UNIVERSITY OF HARTFORD
STAFF ASSOCIATION MINUTES

FINAL Approved 4/11/18

March 14, 2018 1:00pm-2:00pm GSU335 | Meeting called to order by Katie Cox, Chair

In Attendance

Executive Board: Katie Cox, Chair; Laura Eldridge, Carla J. Fuller, Ben Ide, Ellen Levasseur, Rachel Yacouby, Linda Zigmont

Staff Members: Kelly Anderson, Randi Ashton-Pritting, Donna Clarke, Barbara Dessureau, Sue Fitzgerald, Donna Galin, Valerie Gilleran, Amy Kopec, Christina Lapierre, Shelli McMillen, Cindy Oppenheimer, Sean Parke, Kate Sheely, Bonny Taylor, Lisa Wollenberg

I. Introductions

Katie Cox, Chair, welcomed everyone to the meeting and called it to order at 1:00 p.m.

II. Discussion and Approval of Minutes from the 2/14/18 Meeting

The 2/14/18 minutes were approved unanimously with the following changes:

Item III. a.:

Remove: “discontinuation of benefits for spouses of employees making over $40,000/year.”

Insert: “change in definition of an eligible spouse – for the purposes of medical insurance plan elections only. This was changed effective January 1, 2018 and was announced in Fall 2017 open enrollment materials”¹

Item III c.:

Remove: “discontinuation of spousal coverage”

Insert: “change in definition of an eligible spouse”¹

Item III c.:

Remove: “The coming year will bring dental plan changes and the yearly review and “out to bid” of medical carriers.”

Insert: “The Benefits Taskforce will, as a part of a standing practice of institutional due diligence, review the results of a marketing exercise as it relates to the University’s medical and dental insurance plans this summer. This marketing exercise may (or may not) result in a change in plans or insurance carriers.”

Added to bottom of Item III:

¹Effective January 1, 2018, the University of Hartford’s group medical insurance plans will change the definition of an eligible spouse* as it relates to the University’s medical insurance plans as follows:

- **Eligible Spouse** – an employee’s spouse who **does not have access** to affordable health care coverage that provides minimum value (as defined by the Affordable Care Act) through his/her employer.
- **Ineligible Spouse** – an employee’s spouse who **has access** to affordable health care coverage that provides minimum value (as defined by the Affordable Care Act) through his/her employer.

All spouses currently enrolled in the University’s group medical insurance plan(s) will have their coverage cancelled effective December 31, 2017 UNLESS a signed *Spousal Affidavit* (enclosed) is received by HRD by 4:30pm on Friday, November 10, 2017 attesting to spousal eligibility as defined above. This change does not impact spousal eligibility for dental, vision or optional life insurance benefits.
NOTE: For CY 2018, employees whose base earnings are less than $40,000, if annualized, are exempt from this requirement, if applicable.

III. University Committee Reports

a. Budget Advisory Team – Randi Ashton-Pritting, Valerie Gilleran
Valerie Gilleran reported that at the 3/1/18 BAT meeting the following were discussed:

- Josh Duhaime, Budget Director, has left the University; Laura Whitney, Controller, Elaine Daly, Director of Financial Accounting, and Bill Nowitzke will be taking on Josh’s roles.

- Spring Census was flat when compared to Spring 2017. The projection for next year’s new and continuing student enrollment numbers is also expected not to change.

- A purchasing cutoff is still being discussed for this fiscal year.

- The benefit to the University from more employees changing to high-deductible-based health insurance plans, as well as, the change in definition of an eligible spouse for health coverage, is still expected to be favorable. Further assessment will occur in April.

b. Wellness Committee – (Lindsey McKeegan – absent), Barbara Dessureau
Tabled

c. Benefits Taskforce – Cindy Oppenheimer, (Lynn Galvin - absent)
The BTF met on 3/8/18 and set their Calendar with the issues that they will address this year. These will include reviewing the results of a marketing exercise as it relates to the University’s health insurance plan, as well as, the dental plan (both reviews are part of a standing practice of institutional due diligence). Since the dental plan premiums are paid 100% by the employee, feedback from Staff is very important in the decision-making process when the BTF reviews other dental plans. Cindy Oppenheimer and Lynn Galvin are asking for Staff feedback on the current plan as soon as possible. Members can call or email them with their comments. The BTF will also be looking at how the University’s paid time-off benefits compare to other Universities, i.e. Vacation, Bereavement, Holidays, Short Term Disability and Volunteer Days. Reviewing these benefits does not necessarily mean there will be any changes to current policies.

d. Presidential Commission for the Status of Women – Donna Clarke
The Commission met in February and will be meeting March 15. The campus Climate Subcommittee has submitted their final summary and recommendations, along with action points from staff and faculty focus groups, to the Commission and expect a response following the March meeting.

