

University of Kentucky
College of Agriculture Staff Liaison Committee
March 9, 1999 Meeting

ATTENDANCE

Members: Kabby Akers, Malinda Cooper, Barbara Coughlin, Joe Collins (for Carl Harper), Elizabeth Griffin (for Kathy Scahill), Dave Harover, Sue Haszler, Sandra Hutchens, Carl L. King, Barbara Nevius, Rita Parsons, Rupal Patel, Cindy Rigsby, Susan Sponcil, Nancy L. Strang, Pat Tackett, Pat Van Meter, and Jerry Warmouth.

CORRECTIONS TO JANUARY MINUTES

Rosemary Veach asked that a couple of items be clarified. 1) the consulting firm used for the "It's About Staff" project was Watson/Wyatt Worldwide (not Watts and Wyatt), and 2) Local market data was reviewed for some jobs but a decision was made to use national market data, indexed to our region.

Nancy Strang attended the January meeting, but was left off of the attendance record.

UPDATE ON ORGANIZATION FOR EXTENSION SUPPORT

The Extension Support Staff Committee is currently creating By-Laws and determining who qualifies for membership. There was no Area Extension Staff meeting this past month, and the committee is still waiting on feedback from this group.

SIDEWALK ISSUE

There seems to be a conflict concerning who is responsible for extending the sidewalk. Dr. Hiatt forwarded Malinda's letter to Jack Blanton who forwarded it to George Debin in Fiscal Affairs. Mr. Debin responded indicating that Warren Denney and Charles Slang have made a commitment to complete the project. If the sidewalk has not been extended, please let Malinda know and she will follow up with another letter to Mr. Debin. Malinda also sent thank you letters to Dr. Hiatt and Mr. Debin.

STOP SIGN NEAR AGR. SCI. BLDG.

Joe Collins, attending for Carl Harper, reported that the traffic office would not place an additional stop sign at this intersection.

SPECIAL HOLIDAY LEAVE

Cindy Rigsby updated us on the problems her department has concerning the four days of holiday leave UK gives between Christmas and New Year's. Her department (Livestock Disease Diagnostic Center) operates year round and employees cannot take these days at this time of year. According to HRS guidelines these days must be taken

either 6 weeks before or 6 weeks after the University's special leave. If the days cannot be taken within this time frame, the Department can request an extension of time, however no extension requests have been filed during the past few years. This year, one staff member lost a day of special leave because the lab supervisor would not allow time off when requested. Faculty members are allowed to use special leave at their discrepancy, however, staff members are not given this option creating problems.

NEW BUSINESS

Dr. Linus Walton met with the group as a representative for the Employee Benefits Committee. This committee is made up mostly of staff members and is strictly an advisory committee to George Debin, Office of Fiscal Affairs. He shared with us some of the concerns the committee has addressed in the past as well as future items. Among some of the recommendations the committee has made

1. That UK keep funding the current benefits in future budgets.
2. Resources be found for all regular half-time employees (not graduate students) - currently these employees receive no benefits.
Recommendation: UK provide at least half of the UK contribution that full time employees receive.
3. That pregnancy for dependents not be dropped from University healthcare currently no difference between employee or dependent.
4. That the necessary administrative changes be made to allow employees to tax shelter all benefits, i.e., parking fees, optional life insurance.
5. Retiree members of UKHMO keep option after eligibility for Medicare.
6. University develop a communication plan to inform employees of requirements necessary for eligibility for KCHIP program (state funded program for dependent children of people who can't afford premiums). This program is targeted for dependents not currently covered under any other plans.
7. Consider funding a portion of tuition of University dependents.
8. Increase funeral leave for the death of a spouse from 3 days to 5 days.
9. University consider funding additional \$2,500 life insurance (move from \$7,500 to \$10,000).
10. University consider adding optional employee paid burial policy.
11. Eliminate 1 year waiting period to receive retirement benefits, suggest that vesting occur 6 months after enrollment (this will be helpful with recruitment of faculty and staff).
12. Minimum age requirement for phase retirement be reduced from age 65 to 62 (important to be able to predict faculty retirement for recruitment purposes).
13. Contribution for health care be increased from the current \$3,000.

Questions and Answers

1. What insurance benefits do retirees have?
Currently a UK retiree keeps insurance if employed 15 years, unless moving outside the service area, then they use the current provider.

