REPORT ON THE ACADEMIC STAFF REPRESENTATIVE’S MEETING

The Academic Staff Representatives met on Friday, November 15 in Madison.

- The meeting began with an informal discussion of governance structure for academic staff across UW System. Roles, rights, and responsibilities of academic staff at each campus were shared. Different campuses have different approaches to shared governance.
- The next topic was academic staff salaries across UW System. There was an equity study done to compare salaries among UW System campuses, as well as among peer institutions. UW - Green Bay hired an outside consultant to evaluate its salary structure and the representative reported that they were not entirely happy with the report. UW – Oshkosh is losing jobs to industry and morale is low, so they decided to reward institutional loyalty by offering about 360 equity pay raises. One representative asked where the 1% pay raise came from and was told that it came from internal funds. Another representative mentioned that the number of failed searches on campus has been increasing because of low salaries and this might be a “wake-up call” illustrating that UW System is becoming a less attractive place to work.
- The topic of contract types and lengths was discussed. Different campuses have different philosophies about using indefinite status contracts and rolling horizon contracts. There was a question about how the 1% pay raise was applied to IAS. Some representatives reported that IAS with terminal contracts at their campuses did not receive the pay raise. Other campuses awarded the 1% pay raise “across the board” for all IAS who met solid performance or beyond. This pay raise was applied to base salary, but was funded by internal reallocation rather than by state money.
- One representative asked about campus policies regarding tuition reimbursement for educational advancement. According to the web-site, this is a benefit offered by UW System, but each campus makes its own policies. Concern about “truth-in-advertising”.
- There was a conversation about using CUPA codes for academic staff positions to make salary comparisons with peer institutions. This can be difficult because of the variety of positions and the way that they are titled.
- The representative from Madison reported that from 20101 to 2011 the number of its academic staff members with five or more years of continuous service declined from approximately 3600 to 1944; indefinite status contracts dropped from 2.8% to 1.9% of the academic staff. There is language in Chapter 36 regarding the role of academic staff in determining criteria for rolling horizon and indefinite status contracts.

The Academic Staff representatives joined the Faculty representatives for a joint session.

- The deadline for applications for UW System president was November 18, 2013 and first cuts would be made on November 22, 2013. The Board of Regents would select the final list of 10 to 12 semifinalists the first week of January 2014, with five finalists chosen from that list.
- The system-wide committee to address Remedial Education will be announced in December.
- A 12-member committee from UW System and the Technical College system will discuss the transfer credit agreement concerning issues of alignment and rigor.
- President Reilly addresses the representatives for the last time and thanked everyone for the hard work and cooperation during his tenure.
Supervisor training at UW System. OSER used to be responsible for this training, but UW System will now take responsibility. It will apply to Classified staff who are supervisors of other classified employees. The program will require two days of training and cover a myriad of topics.

The issue of excluding IAS from the 1% pay raise was raised. Distribution of that pay raise was left to each campus and UW System did not interfere because the entire 1% came from reallocation of funds from each institution’s budget.

A question about UIA (i.e., life insurance eligibility) was addressed. This is not part of the state’s benefit package and not all instructional staff contribute to the program.

The question of the 12-month pay plan was asked again. The Interim Vice President for Finance stated that this issue is much less important to UW System than it is to employees. Other issues are more challenging and require attention. If the issue is ever addressed, there might not be an individual option; either we get nine paychecks or we get 12 paychecks. No decision has been made about the possibility of ten paychecks for those on academic year contracts.

There was significant discussion about tuition. The GPR fee/tuition allocation (102 dollars) to the campuses takes almost 1/3 of the $6 billion dollar budget; slightly more than half comes from tuition while the rest comes from GPR. Each biennium requires an estimate of the “unavoidable” cost, which is dictated by the state to fully fund GPR base compensation (i.e., salary and fringe benefits). This leads to a discussion with DOA to determine what the state will contribute to GPR. This will determine how much more tuition revenue will be needed to fund the “cost to continue”. Each campus is evaluated to determine its need and this information is shared with the state. This raised the question of how much tuition revenue each campus needs to generate. The basis for that tuition decision depends on the tuition from the previous year, according to some kind of “blueprint” that was established in the 1970s. Really confusing!

After lunch, the representatives met again in joint session.

The Board of Regents will address the issue of associate degrees at its February meeting.

The remediation committee met on November 15 and decided that their executive committee should consist of three co-chairs and a member from UW System. This is going to be a big job because the perception is that UW System needs to fix K-12 education. Regent policies and System policies will be reviewed and best practices from within the institutions will be identified. A final report will be provided in the near future. This committee is going to be highly visible because of its high profile.

Discussion about the 30-credit General Education agreement among UW System, UW Colleges, and the Technical Colleges. Meetings have occurred with UWEC and CVTC; MATC and UWM; UWO, UWFV, and FVTC. There are significant challenges in identifying 30 credits which would satisfy a distribution model. It would be preferable to identify more than 30 credits to allow some flexibility for students and institutions, but that might be very difficult for some of the technical colleges to accomplish.

The final topic was the status of shared governance. Mark Nook, Ray Cross, Chancellor Blank, Senator Vos and others have been participating in a series of dinner meetings with several Republican legislators and UW System officials. Each meeting addresses a different topic with the ultimate goal of rebuilding trust between UW System and the legislature. IT is uncertain whether any faculty are involved.