our recommendations to all faculty on Monday December 13, 2010 via Speaker Scott Coykendall.

Respectfully submitted,
Anne Lebreche, Scribe