2. Are there any major changes in open enrollment?
No. There has been a change in the length of time for open enrollment. Employee Benefits is working for us, and does a good job under limited conditions. The last two issues of UK News had articles about benefits, and mentioned that all health insurance plans will have co-pays. The website is: <http://www.uky.edu/FiscalAffairs/HR/benefits> or people can call 257- 9519 ext. 167. (Susan will try to get information about the co-pays to us as soon as possible). Open enrollment will be the last 2 weeks of April, and notices about premium changes should be available by April 1.
3. Do you know about the increase in costs for 1999?
Employees in western Kentucky were affected the most last year. No, the committee hears about the rate increases at the same time we do. The rates are set by an independent consultant who looks at costs, based on income from plans and recommends premium increases accordingly. UK is self insured, and hires companies to provide services.
4. UKHMO is not an option for 70 counties, how can their voices be heard?
Susan Sponcil said they are currently recruiting providers to participate in this area of the state. A proposal was made and approved to send a memo to George Debin and T. Lynn Williamson voicing concerns of the people affected the most by the increase in health care costs. Malinda Cooper will draft a memo to Mr. Debin and Mr. Williamson, and send it through Dr. Little since she has the history and letters from individuals.
5. People cannot afford insurance on their current salaries, how do we address these issues? Can insurance benefits be pro-rated?
This has been discussed by the committee, but no changes have been made yet. There were problems with an insurance policy a few years ago for nursing home benefits. These problems were eventually settled. The Administration has tried to correct this by bringing in new group (i.e. cancer insurance).
6. Has the University considered a cafeteria style plan of insurance?
The committee has recommended and is looking into what is available.

7. What about providing eye care coverage?
There is one dental benefits package that includes eye care.

Dr. Walton has agreed to meet with us again and is open to any questions or recommendations that anyone would like to discuss. He will give us an update in approximately 1 year. He also offered to send information through Susan Sponcil or Carl King. (Jerry Warmouth sent Dr. Walton a thank you letter.)

EMPLOYEE RELATIONS OFFICE

Jerry Warmouth reported that this office is now fully staffed. She had a pamphlet describing the Employee Relations Office, and it was recommended that we invite someone from that office to our May meeting. Jerry will make the contact.

COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE STAFF AWARD PROGRAM

Rita Parsons reported that the College will be sponsoring the Staff Award Recognition Program again this year. The committee will meet on March 29 to discuss the program. There is some effort being made to coordinate dates with other events during Round Up week.

COLLEGE OF AG STAFF APPRECIATION DAY - 1999

Sandy Duff and Malinda Cooper are working on the "Let's Get Connected" program. A proposal is being presented to Dr. Little requesting that the following events take place: a) College Ag Award Program, b) College of Ag Staff Appreciation - Luncheon, and c) Extension Support Staff Organization (Chi Epsilon Sigma), Let's Get Connected (County Extension Professional Improvement). It was suggested that Sandy Duff be invited to the next meeting to discuss coordinating these events.

STOP/YIELD SIGNS

Pat Tackett reported that Dr. Hiatt declared the request for a stop/yield sign be installed on the driveway encircling the seedhouse/greenhouse was a safety issue and took care of the problem.

UK STAFF APPRECIATION DAY

The annual campus wide staff appreciation day sponsored by Fiscal Affairs has been scheduled for Friday, May 14 at Memorial Coliseum from 11:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. If anyone would like to set up a departmental display contact Barbara Nevius or Linda Blair in Ag. Communications by mid-April.

COMMITTEE MEMBER ROTATION

There was some discussion about committee members rotating off in September. Should we have a luncheon for old members? How will new members be assigned? Susan Sponcil will contact Dr. Little about how he wants to replace departing members.

DAVE HAROVER - NEW ASSIGNMENT

Dave Harover indicated that he will be taking a new position with the KY Emergency Medical Council and is leaving the committee. He enjoyed serving on the committee, and reminded members that we do accomplish things! We wish you luck in your new position Dave!

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be on May 11 at 1:30 p.m. in Rm. 154 Agr. Engr. Bldg. Jerry will invite a representative from Employee Relations to the meeting, and Malinda Cooper will invite Sandy Duff.

Submitted by Rita Parsons, Secretay CASLC.

For questions about the [CASLC web pages](#), please contact CASLC-www@sv.uky.edu. For other questions about CA Staff concerns or about CASLC, please contact any of the [committee members](#).