Staff Council Officer’s Report

January 2016

SC LEADERSHIP WITH VP HRDMA

On Tuesday, December 1, 2015, I attended a quarterly meeting with Wanda Heading Grant, Vice President for Human Resources, Diversity and Multicultural Affairs, Jes Kraus, Executive Director for Human Resource Services and Affirmative Action, and Harold Pierce, Executive Director of Benefits and Employee Operations. Johanna Brabham, Staff Council Vice President, was ill and did not attend the meeting. The Staff Council Administrator position was currently vacant.

I asked for an update on the Salary Equity study (for Gender and Minority Status), and Wanda shared that the study is still active, but the data requires additional in-depth investigation, as the initial evaluation of classifications showed some disparity that needed more information. Wanda estimated that the results will be completed and presented in February 2016.

We also discussed the health insurance rate increases, and how the information was rolled out and presented to staff. I noted that the timing of the notice was concurrent with the beginning of Open Enrollment, and that earlier notice would have been preferable. Wanda and Harold acknowledged that they would also prefer to send notice earlier, but there were difficulties this year in obtaining the data and approvals that caused the delay.

We also discussed that it had been helpful when Harold Pierce presented the background data for the rate increases in his sessions on Thursday and Friday, November 5 and 6. University Benefits Advisors, Human Resource Representatives, and Staff Council Representatives were invited to these sessions, and viewed and discussed the PowerPoint presentation Harold gave. This information would have been helpful for staff at the time they received the general notice from Wanda’s unit about the increases. Unfortunately, there is a lack of consensus at this time over who should be distributing this information to staff. Wanda would prefer that this information be disseminated by Deans and Vice Presidents, so as to answer questions for staff that may be unique to their unit. Staff Council would prefer that this information be sent out by the central unit issuing the notice, as background for the increased rates. Staff Council will continue discussing this with HRDMA to see if there could be information distributed to staff at large with instruction that questions should be directed to their Dean or Vice President.

I asked for a status of the rollout of improved Performance Appraisals. The electronic system, rollout and training for supervisors, units and staff is still projected for this Spring. Staff Council’s Personal and Professional Development committee has been involved in researching and recommending a robust appraisal and professional development process, and we are hopeful this will be a part of the rollout.
Finally, Jes Kraus distributed a draft of the revised Grievance and Mediation Policy – Staff (Non-Represented), which is more aligned to have staff resolve issues at the supervisor, manager, and Dean/Vice President level. Staff Council leadership will be meeting with Jes, Lucy Singer (General Counsel), and others to discuss and refine this revised policy, hoping to finalize it by late Spring 2016.

**SC Leadership with President Sullivan**

On Wednesday, December 16, Johanna Brabham, Staff Council Vice President, Meryl St. John, Staff Council Administrator, and I met with President Sullivan for our quarterly meeting. We discussed the FY17 Non-Represented Staff Increase and the president confirmed that he and his team are working to include an inflation factor component and a merit component. He intends to be able to announce final numbers early in the Spring semester.

We mentioned to the President that the recent timing of the Health Insurance rate increase and distribution of background information to staff was being discussed with HRDMA. We shared with him our concerns about the late timing of the increase notice, and the concern over how the background information was disseminated. He supports our working with HRDMA to try to have this work more smoothly next year, and shares our concern that staff receive the information needed in a timely manner.

We shared that we intend to speak before the Council of Deans to enlist faculty who are staff supervisors to be trained in the areas of knowledge needed to be good, fair and competent supervisors of staff. President Sullivan expressed his support for competent staff supervisors, regardless of whether they are faculty or staff, and reminded us that this is a learning institution, and supervisors should be open to improving their skills, and providing leadership and professional development guidance to staff they supervise.

Respectfully submitted,

Renee Berteau, Staff Council President