

Faculty Benefits Committee Meeting - September 15, 2016

9:30-11:30 AM Petit Institute Bldg., Room 1316

Minutes

Attendees: Doug Britton (Secretary), Jason Freeman (Acting Chair), Darrell Gray (Staff Council Rep.), Bobby Hall (Exec Board Liaison), Stella Richardson, Leslie Sharp (Graduate Studies Office).

Administrative: The minutes from the August 18, 2016 meeting were approved unanimously.

Committee Business:

Bobby Hall – Faculty Executive Board Liaison for this committee. Come from GTRI and will be the committees conduit back to the exec board.

Leslie Sharp – Associate Vice Provost, Office of Graduate Education and Faculty Affairs (GEFA). Leslie works very closely with OHR and has volunteered to participate on this committee to increase communication and collaboration.

Mark Braunstein (not in attendance) – Current GT Representative on the BOR benefits committee. There was discussion regarding the future of this BOR Committee, and it was unclear if it would continue to function has it had given some recent restructuring at BOR. Historically, it was an advisement committee, and did not directly make policy or other decisions. Both the committee and Mark are waiting to see how that restructuring will impact the function of this committee.

Continuing Business:

OHR Representation

With the OHR representative departing, we have not yet received any word on a replacement representative.

- Leslie Sharp indicated that OHR is covered up in transition related to the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA).
- Staff Council has had some interactions with the Director of Talent Acquisitions – regarding apparent issues with applications from the internal applicants being lost.
- Jason Freeman indicated that it may be a while before we get an OHR rep, but we can still reach out to various individuals with OHR if we have questions/concerns.

State of Georgia Research Institution Issues and Collaboration

- Jason Freeman reported on behalf of Raquel Lieberman, who had reached out to other institutions to gauge interest in potential discussions and collaboration of topics of common concern.
- Most have either not responded or expressed interest in interactions between committees.
- UGA has expressed interest in discussing common issues between institutions.
- Action Item: figure out what this will look like, who will represent, format, etc.

Faculty Benefits Committee Faculty Leave Document

- Committee discussion took place regarding the ownership of this document, and how it might be used, updated, and further developed. Leslie Sharp in the Office of Graduate Education and Faculty Development indicated that they consider the Faculty Benefits Committee to be the owner of this document.
- It was generally accepted by the committee that the document is considered complete except one item that appears contradictory between point #2 & #9.
- Active Service-Modified Duty (ASMD) Discussion
 - The suggestion was made to add a sentence indicating that faculty should contact the Office of Graduate Education and Faculty Affairs regarding any questions pertaining to Active Service-Modified Duty (ASMD) opportunities.
 - Members of the committee expressed concern about potential issues with gender equity and the possibility that while official time may be reduced, expectations on output may not be reduced.
 - With ASMD, faculty can request a decrease in percent time – however, there is some confusion on how the policy reads. Leslie Sharp indicated that the GEFA recently became aware of this potential issue, and would be looking at it a little more closely. If a faculty member wants to reduce time, it must be in coordination with the faculty and school chair.
 - The request must come from faculty member for a specified period, and it must be approved by college and faculty supervisor. It was pointed out that faculty need to maintain at least 75% effort in order to qualify for faculty benefits.
 - Jason Freeman expressed concern about adding/adopting any language on ASMD, as this was really policy language, and the Faculty Leave Document is intended to be a summary document – not a policy document.
 - Leslie Sharp agreed, and Jason Freeman asked about how language might get adopted as policy – Leslie Sharp and Bobby Hall indicated that draft language would need to be incorporated into faculty handbook, which would go through faculty Senate committee process. There was also a question about whether it would need to be approved by the BOR.
- Leslie Sharp indicated that if this committee was ready to release the Faculty Leave Document, the GEFA was ready to use and release it. Jason Freeman stated that this committee had already approved the document, so it is good to go.
- Leslie Sharp suggested that GEFA might be interested in the idea of doing an event for new faculty to discuss the various faculty leave options, based on the Faculty Leave Document. Jason Freeman suggested that they include Michelle Powell at any event that gets put on for faculty. Doug Britton suggested the possibility of using the daily digest as a means for getting the information out to existing faculty.
- Doug Britton also inquired about any new information on why there was a restriction on leave for adoptions based on the child's age. Jason Freeman indicated that he had not received any further information on this, and Leslie Sharp also indicated that no one really knew why this was in place. Jason Freeman raised the question of policy ownership related to the adoption age

question, and if this was managed by the BOR, or if it was GT OHR who could address this directly. Leslie Sharp said she would ask and try to find out.

