UNIVERSITY OF HARTFORD
STAFF ASSOCIATION MEETING MINUTES
December 14, 2011, Gengras Student Union - Room 345

PRESENT: Lynn Galvin, Nancy Fields, Evelyne Haldimann, Ben Ide, Sally Henowitz, Bonny Barsi, Kathleen Hayden, Carla Fuller, Cheryl MacMath, Karen Degrace, Jamie Harlow, Eric Pavesic and Bettina Viereck.

MINUTES: Meeting minutes for the November 9th meeting were discussed. A question was raised regarding the date referred to in the Budget Advisory Report (BAT) in the sentence, "Suggestions were made regarding the 2013 merit increase." The term fiscal year was not mentioned, so it was unclear if the reference was being made to calendar year 2013 or fiscal year 2013. Another question was raised in the same report regarding the reference to "the formation of a new committee called Foundation for the Future." It was believed that the accurate name for the newly created committee is "Foundation of the Future," not "Foundation for the Future." It was determined that Evelyne will ask Sharon Scorso for clarification on those two questions which will be provided at the next meeting.

It was moved and seconded that the meeting minutes be approved and accepted as written with clarification to the BAT report to be provided at the next meeting.

The November 9th meeting minutes were approved.

UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE REPORTS

BAT Evelyne reported that the most recent BAT meeting concentrated primarily on discussions about the Foundation of the Future. It is planned that the activities and committee progression will be very diligently publicized to faculty and staff through town hall meetings and web sites. The committee will address rumors as they come up and will keep accurate information well publicized. Basically the Foundation of the Future is tasked with finding the most effective way to distribute University funding across departments, programs, and future initiatives. Assuming that the total amount of University dollars available will remain basically the same, it is recognized that funding needs from initiative to initiative vary. Perhaps some programs can be combined to more effectively use available funding? Although Institutional Advancement seeks additional revenues for the University, this task force is challenged to look at the existing level of funding and determine how it might be best redistributed. The committee will recognize departments which have intrinsic value to the University and will not simply look at programs and/or departments from a dollars-and-cents perspective. The task force members will need to think out of the box and there will be a need for a lot of communication. It is projected that the in-depth study will take approximately nine months to a year to complete and will involve twice monthly meetings.

Several comments and questions were submitted by Staff Association members after Evelyne reported. It was commented that President Harrison sent a letter to University employees, which listed Foundation of the Future task force members. It was noted that there were no office support staff members on that list. Evelyne suggested that she was most likely asked to be part of the task force as the "staff" representative. Further discussions stated that since there is not a specific and clear line of management for office support staff, the voice of those employees is often not heard or recognized. Non-
exempt staff employees are often not appropriately represented in study groups and committees tasked with making University-wide recommendations. Office support employees (specifically those with non-exempt status) often have specific concerns and prospective which can really be best communicated by a representative who functions in that specific capacity. Faculty often do not know what office support staff actually have to do on a day-to-day basis nor do they have knowledge of the policies and procedures that office support staff have to follow. This issue (appropriate representation of non-exempt office support staff) speaks to the recent Values Initiative.

Evelyne will bring this issue to the Administration’s attention.

Another point discussed during this segment of the meeting was a recent college financial analysis which compared the University of Hartford budget to budgets of other similar institutions. We are pretty much in balance with similar institutions. This will be discussed in more depth at the next meeting.

**WELLNESS**

Jamie Harlow reported. Over 600 employees and spouses signed up to participate for the next year in the PureWellness component of the healthcare plan. It was commented that the PureWellness web site was not yet available and there were questions about when it would be available. It was estimated that it would be available at the start of the New Year in early January. People who had not yet signed up (as of the date of our meeting) could still sign up. Jamie also announced that the Office of Human Resources Development (HRD) was awarded a $20,000 grant from the CIGNA Foundation. HRD will use the funds to help pay for tools (such as pedometers), speakers, and other resources that focus on health concerns such as nutrition, smoking cessation, general fitness, and stress management.

There is a possibility that United Health Care offers something similar to the Weight Watchers on Campus program. United Health Care’s program may be cost free to employees. Since it has been difficult getting the minimum number of employees to participate in the Weight Watchers on Campus program, the United Health Care option is being explored.

**BTF**

No Report.

**SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE** – Sally Henowitz reported. Smoking cessation efforts at the Harry Jack Gray Center are going well. Mortensen Library staff is being very helpful to remind people that the area is a smoke free zone. Students will be organizing a spring clean up. It is believed that if students see their peers engaging in this activity, they will be more likely to follow suit. The second annual Residence Hall Power Struggle was held this fall. Residents of the A-Complex won the overall competition. Residents of the C-Complex won the single-day competition which was held on November 2nd. Students and Aramark will be participating in an upcoming Recycle Mania Tournament.

