

CAPA MEETING

Friday, March 27, 2009

9:00 ~ 11:30 a.m.

Walter Library, room 101

PRESENT

Representatives: Neil Anderson, Richard Brown, Christine DeZelar-Tiedman, Susan Doerr, Fang Du, Pam Enrici, Sally Euson, Michael, Fridgen, Ann Hagen, Cynthia Hagley, Kirsten Jansen, Jessica Kuecker Grotjohn, Susan Larson, Caitrin Mullan, David Nicolai, Steven Pearthree, William Roberts, Caroline Rosen, Laura Seifert, Larry Storey, Andrew Swain, Travis Trautman, Sarah Waldemar, Laura Weber, Sheryl Weber-Paxton, Julie Westlund

Senate Representatives: Elaine Challacombe, Wendy Friedmeyer (for Laura Seifert), Barbara Jensen

Non-Representatives: David Bernstein (chair of R&G committee)

Alternates: Jodie Double, Jaime Gearheart, Erling Kurtti, Scott Madill (for Kelly Hall), Christine Mahoney, Rebecca Moss (for Laura Seifert until 10:10), Theodore Peck (for Frank Douma), Kimberly Simon

ABSENT/REGRETS

Regrets: Laurene Christensen, William Craig, Frank Douma, Kelly Hall, Dawn Hoover, Mary Jetter, Jill Trites, Pam Stenhjem (chair)

Absent: Rand Rasmussen, Nathan Tesch

Guests: Nan Wilhelmson, director, Office of Human Resources

Bill Roberts filled in as chair in Pam Stenhjem's absence. He called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. Introductions were made. The March agenda and February minutes were approved unanimously.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

Budget ~ Bill Roberts: Roberts announced that there will no longer be food at meetings and that the committee is trying to conserve money even though they are currently well under budget for the 2008-2009 academic year. He stated that the budget cut for the 2009-2010 academic year is \$3,000. He said that he is not sure about the committee budget for the future but it is in good shape for now.

Executive Report ~ Bill Roberts: Roberts told members that President Bruininks attended the last CAPA Executive meeting and discussed the Regents Scholarship. He said that the President intends on making an announcement to the University community within a couple of weeks once a decision has been finalized on the new guidelines of the scholarship but did not want the meeting conversation made public until then. The President has received many emails from the University community regarding the scholarship. Some emails support the change while others do not. The President stated that he remains open to other options for budget retention.

The President briefly discussed the possibility of a furlough or school shut down during the 2009-2010 academic year. He said that because implementation requires a great deal of planning, it is not likely to occur this coming academic year. It will remain a possibility in the future and he will address the University community if and when that time comes.

Roberts said that the Benefits and Compensation Committee discussed impending University budget possibilities for the coming biennium. He said that stimulus funds will be earmarked for specific use, meaning what stimulus funds used in the next biennium will not be available in the following biennium. He said the final status of the budget will probably not be known until the end of the legislature in June.

Communications ~ Julie Westlund & Susan Doerr: Susan said website needs to be updated with Outstanding Unit Award information. She stated that she has fallen a bit behind due to a family emergency. Everything else is going well.

Representation & Governance ~ David Bernstein: Officer and senator elections will be held next month at the April 17th CAPA meeting. There are nine senator seats expiring. He has received verbal interest in all positions except for chair elect but has yet to receive nomination forms. He noted the importance of receiving the forms as soon as possible in order to have time to process them. The committee is still in need of a chair elect nominee.

Bernstein mentioned to members that the Representation and Governance Committee will be hosting a forum on April 8th from noon until 2:00 p.m. at 325 Educational Sciences building. He said there will be three to four presenters talking about unit level groups; what they have accomplished, what they do, what they have yet to accomplish. He encouraged members to attend at their leisure and to RSVP via email if at all possible as there will be pizza and he will need numbers to order. Attendees do not need to attend for the whole duration of the forum.

A motion will be made to the Senate to change the language on the Academic Freedom and Responsibility Policy. Bernstein read the policy to members regarding freedom to speak out against institutional policies without reprimand. The requested change was that the policy become clarified that it not only pertains to faculty but all employees in governance at the University. Bernstein said that because the policy came to the attention of the executive committee with little time for action, there was no time to bring it before the whole committee to vote. Therefore, the executive committee voted on it and he asked members to understand the decision that was made under the time constraint given. He apologized but could not see another logical way to do it. Members seemed accepting and there was no expressed disgruntlement.

Constitutional Changes ~ Neil Anderson: Mr. Anderson sent out a draft of suggested changes to the constitution and bylaws on March 15th and has not received any comments. He asked if there were questions but there were none. He said there needed to be an affirmative vote by at least two-third committee majority to make amendments to the constitution. A motion was made to accept the changes made to the constitution and seconded. The changes were approved unanimously. A motion was made to accept the changes to bylaws, it was seconded and approved unanimously. Anderson noted that there only needed to be a 50% majority rule of all voting members attending the meeting on policies and procedures. A motion was made to accept the suggested changes to policies and procedures it was seconded and approved unanimously.

Succession Plan ~ David Bernstein: Bernstein stated that he did receive feedback on the current succession plan document and sent a revised version to members on the Representation and Governance Committee (R&G) on March 13th and they approved it. He said that there was one minor change to the document; Roberts thought the document should not be gender specific so it was neutralized. He briefed the succession plan in regards to position duties, timeline, etc. and outlined the R&G committee's role. With regard to the compensation issue, the chair elect will receive a \$2,500 stipend to be used in facilitating the work of chair elect. The total compensation for the chair elect's unit will be \$12,500 within a two year period assuming that the chair elect follows through with their commitment as chair the following year. Members asked if the chair elect can vote. After a brief deliberation, Roberts and Bernstein agreed that it would be a conflict of interest and the chair elect would no longer be in a voting category, i.e. a representative, so the final answer was no, they cannot vote.

