

University Of Washington
Faculty Council on Benefits and Retirement
10:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m., January 30, 2012
36 Gerberding

Meeting Synopsis:

- 1) Call to Order
- 2) Review of Minutes from December 14, 2011 meeting
- 3) Update on UWRP communications
- 4) Suggestions for enhanced communications to faculty/staff/librarians
- 5) Review of UW letter to plan participants on turning 50
- 6) Adjourn

1) Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 10:37 a.m. by standing Chair Arthur Nowell.

2) Review of Minutes from December 14, 2011 meeting

Minutes from the December 14, 2011 meeting were unable to be approved due to lack of quorum.

3) Update on UWRP communications

Katy Dwyer, Executive Director of UW Benefits, discussed the informational meetings which were rescheduled for January 30 and 31st. There will be five meetings held, at Seattle, Tacoma and Bothell campuses. One of these meetings will be televised via UW TV. Dwyer and Mindy Kornberg, Vice President for UW Human Resources, presented to the Faculty Senate last week where additional comments were provided. Benefits will aggregate comments from the Faculty Senate session as well as the public meetings and communicate them to the Provost.

It was asked whether special meetings will be held with Department Chairs, however it was noted that Benefits was broadly reaching out through presenting to the Faculty Senate and notifying all participants within the UWRP and VIP plans of the public meetings. When question was posed about broader email lists, Dwyer agreed to investigate other pertinent email lists which will allow for a broader divulgation. It was requested that the deadline for comments be clearly listed within the reminder emails.

Brad Holt requested to know how feedback on options would be possible. Within presentations, Dwyer would mention that FCBR had reported that it did not believe fund options were enough and would solicit thoughts from others that shared this perspective. Kornberg expressed concerns for stating that the Council thought more options were necessary; she commented though further questions would not be taken, suggestions would be received up through the week of February 5th. Another suggestion was to make the Benefits website link to submit suggestions bolded. Thom Deardorff, representative of the Associated Librarians of the University of Washington, informed that ALUW had seen the proposed changes and had supported them. Dwyer confirmed that the proposed changes had been presented to

the PSO. The organization had a sent out a reminder to attend the public meetings in their newsletter, though it did not adopt an official position on the recommendations. Holt noted that the council broadly supports the proposed changes, despite some important concerns.

4) Review of UW letter to plan participants on turning 50

Nowell described the process that once UWRP members turn 50, they receive a letter from the UW Benefits Office informing that they are eligible to increase their University matched contributions to 10%. Dwyer gave a background on this communication, which is now done via email rather than as a physical letter. Such communication is sent six months prior to participants' 50th birthday, followed by quarterly reminders. It was mentioned that roughly 400 out of 5,000 faculty and staff members over age fifty do not opt in of such qualifying members do not take advantage of such benefits.

Bob Bowen noted that FCBR had earlier requested for this program to be opt-out rather than opt-in and asked why such a transition had not occurred. It was suggested that such individuals opting out do not understand that this is a 100% return on this investment, or the potential gain of thousands of additional dollars in retirement, and providing information would change the scenario. Participants could be notified with a message with contact information for professionals to explain such benefits. Dwyer suggested that statistics on rates of return can be communicated to incentivize such reluctant members, and that once numbers of non-participants decreases sufficiently, a campaign can be to make this policy opt-out. Discussion followed comparing the financial benefits of having opt-out or mandatory increase in contribution to 10% upon reaching age fifty. Contacting Provost Ana Mari Cauce was suggested to see if she would support opt-out options on increasing contributions.

The opt-out option had been previously sent to the Senate Committee on Planning and Budgeting, which was not enacted due to lack of funding. Holt offered to re-present this issue to the committee once Provost Cauce was contacted. Nowell will draft a letter and circulate to the committee to send to the Provost after Dwyer provides information from a survey regarding those not utilizing the program. Members briefly differentiated support between new hires and those present longer at the University.

5) Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 11:08 a.m. by Arthur Nowell.

Notes by Jay Freistadt, Faculty Council Support Analyst. jayf@u.washington.edu

Present: **Faculty:** Holt, Nowell, B. Bowen
 President's Designee: Kornberg
 Ex-Officio Reps: Masterson, Deardorff, J. Ray Bowen
 Guests: Dwyer

Absent: **Faculty:** Breidenthal, Philipsen (Chair), Nihan
 Ex Officio Rep: Tyl, Dougherty