

Benefits Committee Meeting Minutes
April 14, 2015, 9:30-11 am
OHR 220

Attendees: Jason Freeman (chair), Stella Richardson (Secretary), Wayne Book, Brandon Conkle (HR), Michael Elliott, Amy Herron, Debbie Lee, Tommy Little, Kevin Merkel (HR)
Absent: Doug Britton, Michelle Powell, Jefferson Losse (student representative)

Administrative

The minutes from the February 10, 2015 meeting were approved without changes.

Updates

Brandon introduced Kevin Merkel, Senior Director of HR Services.

Retirement exchange RFP

Brandon reported on the retirement exchange. There is no RFP for the exchange. The Board of Regents (BOR) was able to sole source with Aon Hewitt because they were the only vendor that had a relationship with Kaiser.

Aon Hewitt is the BOR benefits broker and will also run the retiree exchange. The exchange is only for Medicare eligible retirees. Retirees who are under the age of eligibility will continue to be covered under the same plans as active employees. An email went out to the Silver Jackets with information about the exchange. A series of meetings has also been planned for retirees to provide information about the exchange. There will be a meeting at Georgia Tech on May 8th. Retirees can attend these meetings at any USG institution. UGA has already had their meeting where some lively discussion occurred. The BOR website has a list of all the institutions that will host meetings and the dates that they will be held.

So far the exchange plan has not been well-received by retirees. Lots of feedback has been given but according to Brandon it probably will not change the plan. Per Brandon, the exchange will give retirees more choices for medical care. A dollar amount will be given to retirees, which they can use to select a carrier from the medical exchange. That amount has not been determined at this time. In some cases retirees may benefit from the exchange depending on what type of subsidy they select. He reiterated that no one will lose any benefits. Some plans may have a lower actuarial value which would mean a lower premium. Some may be the opposite. Also, plan availability will vary in different areas. Brandon explained that the BOR will pay a flat amount across the board for retiree medical benefits. Currently that amount differs depending on the plan. This subsidy will cover more or less of the plan cost depending on the selection. There are at least 90 plans in the exchange. An automated system has been set up by Aon Hewitt that will help guide retirees through the process but will not direct them on which plan to choose. Direct assistance from Aon Hewitt representatives will also be available. A memo is going out this week outlining the details of the program. Brandon will also send the link to the BOR site that has more information about the exchange program.

Brandon stated that a memo was sent to employees in 2013 that outlined changes in the retiree policy. That memo committed to subsidizing retirees at 70% of the level of active employees.

Merit raises

Brandon stated that there will be merit increases this year. Georgia Tech will provide a subsidy for raises but has to wait for rule sets from the BOR before a final decision is made on the amount. Human Resources is projecting that 75% of the employees will get an increase. New employees, those with poor or no evaluations on file and those over the maximum range for their pay grade probably will not receive increases. An increase for employees over the maximum range would be an exception. Raise money is aggregated at the college or unit level so that individual units will have some flexibility. Mike asked what percentage of our salaries is covered by the state. Brandon thinks around 25% but will find out for sure and let us know.

Staff Council

Tommy reported that the staff council has been seated. There are 20 elected members and 5 committees. Each committee has ten members. They were identified last week. Staff were asked to apply for committees. There were 150 applicants and 60 were selected.

Each committee chair was asked to come up with 5 priorities on which to focus. Things that don't cost money probably have the best chance of moving forward. Chairs will begin setting up meetings to discuss priorities with committee members. They are also discussing putting together a survey to send out to staff to see what issues they want addressed.

Tommy is chair of the benefits and compensation committee. They will take on the parking issue. He will probably assign each of his members a topic to research.

Brandon is an ex-officio member of the benefits committee. There is no retirement representative on the committee. Tommy isn't sure whether there is or will be a student representative. There is also a question as to whether a student representative will be part of the Benefits Committee. Jason will find out.

Jason stated that as of next year there will likely no longer be staff members on the Benefits Committee. There are some common issues for both the Staff and Benefits Committee. Tommy will be the staff liaison to the Benefits Committee. There is a question as to whether the Faculty Benefits Committee will continue to represent students and retirees (including staff retirees). There may be some changes in the committee structure—it will be much smaller since staff will no longer be members. Jason suggested that it may work to have periodic joint meetings with the Staff council and split off into smaller groups for discussions.

Additional Topics

Tommy will continue to engage with the parking office. There is no indication that rates will decrease any time in the future. They are increasing. He plans to ask Lance about options. He wants to keep a dialog going. Jason wants to accept Lance's offer to have a Benefits Committee

or Staff Council to become a standing member of the parking task force.

There was some discussion about student employment within the USG and how difficult it is to track their hours if they work.

The BOR is interested in wellness programs and, in particular, biometric screening in exchange for premium reduction. No follow through yet on an RFP.

No further complaints have come to OHR about the Anthem data breach, however there appears to be continued confusion about whether people must actively enroll in identity theft protection services. Active enrollment at <https://anthem.allclearid.com/> is required in order to receive full benefits of the protection.

HR update

Jason asked for an update on Scott Morris's replacement hiring. Kevin stated that they are currently studying their environment to get the HR department in order. They have had quite a few turnovers. There is not yet an active search for a new director.