Katie Cox reported that the Staff Association is being asked for a representative to sit on the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee. Christina Lapierre volunteered to be on the Committee as the Staff Association (SA) representative.

IV. Staff Association Reports

a. Web Advisory Committee – Barbara Dessureau
The Office of Marketing and Communication will be deciding this week on one of two companies to redesign the University website. The firms are from Baltimore, MD and Summerville, MA.
b. Faculty Senate – Ben Ide
Mary Ellen Gillespie, Director of Athletics spoke to the Senate. UH student athletes have a retention rate of 87% and the highest GPAs in the America East conference for the past 12 years. The discount rate for student athletes is a third lower than the rest of the student population. By virtue of having Division I status for our athletic programs the University’s visibility is boosted by the ESPN ticker updates and the ESPN3 televised games. Athletics is one of the largest student employers on campus. Mary Ellen is looking to involve other academic departments when hiring student workers. For instance, using Barney School students in the UH Sports Center, production truck or business office.

c. Treasurer’s Report – Rachel Yacouby
There are no changes to report.

d. Membership Director Report – Ellen Levasseur
There are 119 members in the Staff Association.

e. Fundraising Committee – Valerie Gilleran
This committee is on a hiatus.

V. Old Business / VI. New Business (as one discussion)

Continued discussion of January/February meeting and continuation of discussion of status of Staff Association moving forward [to a Staff Council structure].

Katie Cox began an open discussion on the move to a Staff Council (SC) structure by reporting that the SA Executive Board (EBoard) has been focusing in their meetings on this change. The goals for a SC would mainly be to give all non-union Staff one voice and to re-energize those staff who currently feel dis-enfranchised at times through better representation. She told the membership that the EBoard meets monthly and they meet quarterly with President Woodward and the Administration. As SA Chair, Katie meets individually twice a semester with the President.

The change to a SC would involve assigning representatives to specific campus “voting blocs”. The representatives would be the ones to actually vote at regular membership meetings, but Katie stressed that meetings would continue to be open to all staff. The items that are currently voted on are: 1) approving minutes, 2) voting on SA officers, 3) voting for representatives to sit on University committees and, 4) changes to the SA Constitution and Bi-Laws. The discussion then centered on how to assign “voting blocs”, whether by colleges and defined areas/blocs (i.e. Facilities, Libraries, Institutional Advancement, etc.), or whether to include representation for specific job-types for staff who may be spread out in various departments/colleges across the campus. Some members felt that having specific job-types be represented by a Committee, that would report to the membership and the EBoard, would be more effective since they could have separate meetings to gather data and then report on specific issues that would directly support their needs/issues. A comment was made that, ideally, the structure for meetings of constituent blocs would be first approved, and then supported by the Deans of Colleges, rather than for meetings to take place and just be sanctioned by the Deans. At issue, was the current lack of support by some Deans for their Staff. The EBoard will continue working on the development of voting blocs and the move to a Staff Council at their next meetings.

Katie then took an informal (unscientific) poll of members at the meeting as to their use, or not use, of Personal and Vacation time under the current time-off structure. Most members at the meeting save time-off into June in case they need days for unexpected illness, etc. They then use them all at once at the very end of June just to use them before “losing” them. Basically, everyone in the room would like the option to rollover 3-5 days at least through the
summer, if not beyond. Only about one third of those polled forfeited unused vacation on June 31st. Thus, most people used days at the end of the fiscal year just to use them. This does create a fairly “empty” campus at the end of June.

Katie adjourned the meeting at 2:00 p.m.

FUTURE MEETINGS: 1-2pm - GSU 335

4/11/18 Annual Meeting
5/9/18
6/13/18

Respectfully Submitted by: Carla J. Fuller; Recording Secretary