

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING

November 17, 2021

Video Conference on Microsoft Teams

MINUTES

Present: Taka Ashikaga, Richard Branda, Stephen Cutler, Ruth Farrell, Alan Gotlieb, Michael Gurdon, Judith Van Houten, Dwight Matthews, Jack McCormack, Alison Pechenick, Mara Saule, Lee Thompson

Absent: Rachel Johnson, Beth Mintz

Call to Order: Chair Michael Gurdon called the meeting to order at 2:02pm.

1. Lee Thompson moved and Judy Van Houten seconded a motion to approve the Minutes of October 20, 2021, as amended, and the General Meeting of November 5, 2021, Minutes as amended. The motion passed.
2. RFAO Board Meeting
 - a. Chair Gurdon welcomed Ingrid Temer from BC/BS, Andrea Mast, Associate Chief HR Officer, and Greg Paradiso, Director of Benefits, to the meeting for a discussion of HR issues.
 - b. Ms. Temer presented an update of the VBA retirement health plan metrics. Total enrollment is 2344. The call center metrics were 100% accuracy, 94.3 % timeliness, and 70% first resolution. A 3month review of enquiries indicated that the volume was decreasing. There were 23 enquiries to BC/BS and of these, 12 cases were sent on to VBA for investigation. They involved drug issues, enrollment, benefits, customer service center and claims. The average resolution was 4.27 days. Ms. Temer recommended that UVM encourage calls directly to VBA customer service.
 - c. Several HR problems reported by members were brought up for discussion. These included:
 - i. The call center for the Vermont plan is in Michigan but there are no immediate plans to bring it in-state.
 - ii. Physicians who call the number on the VBA card for preauthorization get the general service line and are frustrated by long wait times.
 - iii. The Customer Service line is not covered 24/7, which is a problem for retirees in other time zones.
 - iv. There is a problem with optometrist coverage, evidently because the doctor's office cannot connect to VBA electronically and the Service Center has a problem finding the code. Consequently patients have to pay the bill up front and then seek reimbursement from VBA. Ms. Temer said she would look into the number of claims for optometrists.
 - v. Large organizations such as COSTCO and Walmart do not have VBA in their systems because they are out of network.
 - vi. A yearly eye refraction exam is currently covered in our VBA benefits. The separate VSP insurance plan also covers a yearly eye refraction exam. The two plans overlap on this coverage thus UVM and we pay twice for the same refraction coverage.
 - vii. It is reported that UVM had a 20% savings for the change to VBA in 2021. It was suggested that UVM should share this savings with retirees in the form of coverage for eyeglasses and hearing aids.
 - viii. UVM medical center and MVP are offering an advantage plan that is similarly named to VBA and is confusing to retirees.
 - ix. Other advantage plans offer additional benefits such as hearing aids. Mr. Paradiso said that the cost of additional benefits was looked at initially and amounted to several thousand dollars. VBA could look into offering options to UVM, including people paying individually for additional benefits.
 - x. There are 101 retirees enrolled in the additional VSP plan for January 2022. However, many retirees did not get or did not recognize the mailing. This will be sent again as a UVM mailing.
 - xi. The University Benefits Advisory Committee is dormant since the chair stepped down. It may reconstitute.

- xii. There are no new updates on parking as it affects retirees.
- xiii. Ms. Mast will follow up on a mechanism to identify retiring non-emeriti faculty and administrative officers who are eligible for membership in RFAO.
- d. Faculty Senate Report (Mara Saule for Rachel Johnson).
 - i. Curricular Affairs – All Items Passed
 - New BA in Neuroscience
 - Substantial revision of Classical Civilizations major and minor
 - Name change Dept. of Geography to Dept. of Geography and Geosciences
 - ii. Academic Reorganization Working Group Report.
 - a. Campus Response – People are concerned about reorganization, unhappy with process development, were suspicious of rationale and outcomes. Did not hear from the whole campus, mostly heard from faculty some of whom participated repeatedly.
 - b. Difficulty on the part of the campus to think about issues between academic reorganization and social justice, diversity, equity, and inclusion. Going forward, DEI needs to be front and center.
 - c. Recommendations
 - i. Establish Processes for Long Term, University-Wide Academic Planning and Oversight
 - ii. Empower the Academic Stewardship Group to Review Cross-Unit Degree Programs
 - iii. Establish Systems Consistencies Across Units (such as IT, advising)
 - iv. Bring the Campus Community Back into the IBB Conversation
- e. Update from United Academics (Michael Gurdon for Beth Mintz)
 - i. UA and the administration are in favor of a vaccine mandate for all faculty and staff but UA believes the disciplinary procedures in the proposed policy contradict the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA).
 - ii. The administration is requiring all faculty to fill out a conflict of interest and commitment form that UA believes contradicts what is in the UBA. UA is grieving this.
 - iii. UA filed an unfair labor practice because UA was excluded from negotiating on behalf of the 35 retirees who lost coverage under the new health plan. This is now at the Vermont Labor Relations Board.
 - iv. Last year all faculty voluntary separation agreements included a nondisclosure of terms clause which UA stopped but it has reappeared this year. UA will again push back.
- f. Review of the Annual General Meeting and any action steps needed therefrom.
 - i. The reviews were generally positive for both in person and videoconference participation, but there was disappointment about the low attendance.
 - ii. One of the major concerns expressed during the meeting was about software access and technical support. There is consideration of drafting a letter to senior decision makers about this concern.
 - iii. There is a lack of clarity regarding the licensing agreements for software. A better understanding by RFAO might point to a solution to this problem.
 - iv. There is a need for better access by RFAO members to University information.
- g. Other business.
 - i. Consider inviting Kirk Drombrowski, Vice-President for Research, to the next meeting.
 - ii. Use the RFAO forum for requests and notices to members regarding opportunities to contribute to academic activities.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:44pm.

The next meeting of the RFAO Board is scheduled for: **December 15, 2021, at 2pm as a Videoconference.**

Respectfully submitted, Richard Branda