Pick up of cardboard (which is not currently included in regular paper recycling) will soon begin on Wednesdays. Facilities supervisors will be discussing this with building custodians in the near future. Staff Association members asked Sally some questions about whether or not boxes should be flattened and which custodial shift would be taking the cardboard? It is currently thought that first shift custodians will be handling that. There are two bins on campus specific to cardboard recycling; one at Gengras and one behind Mortensen Library. It was suggested that the Sustainability Committee place information in UNotes to inform the entire University community about the start date, location, and rules of
cardboard recycling. It was stated that currently books are not recyclable. Discussion continued with questions and comments about recycling of office machines, reducing distribution of University bulletins and course catalogs, and reducing mailings for the Observer, yearly reports, course catalogs, etc. Suggestions from having mailing lists cross referenced to providing “opt out” options for mailings were provided.

**STAFF ASSOCIATION REPORTS**

**WEB ADVISORY COMMITTEE** - No report.

**FACULTY SENATE** - Ben Ide reported. The Faculty Senate would like to see a copy of the Staff Association’s newly updated and adopted Constitution and Bylaws. They would also like a presentation of the completed Staff Satisfaction Survey results which were presented in early October to University of Hartford staff.

**TREASURER’S REPORT** - Cheryl MacMath reported that there was no change since the November report. The budget balance is $3,138.75

**MEMBERSHIP DIRECTOR’S REPORT** - No report

**NEW BUSINESS** - Several topics were brought forth at this meeting.

1. **Mandatory break requirement if an employee works more than 5 hours.**

   During recent automated time-sheet report training, many part-time employees discovered or were re-informed of the University of Hartford’s policy of a mandated half-hour break after working five consecutive hours. The State of Connecticut’s labor laws require that employees be provided a break after seven and one half hours. The University of Hartford’s policy is therefore more conservative than the State of Connecticut requires. Although the policy is intended to provide employee protection and ensure that University employees are allowed an appropriate amount of personal time during a work day, the policy can also be restrictive for some part-time employees. For instance, the policy could require some part-time employees (those working between 20 and 30 hours per week) to be on-site one half hour longer than they would choose to be in order to accommodate the half hour break - which they do not wish to observe. Because of the protection the policy provides - especially to full time employees who work seven hours each day or longer - it was suggested that the Staff Association continue to support the current policy. However, because of the restriction the policy imposes upon part-time employees who would rather forego the break period, it was suggested that perhaps HRD could provide a waiver which could be signed by those individuals restricted by the policy. HRD will look into the possibility of a waiver. We will follow up on this at the next Staff Association meeting.

2. **Flex Schedule - Minimum length currently equals two months.**

   Currently staff can create/request a flexible work schedule for their position which allows them to deviate from "standard" University of Hartford work hours. The minimum amount of time that can be designated to a "revised" or "flexible" work schedule is currently two months. For those staff members who would like to teach and/or take classes during winter, May, or either summer term, a flexible work schedule must be submitted. Since all of the above mentioned terms are shorter than two months, the 2-month minimum length for a flexible work schedule request cannot be met. Therefore staff teaching adjunct during winter-term and/or summer-term, in which the teaching is done during the normal business hours, are required to teach without charge.
to the University or use vacation time when teaching in these terms. HRD has been asked to research what can or cannot be done to either eliminate the 2-month minimum requirement, under specific circumstances such as outlined above, or provide other feasible options. We will follow up on this at the next Staff Association meeting.

3. Setting one Staff Association meeting time and ensuring supervisors allow staff to attend.

Currently the meeting times and places for Staff Association meetings are staggered. One month, the meetings will be held at 12:00 noon in the Gengras Student Union, and the next month they will be held at 1:00 at the Woods Family Classroom in Mortensen Library. Staggering the meetings was agreed upon in the attempt to accommodate as many staff members as possible in the hope of making meeting attendance more accessible.

It was suggested that one meeting time be set for all general meetings. The suggestion was made that the meeting time should be set for 1:00 pm every month and that something should be done to ensure all supervisors are informed that their staff members are allowed to attend. It was suggested that it would send a very clear message to the University community of the importance of the Staff Association and the importance of meeting attendance if employees were allowed to attend during regular working hours rather than having to attend as a lunch-time activity. It should be recognized that Staff Association participation is a legitimate and valid work experience. Once established, this should be publicized so all staff understand that they have the right to attend these meetings.

4. The Staff Association will make a request that the Benefits Task Force revisit the current tier structure for benefits costs and employee payments.

Respectfully submitted by

Nancy Fields, Secretary