MINUTES
University Staff Congress
11.21.19

All members present with the following exceptions

MEMBERS EXCUSED: D. Morris (107), B. Wettstein (133), T. Roach (134), M. Monroe (135), S. Frey (140), S. Baxter (154), A. Weiss (181), R. Kutz (185), J. Taubel (189), O. Harris (193), R. Orzel (195), L. Ketterhagen (202)

MEMBERS ABSENT: A. Johnston (105), J. Priebe (118), M. Fennessy (177), C. Whitworth (187)

In addition, 6 Alternates were present.

At 2:30PM, Vice Chancellor Ray Taffora announced that a quorum was present and called the meeting to order.

Vice Chancellor Taffora directed the attention of the Congress to the Minutes of the previous meeting. A motion was heard to approve the Minutes, as was a second. All in Favor. MOTION CARRIED.

Vice Chancellor Taffora paused for public comments. Ms. Vicki Werla, Alternate for Congressional District 152, spoke in favor of the proposed Amendments offered by the Bylaws Committee and encouraged members of Congress to vote in favor of them.

Vice Chancellor Taffora provided a report to Congress, in which he described the organization and duties of the Office of Legal Affairs, which is comprised of 13 Attorneys.

Vice Chancellor Taffora recognized Ms. Jamie Gilford for the purpose of providing a report to Congress in regard to ESA and Service Animals policy. Ms. Gilford noted that in the future an ADA coordinator would be hired and that representatives of shared governance are welcome to take part in meetings as stakeholders. Ms. Gilford provided an overview of the policies and described the intent to bring the campus into Federal compliance.

Representative of District 167 requested clarity in regard to what is permissible as to an inquiry regarding a service animal.

Reply came that what is permitted is provided by the Federal Government almost verbatim.

Representative of District 152 inquired how the ESA policy might respond to those in the workplace who object to the presence of non-work related animals.

Reply came that if there is a conflict, particularly in regard to a phobia or an allergy, the employee should reach out to the Disability Coordinator.

Representative of District 152 noted the distinction as to how research animals are handled in the workplace versus the casual appearance of ESA animals and found the approach inconsistent.
Reply came that the policy is fairly strict and, although animals are present in both examples cited, different functions require different policy.

Representative of District 152 encouraged the Office of Legal Affairs to participate in a meeting with the Personnel Policies and Procedures Committee of University Staff shared governance to get input.

A positive reply to this suggestion was provided.

Vice Chancellor Taffora recognized Mr. Terry Fritter for the purpose of providing a report on behalf of the Bylaws Committee.

Mr. Fritter described the content and consideration given by the Committee, to an Amendment regarding the re-structuring of the Alternates beyond the ‘Active Alternate’ designation.

Representative of District 123 moved to amend section 1.02 of the Bylaws as it related to Alternates. A 2nd was heard to the motion.

Representative of District 119 stated her support for greater involvement for those engaged in shared governance, but inquired as to the need for such specific action when a number of Congressional Districts remain vacant.

Mr. Fritter clarified that the intent of the motion was to address the participation of those in districts in which there are multiple Alternates, rather than the issues of vacancies, which was not a matter discussed by the Bylaws Committee.

Vice Chancellor called for a vote on the motion. All in Favor. MOTION CARRIED.

Representative of District 123 moved to amend section b under ‘Vacancies’ in the Bylaws. A 2nd was heard to the motion. All in Favor. MOTION CARRIED.

Mr. Fritter described the content and the consideration given by the Committee, to a proposed Amendment regarding the change in responsibility for reimbursement requests.

Representative of District 110 moved to amend the Bylaws by striking language in Section 2.12 under ‘F’. A 2nd was heard. All in Favor. MOTION CARRIED.

Representative of District 110 moved to amend the Bylaws by adding a ‘Chapter 3’ with language regarding the processing of reimbursement and reports to Congress by the Office of the Secretary. A 2nd to the motion was heard.

Representative of District 162 inquired if funds allotted for reimbursement have consistently been fully allocated.

Reply came in the affirmative, including after increases were provided through the VCFA.

Vice Chancellor Taffora called for a vote on the motion. All in Favor. MOTION CARRIED.

Vice Chancellor Taffora recognized members of the Title and Total Compensation Project team for the purpose of providing an update to Congress.
Mr. Mark Walters informed the Congress of the campus commitment to instituting a $15.00 minimum wage, noting that over 400 employees are currently working below that level, and in addition reminded the Congress that the implementation of the project would not result in the reduction of wages.

Congress was informed that there had been strong participation in the forums by employees and that submitted questions are being posted to the TTC FAQ page.

Ms. Diane Blaskowski reviewed the project timeline and informed the Congress that all employees are now mapped.

Ms. Megan Owens reviewed the appeals process and noted that managers are being instructed to dedicate an hour per employee to discuss their title. The five steps of the appeal process were described, with it starting with an informal conversation with the supervisor and ultimately concluding, if need be, with a final review by the Chief Human Resources Officer.

Diane Blaskowski reported to the Congress that a summary of the results of the Benefits Preference Survey will be posted shortly, but that raw data will not be posted in order to protect confidentiality.

Representative of District 159 expressed concern regarding protections for employees who file appeals.

Reply came that it will be made clear to supervisors that retaliation, related to appeals, will not be tolerated and experienced employees should feel free to file an HIB claim which would be viewed as actionable.

Representative of District 159 inquired as to how the message gets to managers who are not participating in training.

Reply came that, while training is not mandatory, OHR maybe present during certain employee conversations.

Representative of District 159 inquired, if the appeals process could delay the roll out.

