COMMITTEE ON COMPENSATION
Block 1 Minutes
September 13, 2010

Present: Marion Hourdequin, Karen Klein, Chris Melcher, Shaleen Prehm, Chad Schonewill, Patti Spoelman, Diane Westerfield, Armin Wishard, and Dan Johnson (chair)

We started the meeting with a review of the new Wellness Program to be launched imminently on campus. It includes blood screening, health risk appraisals, health coaches, and a personalized prevention plan. Employees must register online, so reminders will be going out soon, both electronically and to employee home addresses. The program is free to the employee, and free to the spouse if they are covered under GreatWest's insurance program. It represents an extra budget line for the College, at roughly $80,000, but represents a commitment to employee health and wellness. Similar programs at Colorado Springs Utilities were largely responsible for keeping their health insurance premiums flat for two years. The program is offering us a guaranteed return on investment, and we are acting on the direct recommendation of the Health Concerns Committee. There will be some tracking by the College of participation by employees and dependents, but no tracking of health or medical conditions.

Data necessary to calculate this year's CPI values will be available on September 17th, so Dan will circulate them soon thereafter.

The Staff Reclassification Working Group is still working on the same themes of overall reclassification and compensation, progression through ranks, pay for performance, compression in the grades of nonexempt employees, and objectivity in evaluation of staff positions rather than the person up for a raise. Dan will circle back to review work of the consultant (visiting later this fall), and will reconvene with Barbara.

We discussed the philosophical meaning and interpretations of our existing Compensation Philosophy statement . It is clearly in need of amendment, to better reflect our actual practice (or vice versa, we could adjust our practice to fit our philosophy). The divergence between the statement and practice is much larger for staff than for faculty, so perhaps we need separate statements for each group, or at least recognition of different objectives.

We also discussed the potential reasons for (and against) grossing up the salaries of employees committed to same-sex relationships. They are subject to a tax penalty on benefits that does not apply to married couples, since the federal government does not recognize the legality of same-sex unions. Bowdoin was presented as one example of a peer that has this type of policy, and is the only institution we can find that offers this policy, outside of states which offer state-wide recognition of same-sex unions (like California). Our discussion centered on the underlying principle: should we compensate employees for their life situations that are not related to their professional activity? If we compensate this group, as a statement of ethical principle, then do we open the floodgates to other groups? If we offer additional compensation to same-sex couples, should we similarly compensate opposite-sex couples who choose not to marry, or is this additional compensation only to be offered to those who are not permitted to marry by state law? Since we cannot know the tax rates applicable to each household, we can only estimate at the costs of such a program, and now appreciate the reason for the simplicity of flat-dollar amounts offered by at least one peer institution. Human Resources will work on calculating the costs of implementing such a program, along with the costs of alternatives. Karen, Diane and Armin will research parallel programs at other institutions, and will be the contact people for this issue.

We agreed to have a standing commitment to meet from 3-5pm on the second Monday of each Block.