

[In these minutes: 1. Chair's Report, 2. Process for Maintaining an Independent Health Benefits Program]

## **HEALTH PLAN TASK FORCE (HPTF)**

### **MINUTES**

**THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 1999**

**10:00 - 11:30**

**433 JOHNSTON HALL**

[These minutes reflect discussion and debate at a meeting of a committee of the University of Minnesota Senate or Twin Cities Campus Assembly; none of the comments, conclusions, or actions reported in these minutes represent the view or, nor are they binding on the Senate or Assembly, the Administration, or the Board of Regents.]

**PRESENT:** Dick McGehee (Chair), Linda Aaker, Avner Ben-Ner, Richard Butler, Amos Deinard, Keith Dunder, Robert Fahnhorst, Bart Finzel, Priscilla Pope, Robert Sonkowsky, Larry Thompson, Gavin Watt.

**REGRETS:** David Hamilton.

**ABSENT:** Harlan Smith.

### **1. CHAIR'S REPORT**

Professor McGehee said that he had reported to the FCC after the last HPTF meeting. FCC was frustrated with the news of rising health care costs, but the idea of hiring a consultant was supported. FCC also suggested that the process for separating be thoroughly discussed by the committee. Therefore, Linda Aaker will be presenting information on this topic today.

He has also reported to the Regents since the last meeting, and was met with the same frustration. They seem to be supportive of separating from the State, but they want to be sure that all possible alternatives are thought of in advance.

### **2. PROCESS FOR MAINTAINING AN INDEPENDENT HEALTH BENEFITS PROGRAM**

Linda Aaker distributed a handout to the committee on the systems regulations for the Texas A & M Benefits Advisory Committee and its specific role.

Professor McGehee noted that the state laws for Texas A & M are different from the state laws for the University of Minnesota. Minnesota laws restrict bargaining to bargaining units, which may affect the ability of an employee advisory committee to meet and confer with the administration on health benefits issues.

Linda Aaker also pointed out that she is not sure what role the Senate and its committee would play under such a structure. For Texas A & M, the SEBAC is elected, not appointed, unlike most Senate committees. There is an appointed committee, but it is appointed by the President and serves as his/her advisory committee. It would also be necessary for the HPTF to understand the boundaries of the Minnesota State Laws before recommending a committee like the one at Texas A & M.

Professor McGehee suggested that Professor Morrison could appoint a representative from the Law School to help with Labor Law issues or the General Counsel's Office could help. An advisory committee could mean increased flexibility in terms of composition and duties, but it would depend on what office (President, Regents, Senate) would support its efforts.

Members of the committee made the following comments:

- If the University separates from the state health plan, then this includes dental, long-term disability, and life insurance
- If the University does not separate from the state, then it needs to keep lobbying, but the continuing participation for the HPTF in state negotiations is unclear
- If the University does separate from the state, then a mechanism needs to be developed to handle the process
- Ask a member of SEBAC to talk to HPTF and answer what they would do differently now
- Even though the President wants good benefits for everyone, the University needs to look at its budget in terms of other financial goals
- Since AFSCME has reported to the committee in the past that they do not want to separate from the state, this issue should be discussed with them again

Keith Dunder said that he would compile a brief analysis of the legal parameters and restrictions regarding employment law for Minnesota to provide the committee with definition and direction. He will also have colleagues at the Law School look at the analysis before it is brought to the committee.

### **3. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- SEGIP/Joint Labor Management Committee meeting will be on Tuesday, September 20 from 10 - 1.
- Bob Fahnhorst, Dick McGehee, and Carol Carrier met last week and suggested that open forums be set-up on all campuses to provide a HPTF update
- The HPTF web site needed to be updated since it is now a year old.
- RFPs will be arriving shortly. Monday, October 18 and Tuesday, October 19, 108 Donhowe Building has been reserved for review of the RFPs. On October 28 and 29 interviews will be conducted in 215 Donhowe Building. Professor McGehee asked for any volunteers to review the RFPs.

- October 7 meeting has been cancelled; next scheduled meeting is October 21 at 10 a.m.
- October 26 and 27 are the Health Care Fairs in Coffman and the St. Paul Student Center

With no further questions, Professor McGehee thanked all members for attending and adjourned the meeting.

Rebecca Hippert  
University Senate