Reply was in the negative, as employees will remain as mapped until the appeals process runs its course.

Representative of District 108 inquired, at what point in the timeline a pay schedule will be attached to titles, as this would be useful for those who may fall into more than one title potentiality.

Reply came that mapping is blind to pay structure and it is a best practice to map to duties, rather than salary.

Representative of District 108 noted that a person may perform duties described in more than one title and different pay ranges may be attached to those titles.

Reply came that a dual role will typically be guided to where the main duties are.

Representative of District 108 inquired as to when salaries would be attached to titles.

Reply came that salaries will not be posted until the spring.

Representative of District 170 sought clarity in regard to options and stressed the value of retention.

Reply came that there will be more flexibility to promote and progress.
Representative of District 179 stated that their constituents have expressed concern about signing the SJD’s and sought clarity as to what an employee is being asked to agree to.

Reply came that people will not be locked in by signing an SJD, but they are asked to agree that what they are presented with is appropriate to them.

Representative of District 179 sought clarity in regard to the impact of years of service, believing that University Staff should be rewarded for longevity.

Reply came that everything is performance based.

Representative of District 179 expressed concern that this is not the current practice and that people have to move jobs if they want to improve compensation.

Reply came that pay plans will continue over the next two years to allow increases and markets will be examined to make sure pay is appropriate. Reply continued that, in order to put a job framework in place, competencies will need to be identified so those seeking advancement can acquire the necessary skills.

Representative of District 168 sought clarity in regard to progression and promotion.

Reply came that with promotion, it would be a different job and title, but it would not necessarily mean entering the Academic Staff.

Representative of District 168 stated that the process is leading to confusion among the staff.

Reply came to provide additional clarity that a person could be promoted within University Staff but could also move to Academic Staff. It was noted that the project is trying to address the penalizing structure that currently is in place in regard to benefits for those moving between University and Academic Staff.

Representative of District 142 noted that there were 18 year employees and expressed concerns regarding wage compression and stated that they had seen new employees brought in at higher salaries than existing long term employees.

Reply came that a long term strategy is to address deficiencies, but they won’t be identified until new titles are in place and then funding is located.

Representative of District 179 noted that Faculty and Academic staff view governance service as a positive but those supervising University Staff often view it as a negative and a competitor to operational needs.

Reply came that participating in shared governance could be viewed as a legitimate reason for placement on a particular salary range.

Representative of District 119 stated that they thought it was unfortunate that managers were not required to participate in training offered by the TTC Project and sought clarity on the strategy to deal with compression.

Reply came that salary structure is not yet developed and compression will be examined in the January-March time frame. Reply further came that Divisional HR may be present in conversations that are taking place where a manager has not received training.

Representative of District 119 asked if Divisional HR staff had been required to attend trainings.
Reply was in the negative.

Representative of District 150 expressed concern that the basic wage of Trades employees may be cut to provide greater benefits.

Reply came that the Trades employees provided feedback in forums regarding their options and those options are being examined.

Representative of District 150 stated that they felt the messaging in the forums was confusing as it is stated that there will be no wage reductions, but Trades employees could see a wage reduction if they opt for a plan for greater benefits.

Representative of District 122 inquired if the SJD library was now complete.

Reply came that the document posted will be changing as gaps are identified.

Representative of District 122 noted that his constituents have been unable to locate their SJD’s among what is currently posted.

Reply came that they should work with the HR manager.

Representative of District 122 sought clarity regarding the 50 cent floor.

Reply came that for those being awarded merit compensation, it would amount to no less than a 50 cent wage increase.

Representative of District 122 sought clarification that a signed SJD document will amount to an agreement with the description as provided by a supervisor.

Reply came in the affirmative.

Representative of District 122 stated that if this procedure is pursued, it will result in a large number of appeals, and persons should only be asked to provide a simple acknowledgement of the description.

Reply came that it is essentially how the situation will be executed and that there isn’t a document that requires a signature.

Representative of District 122 stated that he appreciated the clarification on this topic and asked for clarification in regard to the appeals process.

Reply came that Central OHR will only become involved in the appeals process if it reaches its final stage, and a consistently applied process across colleges, schools, and divisions should work to avoid that.

Representative of District 122 stated that his interpretation of the appeals process is that at each stage it is resolved by a HR representative.

Reply came that HR will work to make sure jobs are properly identified.

Representative of District 122 stated that when it comes to the appeals panel that includes a representative of shared governance that it should not be limited to someone who holds the same job type, because after these frequent briefings and forums, all members of University Staff can be considered subject matter experts on the TTC Project.
Reply was in agreement.

Vice Chancellor Taffora recognized Mr. Terry Fritter for the purpose of providing a report and accepting feedback.

Mr. Fritter thanked Vice Chancellor Taffora for acting as the presiding officer of the meeting.

Applause heard in the hall.

Mr. Fritter thanked the Office of the Secretary for their display in honor of veterans.

Mr. Fritter informed the Congress that the Chancellor, and/or the Chief of Staff to the Chancellor, will take part in the next meeting of the Central Committee.

Mr. Fritter noted the strong participation in the Campus Workers Collective celebration of Native American culture and heritage and thanked those members of Congress who took part.

Representative of District 179 expressed concern regarding the lack of inclusion of shared governance representatives in the UW-System President Search and Screen.

Reply came that President Cross will be on the Agenda for the December Congress meeting.

At 4:00PM, Vice Chancellor Taffora entertained a motion to adjourn. A motion was heard, as was a second. All in Favor. MOTION CARRIED.

Minutes prepared and submitted by: J. Lease / Secretary