

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

The Faculty Council on Retirement, Insurance, and Benefits met on May 22, at 1:30 p.m. Chair Jim Whittaker called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m.

PRESENT: Professors: Bliquez, Brandt, Dugdale, Frey, Kochin, Waaland, Whittaker
Ex-officio: Chamberlin, Dwyer

ABSENT: Professors: Boxx, Haley, Johnson, Martin
Ex-officio: Dougherty, Olswang, Henley, McKenzie, Rosales

Synopsis:

1. Approve agenda
2. Approve minutes
3. Legislative & Benefits Office Update - Katy Dwyer
4. Work-Group Updates/Priority Setting for Next Year
 - Fund Review Committee
 - Benefits Education
 - Benchmarking Benefits
 - Long Term Care Insurance
5. Planning for session with Faculty Senate Leadership on 6/5

Approval of Agenda

The agenda was approved.

Approval of Minutes

The May 1 minutes were approved with minor revisions.

Announcements

Levis Kochin has been nominated as FCRIB's representative to the Fund Review Committee. It is anticipated that there will be more nominees, since the size of the fund Review Committee is not fixed.

Patti Brandt will be FCRIB chair for 2003-2004.

Legislative Update & UW Benefits Office Report

Katy Dwyer reported that the legislature is meeting in special session and that HB1829, which puts limits on re-employment, has passed. Governor Locke vetoed the limitations on the re-employment of teachers, so this bill affects primarily PERS-type retirees. It will not be acceptable to have even a verbal agreement that retirees can come back to their old jobs. The message is that agencies should follow the normal procedures for hiring people, retired or not. Retirees can, however, work without loss of their pensions.

The supplementation issue did not arise in this legislative session. Dwyer said she looked at retirement applications between 1980 and 1990, and discovered that the peak year for supplementation was 1983. Of 116 retirements in that year, 100 were supplemented. That may have been a year of induced retirements – Dwyer will check on this, footnote the data, and send copies to everyone. In any case, the numbers of supplemented retiree incomes dropped back down after 1983.

Dwyer announced the annual Home Fair, which will take place in the Health Sciences Building Lobby and at Harborview. She will email everyone shortly with particulars. The Long Term Care resources Web page is up; Dwyer thanked everyone for their comments, which helped to improve the information.

The VIP and UWRP brochures are ready – Dwyer provided everyone with copies. Though the brochures are much better looking and user friendly, they are free to the UW since the vendors paid for the printing. These will go into the new employee packet.

Work-Group Priorities for 2003-2004:

Whittaker reminded everyone that FCRIB's priorities at the beginning of 2002-2003 were:

- Fund Review Committee
- Flexible Spending Accounts
- Benefits Education, with a focus on Long Term Care
- Rising Health Care Costs
- Re-employment benefit - monitoring the implementation of 40% re-employment
- Cafeteria-style benefits
- Benchmarking benefits

In October 2002, Whittaker met with Faculty Senate Chair Sandra Silberstein and found that her top three priorities were:

- Faculty Salaries
- Joint Governance
- The Role of Faculty at the UW

What remains to be done in the different areas, Whittaker asked, and what kind of help does FCRIB need to get the job done? Sometimes in the past, it has been possible to get student help for some FCRIB projects.

Benchmarking Benefits

Dwyer said that templates have gone to the vendors, which – when in use - will allow FCRIB to make oranges-to-oranges comparisons. Also included were a couple of Charles Frey's suggested charts that will help employees understand all the differences between financial options while they are working and after they retire. When the information is received, perhaps a Website can be developed to disseminate the data.

As far as benefits comparison with peer institutions is concerned, the AAUDE statistics and other peer information probably needs to be interpreted by someone as knowledgeable as Diane Martin so it is more accessible and useful to UW employees comparing benefits. Not all institutions state salaries and benefits the same way, and much of the reporting is done on an ad hoc basis – for example, for a Presidential search. It is, therefore, not useful for comparison purposes. Dwyer asked whether FCRIB has resources to hire a grad student to help analyze these numbers and come up with reliable peer institution data that would show a true benefits comparison.

Whittaker said this would be very useful information to know, since benefits loom large when salaries are not increasing. Kochin asked whether a project such as this might be just as valuable to other institutions – could the UW join with others to produce this data? Dwyer pointed out that such a project would require a lot of coordination – real research, whether it's joint or not, can't be done unless there is a person to do it. A grad student could do outreach to other institutions and get the ball rolling. FCRIB could also talk to Phil Hoffman, director of the Office of Institutional Studies, to see if they can do the project or even oversee a project that a grad student would do.

Chamberlin said it might be easier to get buy-in for resources if FCRIB could describe the purpose of a benefits comparison document. What is it for, and where does it go? Brandt suggested a fact-finding discussion to discover the potentials for action once a document is researched and created. FCRIB should not just collect information, but should envision ways to use it. Dwyer sees the information as the basis for honest discussion that would help

the UW move forward with some new and innovative options. Whittaker commented that this would provide some clarity about suggestions benefits such as cafeteria-style benefits, tuition benefits, and the like. With the Civil Service Reform legislation coming onstream, the UW might have different contracts with different union groups as well as faculty - it would be very helpful to have good data to support negotiations.

Whittaker said the consensus is that FCRIB needs resources for a benefits comparison project, and should communicate this to Faculty Senate leadership during the June 5 meeting.

Understanding Implications of Legislation

At the last meeting, Brandt called for a clearer understanding of what FCRIB should be doing with regard to legislation that is passed. In the case of the enabling legislation, for example, what is the potential for faculty organization and negotiation? What flexibility and power does the faculty have? Should FCRIB do some work joint with Faculty Affairs? Sandra Silberstein said there is going to be a study group on this legislation, but Brandt has heard nothing about it. She would like legislative issues such as this one brought "front and center" so everyone knows what they are. For example:

- How could faculty do coalition-building across faculty councils?
- What does enabling legislation mean to the faculty?
- What power does the faculty have?

Chamberlin asked what role FCRIB has in advising the chair, the president, or UW legislative reps in benefits issues where the legislature is involved. It seems obvious that FCRIB should be consulted about issues in our bailiwick, but this is often not the case – FCRIB is not consulted, and is out of the loop. When a benefits issue comes up, the leadership should be in the habit of thinking of FCRIB. There should be better communication within the Faculty Senate structure, and with the legislative reps who take faculty concerns and views to the legislature.

There was consensus that one of the legislative reps should be an ex officio member of FCRIB. Brandt said that an FCRIB member should also be appointed to the enabling workgroup.

Other Issues to Elevate to Greater Priority

Dwyer: Adopt a formal work plan that can be used as a template for projects, to enable workgroups to be clear about the scope and objectives of their work.

Whittaker: Monitor the implementation of the 40% re-employment plan, to make sure its provisions are not eroded by local custom.

Chamberlin: Understand the implications of cost increases in medical insurance, and the effect on faculty and staff members.

Dwyer: Hold a planning meeting, instead of an update meeting, at the beginning of each academic year to ensure that the legislative and governmental reps are on the same page as the faculty and to rally support for what the legislative reps are doing.

Whittaker: Elevate Flexible Spending Accounts and Long Term care to greater awareness.

Whittaker asked that all members attend the June 5 meeting if possible, to discuss these issues with the Faculty Senate leadership.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:59 p.m. *Minutes by Linda Fullerton, Recorder.*