

**UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON**  
**FACULTY COUNCIL ON RETIREMENT, INSURANCE AND BENEFITS**

The Faculty Council on Retirement, Insurance, and Benefits met on December 2, 2004 at 9:00 a.m. Chair Karen Boxx called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m.

**Synopsis:**

1. Approval of agenda and minutes
2. Update on Tuition Benefits expansion
3. Discussion of retiree interview process

**Announcements, updates, agenda, minutes**

It was MSP to approve the minutes and the agenda.

**Update on Tuition Benefits expansion**

The proposed expansion of tuition benefits has been heard by the Senate Executive Committee (SEC), the Special Committee on Planning and Budgeting (SCPB), and the UW Budget Committee. All three bodies responded favorably to the idea, but raised funding and priority issues. Is this proposed benefit something that faculty consider a priority? How many faculty members would be able to take advantage of the benefit? There was a perception that far more staff than faculty would be able to use the benefit.

At the Budget Committee meeting, Weldon Ihrig asked how/whether FCRIB knows that faculty value this benefit, when compared to using the same five million dollars for a salary increase or more childcare slots. It would be important to know more about the answer to Ihrig's question before moving forward with the proposal, especially when the UW may well be faced with more budget cuts. There was consensus among FCRIB members present that faculty would very likely prefer a salary raise to an expansion of the tuition benefit. Patty Brandt suggested that FCRIB could push for expansion of the tuition benefit after salary raises and basic benefits are covered.

Katy Dwyer observed that these meetings did not end the conversation of the tuition benefit expansion, but did raise the issue of priorities. Cheryl Cameron suggested that the proposal include a section that specifies that the proposed benefit should not usurp salary increases but should be added as a recruitment and retention tool as R&R resources become available. FCRIB might then resubmit the proposal at the right moment next fall.

Brandt expended on Cameron's idea, speculating that the expansion might begin with a pilot program using about one million dollars in funding, to start the ball rolling on a small scale. This provision could be included in the section Cameron proposed. FCRIB could specify that, when retention funds are available, \$500,000 (or other specific number) could be used for the tuition benefit pilot program. The section could delineate how many people the pilot would benefit at the specified level of funding.

FCRIB should take some time to identify smaller possibilities for the tuition benefit expansion program, and have a package ready to go when the time is right. This should include some clear indication of faculty preferences and priorities, to answer the question "If you could select your benefit priorities, what would you choose?" Answering this question might be the work of a subcommittee, possibly with the help of a graduate student from the I-School, and could involve a faculty survey.

A survey could poll interest in the tuition benefit proposal and other benefits as well. Perhaps a presentation to FCRIB by Randy Shapiro of the Work/Life office would provide some sense of the scope of the less visible benefits at the UW. FCRIB could then take steps to publicize these – some people don't know what's available. University Week wants someone to do an article on the tuition benefit expansion.

At the next meeting, the council as a whole should ask how to put the tuition benefit expansion program to bed so it can be ramped up again. FCRIB members extended thanks to Steve Demorest for the excellent and important work he has done on this program – though it seems to have hit a funding wall, everyone would like to see it happen. FCRIB will keep working on it.

**Discussion of retiree interview process, continued from November 2**

The Council continued the discussion of the best ways to use the retiree interviews Larry Bliquez conducted and documented. The real-life experience of these retirees can be very useful to younger people who are making decisions about planning for retirement.

Pat Dougherty, Director of the UW Retirement Association, said the Retirement Center might host the interviews on its Website, with links to statistics. Some people relate better to stats, while some learn more from case studies. It would be wise to include both.

The Retirement Association could also ask the retirees who were interviewed to participate in its seminars, advising others about how to think about retirement goals, how to use retirement time, and especially the things they wish someone had told them before they retired. Dougherty will look at the interviews and determine what UWRA can use and what they can't. She will consult with the UWRA Board about using the interviews.

Dougherty expressed concern that interviewees have given permission to use the interviews. She also suggested that the Benefits website might also be able to use the interviews, or might provide links to them on the UWRA Website.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:25 a.m. *Minutes by Linda Fullerton, Recorder.*

**PRESENT: Professors:** Boxx, Brandt, Breidenthal, Kartsonis, Waaland

*Ex-officio:* Dougherty, Dwyer, Henley, McKenzie, Cameron

**ABSENT: Professors:** Demorest, Johnson, Johnson, Martin, Waaland

*Ex-officio:* Constantine, Parks