**Staff Council Meeting Minutes**   
February 10, 2021 | Wednesday | ONLINE (WebEx)    
Participants: Professional Staff of University of Hartford

* Because of time constraints, we were unable to discuss/approve the minutes from the Jan. 13 general meeting. These will be reviewed at our March general meeting.

New Business

**NECHE**

* Presentation and updates provided on NECHE accreditation (Prof. Laura Pence and Kathleen Neal, Executive Director of the Office of Institutional Effectiveness)
* Around 2/25/21, Kathleen and Laura will send a draft of the presentation for NECHE
* On-site visit to take place (either virtually or physically) in October 2021
* NECHE looks at the University holistically to evaluate its effectiveness

**TIAA Cref/Raises**

* Open discussion topic: 9% TIAA-CREF contributions and no raises vs. 7% contribution and a 2% raise (Laura Whitney, Vice President for Finance, helped facilitate)
* Tuition discount is large contributor to current financial strain on the University

No decision will be made before March 1st when faculty contracts are issued; Potential decisions to be made around August.

Staff Council Reports

Treasurer’s Report: (Linda Zigmont) Balance is $1,422.98

* No change

Benefits Taskforce: (Cindy Oppenheimer)

* Benefits Taskforce met on 1/21/2021
* Paperless open enrollment went very well.  Very few issues
* CT paid leave: this is a state mandate, and the University must collect from employees’ paychecks.  The state is still working on all the details and the benefits will not start until 2022.  We cannot yet tell you how it will affect the current leave policies since all the details have not yet been released.  Stay tune for more details to come!
* COVID-19 Vaccine-The federal government pays for the vaccine but there is an administration cost which is billed to your medical insurance.  Members will not have to pay anything for the vaccine.  The administration cost is covered at 100% and it not subject to deductible.
* Due to COVID-19, some employees were not able to spend all the funds they had set aside in their Dependent Care accounts.  The University is looking into if it is possible to roll these funds to 2021.  I will update when decision is made.
* Remember to contact Cindy regarding any suggestion or concerns.

Resource Planning & Priorities committee: (Laura Heemskerk/Laura D’Angelo-Gohn)

* Meeting was held 2/21/2021. This was an extra meeting to review FY 2022 budget before it goes to the Board of Regents in February.  As was done last year, there are three scenarios in the budget:  worst case, likely case, and best case.  There are so many moving parts and unknowns especially in light of the pandemic.  We will prioritize revenue-generating actions.

Faculty Senate: (Ben Ide)

* Provost Fred Sweitzer and Katie Kitchens, Director of Student Services and Advising Center for Student Success, spoke at the 1/22/2021 session of the Faculty Senate meeting (meeting times were changed to allow Senators to watch the Presidential Inauguration). For the Spring 2021 semester, the University will take the same precautions to fight the spread of Covid on campus as they did for the Fall 2020 semester, except they will be more aggressive about testing and contact tracing. Faculty members will be given an automatic 1-year extension for their probationary period if they asked for it. Raises to be retroactive to original probationary period if they get a promotion and take the 1-year extension. The Provost also spoke about the financial situation of the University, including student enrollment, retention, and the projected tuition discount rate.

* At the 1/25/2021 session, the Faculty Senate hosted a discussion on the thought of keeping the University Contribution at 9% or dropping it to 7%, with the other 2% going into a merit raise pool.

Human Resource Department: (Lynn Thibodeau)

* The United Way campaign will be starting at the end of March, but there are no materials to share at this time.  It will be completely online and electronic, and emails will go out with the link as soon as the information is available.  It should before the April Staff Council meeting.

Old/Continuing Business

* Delegate elections: Voting has closed as of Feb. 9 at 11:59PM, the ballot is at

<https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=6JGLt45CL0KltKj2yrBxBLREkqHZQh5Fj1txJ5f3fm1UQ1lDSTZaVE8xRFhOVDQ3SElVSjRNRjFDWi4u>

* + Staff Council delegate to Faculty Senate: Rachel Yacouby (23 votes)
  + UH Benefits Task Force: Laura Heemskerk (23 votes)
  + UH Diversity, Inclusion, and Equity Task Force: Desirée Kleykamp (23 votes)
  + UH Resources Priorities and Planning Committee: Laura D'Angelo-Gohn (22 votes)
  + Staff Council Hospitality Committee (multiple positions): Laura D'Angelo-Gohn (18 votes) and Rachel Yacouby (16 votes)
  + Staff Council Ways & Means Committee (multiple positions): Ben Ide (18 votes) and Rachel Yacouby (15 votes)