

Budget and Faculty Welfare Committee 2007-2008 Summary Report

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Steve Harris (09) Vice Chair, Libraries
Ted Evans (10) Science
Jim Bame (08) Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences
JoLene Bunnell (10) Extension
Charles Salzberg (09) Education and Human Services
Gary Stewardson (10) Engineering
Eugene Schupp (09) Natural Resources, on sabbatical
Fred Baker (08) Alternate for Gene Schupp
Vance Grange (10) Business
Jake Gunther (09) Senate
Daren Cornforth (09) Senate
James Sanders (10) Senate

This report covers the activities of the BFW committee since the last summary report in March 2007 through January 2008.

Meetings: 2007: March 27, April 24, August 28, September 25, October 30, November 27
2008: January 29

Facts and Discussions:

The Budget and Faculty Welfare committee is concerned with budget matters, faculty salaries, insurance programs, retirement benefits, sabbatical leaves, consulting policies, and other faculty benefits.

The duties of the Budget and Faculty Welfare Committee are to: (1) participate in the budget preparation process; (2) periodically evaluate and report to the Senate on matters relating to faculty salaries, insurance program, retirement benefits, sabbatical leaves, consulting policies, and other faculty benefits; (3) review the financial and budgetary implications of proposals for changes in academic degrees and programs, and report to the Senate prior to Senate action relating to such proposals; and (4) report to the Senate significant fiscal and budgetary trends which may affect the academic programs of the University.

Main items discussed at recent meetings include:

The results of BFW Committee actions may be found in the committee minutes published within the USU Faculty Senate web pages. A short summary of our actions and findings are given below.

BFW operation

The review of academic program changes for budgetary impact by the BFW committee has been ongoing but the work flow between different review committees needs improvement. J. Norton met with Graduate Dean Burnham and agreed to continue with parallel review but to keep committees informed through email communication.

Summary of academic program review

BFW continued a discussion and review of the integration of regional campuses, distance education, on-line education, and continuing education programs into existing USU departmental programs. The goal of integration is considered a considerable improvement over previous administrative structures. Faculty roles assignments will be formulated through co-operation between (Logan) department heads and regional campus executive directors. Faculty on regional campuses will have letters at the time of review from department head, dean, and regional campus executive director. Some concerns remain about budgetary impacts and funding sources for tenure eligible faculty although funding through legislative action (HB 185) has improved this situation. Efforts to improve participation and acculturation of all faculty including those from regional campuses are ongoing.

The BFW remains concerned about pre-tenure tenure-track faculty teaching overload courses because of financial incentives or departmental pressure. We also are concerned about tenured faculty with research roles teaching overload courses that reduce their time available to complete and publish research. We discourage departments from assigning faculty to teach off-campus courses on an overload basis. Department heads need to appreciate the significant input of time required for faculty to develop courses for electronic delivery and support this effort by reducing other workload demands if possible.

The BFW Committee examined the financial implications and impacts to faculty of several new programs or degrees. The results of the BFW Committee discussions were communicated to EPC or its representative and are on record in the minutes. The BFW Committee assumes that financial problems found by BFW will be addressed before programs are approved by EPC.

Programs reviewed this year:

1) International Program-China: Bachelor of Science with a Major in Economics

BFW concerns were communicated to DEED committee through Rhonda Menlove. Rhonda Menlove and Chris Fawson worked on clarifying these issues and program was approved by EPC on 4/3/07, FS on 4/30/07, and Trustees on 7/13/07.

2) Bachelor in Interior Design (BID Degree)

BFW concerns communicated, program has not passed Graduate Council

3) Masters degree in Anthropology with a specialization in Archaeology and Cultural Resource Management

Concerns communicated, review ongoing at Graduate Council

4) Master of Music degree (M.M.) with an emphasis in Piano Performance and Pedagogy

Concerns communicated, review ongoing at Graduate Council

Issues of Faculty Welfare Discussed

1) Faculty salary compression

Administration acknowledges this problem but it is difficult to correct without additional legislative support. There was some improvement in 2007 budget year. Equity and merit pay increases will continue to be used to retain high performers. Efforts are ongoing to document

status of salaries compared to salaries at peer institutions. There have been concerted efforts at several public universities to address this problem and BFW is assessing these proactive approaches for consideration by the faculty senate.

2) Conflict of Interest Policy on Textbooks

The faculty is required to be self-policing of potential conflicts of interest. BFW Chair will communicate with compliance office (Mr. Russ Price) about changes in Conflict of Interest Form 1. This would add the \$500 level as a screening device but not an absolute limit.

Suggested wording for COI form 1 question #4

4. In university courses you teach or for which you have direct responsibility, do you require the use of a textbook or course materials which you have authored or compiled, and from which you receive significant royalty or other sales proceeds? (For this purpose “significant” means royalties and/or proceeds that annually exceed \$500).

Yes _____ No _____

3) Suggest change in scheduling on grievance review (continuance during academic breaks)

BFW does not recommend changes to current policy due to creating situations in which faculty on 9-month appointments would be required to serve on committees during academic breaks. While continuance of committee function may be encouraged, changing the code to require work through break periods was not judged to be in the best interest of faculty serving on these committees.

4) Request for availability of group supplemental medical insurance for retirees

BFW has expressed this concern through Employee Benefits Advisory Board, the HR staff has taken this matter under consideration and progress is being made in assessing options and offerings from various providers.

Recommendations or actions needed:

1) Conflicts of Interest Textbook and course materials policy

BFW suggested changes to wording on COI forms, any further overall policy change should be brought before FS for their review.

2) BFW supports the requests of faculty to have available for purchase group supplemental coverage for retirees. BFW encourages HR to continue to move forward on this issue as it is of considerable interest to USU faculty to have a program in place as soon as possible. BFW will be monitoring the progress on this issue closely.

3) Budgetary priorities

BFW requests an annual meeting with the administration to review USU budgetary priorities before the legislative session begins. This issue was not adequately discussed this year.

4) Faculty Salary Compression

BFW will research proactive approaches taken by peer institutions and report on findings to the faculty senate early fall 2008.