

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

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

**Synopsis:**

1. Approval of minutes and agenda
2. Report from the Fund review committee - Levis Kochin, Katy Dwyer
3. Review retiree interviews - Larry Bliquez
4. Subcommittees
5. Update on tuition benefit expansion

**Announcements, updates, agenda, minutes**

It was MSP to approve the minutes and the agenda. Karen Boxx will look into the situation with FCRIB's missing PSO rep, whose voice is needed on the council.

**Report from the Fund Review Committee**

The Voluntary Investment Fund Review Committee has met and is in the process of assessing the various investment funds offered to UW staff through the Voluntary Investment Program (VIP). Committee member Levis Kochin said that part of this work is to develop criteria for vendors and for funds that should be offered – for example, some funds may be too expensive, others too cheap. The Funds Committee needs some mechanism to respond to changes in the market, inflation, etc. They don't want people with 30 years of service to wind up with no pension. The Committee is also working on an investment philosophy for use on campus.

Katy Dwyer said she is pleased with the makeup of the Committee – it's a well-balanced group whose members do their homework and are actively speaking up for the greater good of the UW community. The directors of benefits at Western and Central have been attending the meetings, since they intend to replicate on their campuses what the UW is doing, and this has also been helpful. There is a UW Website under development that will eventually include the investment philosophy and lots of information about the VIP fund vendors.

**Retiree Interviews**

Larry Bliquez presented the retiree interviews he has conducted to date. He said he has learned many useful things about retirement planning and its results from colleagues who have experienced the process and are living with their choices.

Bliquez selected the interviewees from many sources, contacted them, and had conversations about their real-life experience with the insurance and investments they selected. His one ground rule has been that interviewees remain anonymous. All interviewees edited the written results to their satisfaction and gave permission for the interviews to be published on the Web.

The "shelf life" of this information might be three or four years, and then new interviews might be done with other people, Bliquez thought. He also pointed out that all the people he interviewed were largely content with their choices – people who had not been happy with their choices did not want to participate.

Dwyer commented that it would be helpful to know when the various careers began and ended, since the financial markets have been so different decade to decade. Without that kind of context, it is difficult to compare the choices and the results.

Bliquez said it is difficult to generalize about the results, but most people were more or less satisfied with the health care they'd chosen, and almost all said they wish they'd started earlier and saved more.

Anna Kartsonis commented that she attended a retirement benefits seminar and was surprised to discover how much she did not know. She suggested that the interviewee experiences might be compiled into a Website or databank on what the choices are and what choices are being made by most people. Steve Demorest thought it would be helpful to show a mean, median and frequency of choices for the entire spectrum of retirement options. Stats are important for some people, case studies work better for others.

Dwyer said the Benefits Office is always considering ways to help people make these important choices, including one-to-one benefits counseling, outreach, and now a newsletter. Part of the problem is getting the information to people in a way that will make them understand that they should begin planning and saving early. The electronic systems at the UW ought to be capable of notifying people of important dates for benefits planning, but for the most part they cannot because they need upgrades that are slow in coming. The newsletter will help.

### **Subcommittees**

**Retirement Financial Planning:** Patti Brandt, Anna Kartsonis, Katy Dwyer, Paul Constantine (Chair), and either Ernest Henley or Pat Dougherty.

**Data Committee:** Diane Martin, Katy Dwyer, Bob Waaland, Bob Briedenthal

### **Tuition Benefit Update**

Dwyer met with Patty Carson and Harlan Patterson about the proposed tuition benefit. They were happy with it, but need official input from the Faculty Senate as to whether this benefit is, or is not, a priority for the faculty. They also need to know whether it is a priority for the Professional Staff Organization, which has not been heard from. For example, if there is 4 million for benefits next biennium, do we want to spend 2 million for a tuition benefit?

Boxx said she has talked with some Faculty Council chairs, who felt that staff would use this benefit more than faculty would. Certainly, there would be a limited number of people who could use it. Many people, either because their spouses do not need it, they do not have children, or their children do not meet the age limit, could not use the benefit. It would be helpful to know just how many people would be able to use it. Dwyer can determine these numbers, but the question remains: Is this a priority right now, or should any available money be used for salary increases?

By the next FCRIB meeting, the proposal will have gone to the Senate Executive Committee and the answer to Dwyer's question should be apparent.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:30 a.m. *Minutes by Linda Fullerton, Recorder.*

**PRESENT: Professors:** Boxx, Briedenthal, Demorest, Kartsonis, Kochin, Waaland

*Ex-officio:* Constantine, Dwyer, Henley

**ABSENT: Professors:** Brandt, Johnson, Martin

*Ex-officio:* Dougherty, McKenzie, Cameron, Parks