

# **Employee Benefits Committee Monthly Meeting**

## **March 18, 2020**

### **Attendees:**

- Margaret Radcliffe, Chair
- Jennifer Earley, Staff Senate (via Zoom)
- Richard Ashley, Staff Senate (via Zoom)
- Marie Bliss, ex officio (via Zoom)
- LaTawnya Burleson, Staff Senate (via Zoom)
- Samuel Doak, Faculty Senate (via Zoom)
- Patricia Donovan, Commission on Staff Policies and Affairs (CSPA) Representative (via Zoom)
- Sara Leftwich, ex officio (via Zoom)
- Leisa Shelor, ex officio (via Zoom)
- Eric Smith, Faculty Senate (via Zoom)
- Sue Teel, Staff Senate (via Zoom)
- Amanda Hill, Administrative Support

### **Opening:**

The regular meeting of the Employee Benefits Committee was called to order at 2:06 p.m. on Wednesday, March 18, 2020 in NEC room 3600 by Chairperson Margaret Radcliffe.

### **Approval of Minutes**

The minutes of the previous meeting held February 19, 2020 were unanimously approved as distributed via email and are available on the EBC SharePoint site.

### **Appoint representative to Employee Dependent and Spouse Scholarship Committee for 2020-2021**

Jennifer Earley has accepted the role of representative to Employee Dependent and Spouse Scholarship Committee for 2020-2021, and Margaret has notified university governance of this appointment.

### **Leave Subcommittee Report**

Several spreadsheets with compiled leave benefits comparison information from Virginia Tech and other institutions were distributed to committee members prior to the meeting via email and were also posted on the EBC SharePoint site. Margaret reviewed the "VT Sick and Non-Sick Leave Comparison" spreadsheet first. Categories B, C, and A from the spreadsheet are grandfathered plans, with B likely including many retired employees as it includes restricted faculty hired in 1981 or prior. Category C includes classified staff hired prior to 1999, so there may still be a number of people active in that status. Category A is the next newest with faculty hired after 1981. Categories D and E are the most current programs. Margaret asked which comparisons the group would like to make a case about and suggested picking a couple that really resonate. Pat suggests everyone review and double-check the data before any case for recommendations is made. Specifically, she suggests focusing on VT data in categories A, C, and E that are relatively standard and can be compared to other institutions. Per Leisa, categories A, C, D, and E still apply, but she will forward the information to the leave team to review for accuracy. Margaret stated that category E applies

to the majority of university staff, while category A includes calendar year and regular year faculty. Category D may be too complicated and difficult to compare with other institutions that do not have a similar category, so the focus will remain on A and E and keeping staff and faculty separate with a further focus on institutions who do the same. Pat reiterated the importance of ensuring the data is correct and stated that some institutions combine the family personal leave and sick leave as one. Margaret agreed that for comparison purposes, it would be best to combine family personal leave and sick leave in one category since it is included in the VSDP plan. Margaret proposed using days per year as the standard unit of comparison, which Rick agreed would be more useful in differentiating disparities rather than using hours. Margaret finds that staff sick leave does not really increase until after 20 years, and Pat suggested adding in a new category to capture that information. Since the differentiation for faculty annual leave is 20 years and staff receives an increase every five years, Margaret suggested adding a really senior column to capture this data.

Margaret will schedule a one-hour conference call with Pat and Leisa to review the spreadsheet. If anyone else would like to be included, let Margaret know. When reviewing the spreadsheet and charts for accuracy, let Margaret and Pat know if there is anything particularly interesting in terms of data. Also, Margaret asked for an overview of the tuition benefits to include in the year-end report. This will be a brief summary of tuition benefits provided for peer universities from the existing spreadsheet, and Jennifer agreed to compile this information.

## **New Business**

Regarding leave issues, Rick asked if there is an ombudsperson who could be contacted if someone feels they are not being treated properly. Margaret confirmed that there is an ombudsperson who is currently giving presentations across campus. Rick asked if the ombudsperson should be the point of contact for issues, and Margaret confirmed that the answer is yes, although it depends on the specific issue. For example, HR could give better policy information, but the ombudsperson would be better suited if it is a supervisory issue.

## **Adjournment:**

Meeting was adjourned at 2:44 p.m. by Chairperson Margaret Radcliffe. The next general meeting will be at 2:00 p.m. on Wednesday, April 15, 2020 in NEC room 3600.