

VILLANOVA UNIVERSITY

Faculty Congress Salary, Benefits, Terms of Employment Committee

Meeting: 9 April 2003

In attendance: Eileen Berens; John Groch; Richard Jacobs; Michael Licata;
Bijan Mobasseri

Absent: Michael Hones*

MINUTES

1. Review of Minutes: The minutes of the January 26th meeting were approved.
2. Chair Activities: Fr. Jacobs provided an overview of the activities he has been engaged in since the last meeting of the FC/SBT Committee. These included: FC ExCom meetings; the meetings between the University Senate ExCom and President as well as the Board of Trustees' ExCom; a meeting with the HR Department regarding insurance contribution and the adjunct faculty questions raised concerning benefits; a report of the VPAA's CATS Committee activities; and, the list of peer/overlap/benchmark institutions.
 - The FC ExCom approved the draft goals submitted by the FC/SBT Committee. The next step in the Committee's work involves identifying strategies and project champions so that these goals achieved during the term of this Faculty Congress.
 - The FC/SBT Committee reviewed a letter describing adjunct faculty benefits submitted to the University Senate ExCom for presentation to the President and the Board of Trustees' Ex Com. In addition, the FC/SBT

* = Chair notified of absence

Committee reviewed the President's response to the questions submitted by the University Senate ExCom. Discussion focused primarily upon the statements regarding benefit reduction and discrimination. The members of the FC/SBT wondered whether some of the benefits identified are sales promotions for the companies involved (in particular, Ford Motor Company) than they are actual benefits for the faculty.

- Faculty frequently raise questions about salary, benefits, and terms of employment. For the most part, these questions have been previously answered on several occasions by the HR department through several venues: *Blueprints*, *Pathways*, and emails. Faculty are encouraged to read these publications which are intended to notify faculty, staff, and administration about important policy matters related to salary, benefits, and terms of employment. In the future, these items could also be published in *Facultas*.

That having been stated, Fr. Jacobs met with Lisa Valosky to discuss several matters raised by faculty members:

The insurance contribution: First, and most importantly, based upon market conditions, the employer (in this case, the University) decides what benefits will accrue to employees as a condition of employment. Thus, benefits are not classified as salary and not subject to tax. The contribution to medical/dental insurance, for example, is not a “cash benefit” but a “benefit” associated with employment by the University and is not taxable income to faculty.

For the sake of discussion, however, were faculty to elect to take a “cash benefit” in lieu of the insurance

benefit, the cash benefit would become taxable income. This would be the case, in particular, for those faculty who are already covered by a spouse's insurance plan. Furthermore, the University would have to pay FICA and Social Security in addition to the cash benefit. In turn, this would increase the costs associated with a benefit and raises the question about whether a particular benefit (in this instance, an insurance contribution) would be worth the cost to the University and to the faculty as well.

Second, because of the diversity of insurance plans that are currently available to the faculty, how would the dollar value of the "cash benefit" be determined and how would it be accounted for? For example, some faculty elect more expensive plans and others elect less expensive plans. Moreover, what is the guarantee that the cash benefit would be used by individual faculty members for medical/dental insurance? And, what would happen in the instance that the cash benefit was not used for medical/dental insurance? Would faculty members be willing, as a condition of receiving the cash benefit, to sign a waiver to prove that they had medical/dental insurance?

Third, a cash benefit would weaken the group purchasing power and discount currently provided to the faculty. In reality, a cash benefit would increase the cost of medical/dental insurance borne by the faculty in general.

Fourth, medical/dental insurance coverage typically has a waiting period for pre-existing conditions. Faculty who elect to enroll in other plans than those offered by the University would not be covered and would have to

pay medical/dental expenses out-of-pocket during that waiting period. Would faculty members be willing to risk that possible scenario?

Overall, a proposal for a “cash benefit” is, in reality, a proposal for an increase in salary, carrying with it additional costs to the University *and* faculty. The negatives to the faculty of a “cash benefit” might well outweigh the positives associated with such a proposal.

Adjunct faculty participation in the University’s benefits programs: Prior to August 31, 1999, adjunct faculty could purchase benefits. As of that date, the Board of Trustees’ policy terminated that program although all adjunct faculty then enrolled in the University’s medical/dental program were grandfathered into the health plan. Currently, eleven adjunct members of the faculty are enrolled in the plan.

One of the factors involved in this change in policy was the utilization of that benefit by adjunct faculty (only fifteen adjunct faculty were availing themselves of the benefit). For the most part, older adjunct faculty members take advantage of this benefit. Because there were not sufficient numbers of younger adjunct faculty taking advantage of this benefit, had the net effect of driving up the cost of medical/dental insurance for full-time faculty members.

