

Minutes for the Employee Benefits Committee of October 23, 2017

I. Call to Order

- a. Chairwoman Mary Christian called to order the regular meeting of the Employee Benefits Committee at 2:00 PM on Monday, October 23rd in Room 105, Hutcheson Hall. The following persons were present: Mary Christian, Sara Leftwich, Bradley Klein, Greg Amacher, Melissa Thomas, Zach Harris, Ashley Jewell, and Susan Hughes. Absent: Betty Wilkins, Katrina Loan, Kim Dulaney

II. Old Business

- a. CFA needs 2 more Faculty representatives. The Commission on Faculty Affairs/Faculty Senate require two more members. Bradley Klein and Greg Amacher agreed that it was tough to find representation, but would work on it. 2) Mandatory holiday leave- the annual report from the previous Employee Benefits Committee Chair (Dwight Veihland) included a recommendation to President Sands to reconsider this policy.

III. New Business

- a. Discussion began with introductions, and discussing the above referenced annual report which summarized issues the 2016/17 Employee Benefits Committee reviewed.
- b. Greg Amacher presented a concern forwarded by the Commission on Faculty Affairs that the retirement options available to faculty are lacking when compared to peer institutions. Many peer institutions continue to pay the employer portion of the health retirement cost, but Virginia's retirement offerings do not allow for this. According to CFA, the retirement options are causing them to lose valuable candidates, and specifically the School of Engineering has lost candidates to Penn State for this reason.
- c. The meeting moved forward with discussing the mandatory holiday leave policy highlighted as one of the issues in the 2016/17 annual report. Susan Hughes offered that, according to Kirk Wehner, now retired AVP in HR, the implementation of the mandatory leave was based on projected energy savings from building closures in conjunction with a majority of personnel taking leave during that time. To date, there has been no documentation available that verifies energy savings. Mary Christian brought up that the winter classes that take place during the mandatory leave period are mostly online, and there are likely cost savings. She also added that it's possible that providing benefits to classified staff might need to be taken into consideration on any further review. Bradley Klein brought up a point discussed during a prior meeting; employees from different cultures resent being forced to take leave during this period, and the University is much more diverse now than when the policy was originally implemented. Mary Christian brought up that, during a land grant meeting she attended, most of the organizations also utilize this mandatory leave policy. Greg Amacher said that not all faculty leave is calculated (AY does not apply, and CY does). Susan Hughes brought forward an action item to find out how the mandatory leave policy is applied to those who start late in the year without having accrued the leave for the mandatory period. The committee agreed that the leave issue affects Staff more so than Faculty. There was no clarity about whether President Sands would support a re-examination of the policy.
- d. Mary Christian brought up that the Employee Spouse and Dependent Children's Scholarship Committee needs representation from the committee, which is a 3 year appointment. Ashley Jewell volunteered to be the representative.
- e. The committee then touched on a few other concerns. Benefits should be benchmarked with peer institutions to understand where Virginia Tech actually falls in comparison. Greg Amacher will send a list of peer institutions. Sara Leftwich mentioned a new daycare facility opening as well as the limited childcare options currently available to employees. Missy Thomas did not have an update from the Staff Senate. There was some discussion about the preferred time for

Committee meetings moving forward. General consensus was that later afternoon on Wednesdays was preferred, and meeting at NEC was easier for parking. Mary Christian will follow up with dates/times for future meetings.

IV. Adjournment

- a. Chairwoman Mary Christian adjourned the meeting at 3:00pm.