- Jason Freeman suggested that one of the benefits of putting together this document may be that it highlights how some of these policies need to be revisited. Leslie Sharp indicated that there is some recognition that other documents need to be drafted, and it may make sense to work with the advanced professors to advocate more strongly for a general paid leave program.
- Apparently, the University System of Georgia (USG) currently prohibits a paid leave program. But the question was raised that if GT used its own foundation funds to support a paid leave program, would the USG allow it.
- Leslie Sharp reiterated the primary issue for nine month faculty, who do not accrue vacation. As a result, they are really in a very different position than other twelve month faculty, as they do not have the option of using vacation time for family leave. In addition, there is the whole issue regarding principal investigator disengagement on research contracts if the leave is longer than 30 days.
- Action items:
 - Review the potential contradictory language between points #2 and #9.
 - Investigate policy considerations with BOR and Faculty Senate – this will most likely take a while – it may be something for spring consideration.
 - Coordinate an event/news blast for general dissemination of the Faculty Leave Document.
 - Consider the option of advocating for a separate leave paid program.
 - Add a title to the document, and then provide an author and date.

Retirement Considerations between TRS and ORP

- Jason Freeman raised the issue of faculty retirement age difference between TRS and ORP. Under TRS, there is little or no financial incentive for faculty of retirement age to stay on full time, whereas that it is not case under ORP. There is a growing concern that, as more faculty who opted into the ORP reach retirement age that fewer will be retiring. As a result, it could create an issue for the colleges in recruiting new faculty, as more senior faculty are not leaving the teaching ranks.
- Leslie Sharp added that in general, GT needs to provide more information and education around retirement life, and what it is going to be like for retirees. She indicated that she has a great book that talks about meaningful retirement plans.
- Unfortunately, there is a feeling that GT rarely thinks 5-10 years in advance, and that this issue will most likely not see any action until it becomes an issue. In addition, there is a question as to whether this is a GT or BOR issue, given that the TRS and ORP plans are administered at the central office.
- Doug Britton suggested that the committee could do a cursory review and generate an informational document that presents the potential issue, and then transmit it to relevant leadership at the Institute. To do this, we would need to get some numbers from OHR regarding the number of teaching faculty on the different retirement plans. Darrell Gray suggested Benidra Williams, who is a benefits supervisor, as a good person to talk with in OHR

Summer Camps

- Jason Freeman reported that Raquel Lieberman had reached out to Lizanne Destefano, the director of CEISMC for information on summer camp policies and procedures, and it appears that most of the summer camps on campus do follow the official guidelines.
- Darrel Gray reached out to OHR as well to learn more about the publicity of summer camps and to find out who maintains the lists. Candice Bovian in OHR is the contact person who handles summer camps.
- The primary issue is that information needs to be communicated earlier, particularly for those who may need access to the financial aid opportunities. There is a wide range of costs for summer camps, and some of them do have financial aid to help offset expenses.

Campus Childcare Center Reviews

- Jason Freeman reported that the external evaluation of the child care centers appears to have stalled. Apparently the reviewers interviewed a number of people but never visited the child care centers directly. It is not clear what is going on.

New Business

1. Jason Freeman reported that Raquel Lieberman has some concerns about the critical review process. It appears that many young faculty are looking prematurely for other opportunities as a result of negative feedback received in 3rd year reviews.
2. Stella Richardson indicated that the FSLA transition will affect many of the staff, and it appears that at this point, various departments are handling it differently. The issues is not just the shift in salary cap for exempt status, but also the implications on the duties/tasks requirements of the associated jobs. Many people on campus will also be shifting from monthly to biweekly paychecks, and this could delay paychecks for the first pay period due to the two week lag in time recording for biweekly.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 10:40 AM.