Roberts expressed concern about the term for the chair position. He said from what he has witnessed, it takes approximately one year for a chair to get to know all of the committee members and their duties and does not think one year is long enough to be successful. Bernstein said that the R&G committee could not figure out how to extend the duration of the chair position without extending supporting positions. He also pointed out that the current proposal of a three-year commitment, chair elect, chair, ex-officio, is already difficult to fill. It was pointed out that with the addition of the chair elect, the incoming chair would already have a great deal of knowledge and networking skills, which was the purpose of implementing that position. Roberts recognized that but said in his experience that he has not seen that system work very well. Ms. Enrici agreed with Roberts but does see that asking for a four-year commitment will make it difficult to fill the position. Bernstein exemplified the Civil Service Committee who currently uses the proposed plan and stated that it is working well for them. He suggested taking a vote on it and trying the proposed system for one year and revising it as needed in 2010. He made a motion to provisionally implement the current three-year proposed succession plan for one-year, it was seconded and passed unanimously. Bernstein stated that all they need now is a nominee for chair elect.

Regents Scholarship ~ Bill Roberts: Roberts briefed members on the emails that Chair Stenjhem has received regarding the proposed cut to the Regents Scholarship. He said that the executive committee members want feedback on how members feel in regards to the proposed cut. Ms. Gearhart said that she has heard that there is a large percentage of people using the scholarship that drop their classes mid-semester, which becomes a loss for the University. Roberts stated that the President is also concerned at the approximate 50% of the people that

leave the University once they have earned their degrees and at what cost to the University? Roberts stated that there will be a tax credit that will help with educational costs considerably but one member stated that those with lower incomes may not be able to pay for tuition and books, then wait for tax time to come around to receive their credit. Mr. Trautman suggested that those who drop their class, should pay for it. Many members agreed that there should be a consequence to dropping courses. There is a concern that long-term negative effects will be seen as a consequence to this benefit cut. Roberts said that constituents are varied in their opinions and not everyone opposes the proposition. He said some feel that a cut to the scholarship would be better than a cut to health care or another more prominently used benefit. Ms. Hagen agreed with that and expressed that she does not think the committee should expend effort toward a political comment on this issue. Many members stated that employees within their units were split in their feelings on this issue. Bernstein said that the matter is not the cut to the benefit but the fact that it primarily affects the lowest paid employees disproportionately. He thinks some employees are agreeing to the cut out of fear so that other things will not be cut but added that he thinks administration will cut other benefits as well, whether they cut the scholarship or not. Ms. Wilhelmson said that the President is considering only a 10% charge for those working on their baccalaureate degree and 25% thereafter. Roberts told members that he would write a statement to administration on behalf of the committee by next week. Included in the statement will be the support of the committee to require some form of commitment or financial reimbursement from those who sign up for and then drop classes.

Benefits & Compensation ~ Bill Roberts: Roberts informed members that the Benefits and Compensation Committee (BAC) discussed financial cuts to the Health Care Savings Plan (HCSP). He said that President Bruininks wants to save \$4 million on health plans for the next academic year. The President expects increases to health plans of up to 8%. Administration plans to pay 6% leaving the 2% for employees to make up. Members discussed various scenarios such as increasing premiums and questioning whether sick people should pay more than healthy people or vice versa, giving employees incentives to use generic drugs when at all possible, etcetera. Ms. Larson asked if there were any statistics regarding the success of current wellness programs. Roberts stated that there is and they show that while some of the wellness programs are very successful, others are not worth keeping, in his opinion. Roberts told members that the Senate voted down moving 2% from retirement funds to the HCSP but that the vote was really towards an amendment to the language used in governing documents, not the transfer act itself. He does not think people knew what exactly they were voting for. He encouraged members to talk to people within their units and think about their position on the HCSP and the executive committee will plan to conduct a survey in May to get a sense of constituents' positions on this matter.

Roberts asked members if they reviewed their vacation hours now listed on their payroll receipts for accuracy. No one cited any inaccuracies. Roberts said that he has not heard anything new on the issue of the 27 pay periods coming in the next academic year but he thinks the solution will not be met until the following year. He said he would inform members once he has heard a final decision.

Roberts commented on a conversation that was held at the last B&C meeting regarding whether employees should garner vacation pay if they have been fired. Wilhelmson clarified that the conversation began regarding severance benefits and changes made by the IRS requiring taxation of retirement benefits should the employee leave prior to retirement. It turned to vacation payout upon dismissal. Members discussed the policy and Wilhelmson said that the policies surrounding that are being reviewed by administration but that currently civil service and bargaining units pay out earned vacation after termination. The concern raised was consistency among employee groups.

KUDOS, COMPLAINTS, CONCERNS

Mr. Anderson said it would be advantageous for CAPA to work with the University administration to communicate to the state that the current financial model for the University is harmful. He pointed out that the University will be operating next fiscal year at the financial state funding level it was in 2006, which is substantial. Roberts predicts that by the end of the six-year financial model in 2012, the University will be much smaller in staff and students. He does not see success with the current proposed model because the numbers do not add up.

Mr. Roberts adjourned the meeting at 11:24.

Lisa Towry
University Senate Office