A second factor involved the administrative nightmare caused by this providing this benefit for so few adjunct faculty. That is, the costs associated with collecting the premium, tracking billings, and paying them increased the costs associated with the benefit. Not only did the costs of this benefit become prohibitive to the

University; again, they had the net effect of driving up the cost of medical insurance for full-time faculty members.

Cost of living adjustment for adjuncts: Any change in policy must come from the Office of Academic Affairs.

- Eileen Berens received the official list of University overlap institutions from Dr. Johannes. These include: Boston College, Holy Cross, Fairfield, Fairfield, Bucknell, Lafayette, Lehigh, and Providence College. The University of Richmond is moving onto the list while Fairfield may fall off.

For purposes of making comparisons between Villanova and its overlap group with regard to salary, benefits, and terms of employment, using the overlap group proves to be problematic for a number of reasons. First, each of the four colleges has its own list of “overlap,” “comparison,” and “aspiration” schools. Second, there are differences set by the market with regard to salaries in each of Villanova’s four colleges.

Members of the FC/SBT Committee discussed these matters. The question was raised concerning whether Villanova is on the lists of its overlap group. Another question concerned the “meaningfulness” of aggregate salary comparisons involving Villanova’s four colleges. It appears that the ranges in salaries for each college would be good starting point for understanding what the facts of the matter are. Lastly, the question concerning the salary “bumps” for promotions was raised. Based upon anecdotal data, it seems that there is no fixed policy.

Fr. Jacobs noted his belief that the issue underlying all of these salary questions is similar to the issue he believes underlies many of the other problems emerging within faculty discourse and are now being addressed by the Faculty Congress. That is, adequate information is not being provided for faculty to know what the facts of the matter are. Rumor, innuendo, and the attribution of malice by faculty members creating an “Us versus Them” mentality then contributes to the erosion of faculty confidence and an increase of feelings of disenfranchisement and demoralization. Unless the faculty is willing to accept its academic duty and ethic and, as a consequence, to become more self-governing, it will not achieve what it desires, namely, respect as an equal partner at the table. This is an issue that the Faculty Congress must address and, as it does so, the FC/SBT Committee can then fulfill its mandate. Short of that, nothing will be achieved except a further increase in feelings of disenfranchisement and demoralization, in Fr. Jacobs’ view.

3. Review of Goals/Identification of Project Champions:

Fr. Jacobs noted the actions taken with regard to the FC/SBT goals since the February 26th meeting:

Goal #1: The VPAA’s CATS committee continues to meet. It currently is looking at ways of “tweaking” the instrument to respond to the dissatisfaction with the instrument that have been raised by faculty members.

The issue of faculty evaluation is moving forward at a rapid pace. Burke Ward and Fr. Jacobs will be meeting with Jack Johannes prior to graduation to envision a long-term plan (perhaps as long as five years) by which

the Faculty Congress will spearhead this issue with institutional support provided by the VPAA's office and VITAL.

Goal #2: Two indices have been identified. A project champion who will study other indices as well as the impact of each would have upon the annual COLA needs to be identified and solicited.

Goal #3: Commerce and Finance has adopted a policy through the Dean's Council. It is not clear whether the other Colleges have a policy. In addition, anecdotal information indicates that some adjuncts have received remuneration for Independent Study courses but full-time faculty have not. The question was raised about remunerating faculty for directing theses. In addition, the question was raised about remuneration for course development for distance learning courses and teaching distance learning courses as well as classes taught at satellite campus.

Because much of the data reported are anecdotal, all of this information needs to be gathered and a report made. Again, the members of the Committee need to identify a project champion who has the interest to pursue this item.

Goal #4: Fr. Jacobs will contact Jack Johannes to see what historical information is available from his office, etc. Furthermore, a project champion needs to be identified and solicited.

Fr. Jacobs noted that, in general, there has been good progress-to-date by the FC/SBT Committee. But, moving forward, he noted that the FC/SBT members need become more proactive in identifying and soliciting individual

project champions so that he and Burke Ward can invite them to become involved more directly in the work of the Faculty Congress.

4. Other business:

Fr. Jacobs solicited feedback from FC/SBT members regarding the number and days/times of the Committee meetings. The consensus was that two meetings each semester are adequate. The mid-afternoon time for meeting is good except for the adjunct representative, John Groch.

One way to deal with this is for Fr. Jacobs to schedule adjunct faculty questions/concerns later in the agenda.

Fr. Jacobs asked FC/SBT Committee members to submit their Fall 2003 teaching schedules with a first and second choice for the day of each meeting. Fr. Jacobs would like to schedule the meetings on Tuesday afternoons, if possible, so that Mike Hones can attend.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING: (**tentative, pending schedules**)

Tuesday, September 16, 2003

Conference Room SAC 302

3:00 – 4:00 p.m.