

## **Talent Development & Human Resources**

### **Minutes**

February 7, 2018 – 3:00 PM

Leigh Hall Room 416

Meeting Called by: Elizabeth Erickson

Type of Meeting: Talent & Development UC Committee

Attendees: Elizabeth Erickson, Sarah Kelly (present for Bill Viau), Alisa Benedict O'Brien, Mary Jo MacCracken, Kathy Rex, Joe Minocchi, Melanie McGurr, and Brittany Hartman. Missing with notice: Peggy Walchalk and Bill Viau.

Dr. Erickson called the meeting to order and made a motion to approve the November Minutes. Motion was seconded and Minutes were unanimously approved.

#### **Subcommittee Reports:**

ITL/UA Training: subcommittee met December 14th and reached out to ITL. ITL has made it clear that they are faculty-focused for the trainings they will provide. SEAC and CPAC will reach out to their constituencies and inquire about types of training/offerings employees would like to see offered here at UA. We also noted that this aligns with our issue brief to consider tuition remission for professional development courses. Sarah Kelly noted that there are some professional development courses included in UA Solutions. There are limitations, but some classes are included in tuition fee remission. A catalog is released each fall and spring (online). The issue becomes having sufficient enrollment for each course (ex: if not enough students enrolled, a UA employee would not be able to take the course free of charge.) Jarrod Tudor is over UA Solutions. Subcommittee will reach out to Dean Tudor.

Health benefits/Incentives subcommittee met December 13<sup>th</sup>. Each subcommittee member will be doing research on what benefits and incentives programs other universities and colleges offer. We will also schedule a joint meeting with the Recreation & Wellness Committee. Liz will contact Rec & Wellness. We will contact Miami, Bowling Green, CSU, Kent and Duke as recommended by Sarah.

Dr. Erickson invited the committee to be present at UC next Tuesday at 3:00 PM for our Committee report.

Next, we turned our attention to a topic submission.

Topic or Issue Description: One of the best benefits of working at UA is the tuition remission for employees and dependents. However, UA Solutions courses and professional development courses are not included in the current educational benefits. Many of the courses and topics would be directly beneficial to employees in their current positions, individual departments and UA as a whole. Many of the larger local employers offer in-house business and professional development opportunities and certifications as they engage workers and provide innumerable benefits to the organization as the trainees apply their new skills. A quick search through the library (Business Source Complete; key words "professional development" and "organizations" and "providing") yields multiple results touting the benefits, as does a quick google search. For example, providing LEAN, PMP, and/or Six Sigma education/certification opportunities to faculty and staff could potentially further the University's Stabilize, Invest and Grow strategy.

Specific actions requested: Review the potential pros (and cons) of allowing employees to substitute UA Solutions training, especially training that would be beneficial to their position and UA as a whole, in place of educational benefit for traditional credit courses (possibly just an employee benefit, not dependents, and the cost of the UA Solutions course could be compared to the average cost of 6 credit hours/2 for-credit courses so that costs are comparable).

CPAC has discussed the desire to be trained on various day-to-day platforms including PeopleSoft, etc. and also for leadership and management training with the desire to be able to move up/be promoted.

Next Topic Submission for consideration: We noted that the Budget Committee was also asked to review this submission.

Topic or Issue Description: At the December CPAC meeting, members reviewed a letter submitted by SEAC to University Council detailing the concerns their constituents have raised regarding compensation. As CPAC is charged with representing Contract Professionals to the administration of The University of Akron, we moved to write this letter, both in support of SEAC concerns, and to address the very similar concerns of our Contract Professional constituents.

We would like to begin by acknowledging the positive momentum that is building on our campus. With President Wilson's leadership, and the hard work of staff, contract professionals, and faculty across campus, we have seen growth in fundraising, an improved student attitude, and mended relationships with the larger Akron community, as well as better enrollment numbers than we otherwise would have seen. We are grateful for the administration's vision and efforts toward these ends.

With all of this momentum, it is important to reiterate what SEAC has stated in their letter: "Increases in compensation can serve several functions...to reward and acknowledge the increased contributions of established employees [and] to help retain those employees that would otherwise take that skill and experience to other organizations." Those staff and contract professionals who remain are here for the right reasons. They care about our students and the success of this University. When we have been asked to do more with less, we have risen to the challenge and cut spending, taken on additional responsibilities, and worked extra hours without a second thought – to be sure that our students receive the same outstanding service that they have grown accustomed to as part of this Zips family.

We remain grateful for the additional vacation days over winter break and the one-time financial bonus in October. However, we agree with SEAC's assertion that "they do not help resolve long term financial issues for employees." We have seen wage stagnation over many years which not only makes it difficult to retain current employees, but equally difficult to recruit replacements for the ones who leave. Additionally, the inequities created between employees who are members of a bargaining unit and those who are not has harmed employee morale, and this will only worsen over time.

Recognizing that the University continues to face significant financial challenges, and that the budget turnaround in 2017 was accomplished through many one-time solutions, we believe that now is the appropriate time to discuss and establish a plan for reinstituting normal compensation adjustments for those employees who are not part of a bargaining unit. As University finances continue to stabilize, our Contract Professional constituents need some sense of what conditions must be obtained by the March budget deadline in order for them to be considered in annual pay raises alongside bargaining unit employees.

Specific actions requested: We are asking for the support of university administration to provide a plan prior to spring break and a timeframe for addressing the compensation inequity for contract professionals,

particularly in light of the many years since any adjustment for CPs. Any assistance the University Council can provide would be sincerely appreciated.

Sarah noted that CPs are down campus-wide by 20%. Sarah is going to pull resignations for CPs and staff since the layoffs and share with our committee. Dr. Erickson will draft a letter in support of CPAC's request and circulate to our committee. Our goal will be to submit the letter of support to UC.

LGBTQ Topic Submission:

Our committee will touch base with Jolene Lane and John Messina to see what UA is already doing and provide updates for "safe space" trainings. We will pick up here at our next meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 4:15PM.