Faculty Compensation and Benefits Committee

March 23, 2016

Minutes

Present: Blau, Buchmann, Carr, Curtis, Gast, Goerler, Heathcock (by telephone), Holub, Lemberger, McGoldrick, Salata, Schoppe-Sullivan, Seiber, Swenson, Wolf

Guests: Lauren Southerland

1. Lauren Southerland, Assistant Professor of Emergency Medicine, Wexner Medical Center, discussed the difficulties faced by junior faculty who give birth during their first year at OSU, as a result of the one year waiting period before eligibility for the paid family leave benefit. She described conversations with medical school faculty who faced difficult choices between work and family at the beginning of their careers. A relatively small number of faculty are affected by the policy in a given year, but the impact on those affected is large. Several peer institutions that don’t have such a waiting period were mentioned. It was argued that this policy could make OSU less attractive to potential new hires, compared to institutions that do not have such a policy.

The ensuing discussion touched on the following points:

(a) The rationale for the policy is that an individual might take a leave during the first year of service and then resign from OSU. An analogy was made with the FPL policy, which requires faculty to spend at least one year at OSU following an FPL, or to repay compensation earned during the FPL otherwise. This could be applied to the paid leave benefit as well.

(b) It would be inequitable to exempt faculty but not staff from the one year waiting period. There are faculty-specific policies such as Faculty Professional Leave that are not available to staff. But those are exceptional, and it is not obvious why paid family leave during the first year of employment should fall into this category.

(c) It would be costly to OSU to extend the paid family leave benefit to first-year employees. However, it is also costly to not extend it. Currently, the costs are borne by the employee’s unit, which often provides informal accommodation, and the employee. This prompted a discussion of whether paid family leave could be provided to first-year faculty through administrative action without an explicit change in the policy. That is, the practice of some departments by which they informally rearrange duties to accommodate the new parent’s need could be formalized. Kay Wolf promised to look into this possibility.

(d) Various other options were discussed: short term disability leave, sick leave, vacation leave, and vacation donation. None seemed very satisfactory.

The committee will revisit the issue after Kay Wolf reports back.
2. Joanne McGoldrick described health care plan savings recommendations made by Senate Fiscal to the administration. The changes fall into three categories: (a) renegotiation of provider contract rates, (b) utilization management (i.e. better efforts to follow approved treatment protocols), and (c) plan design changes. The total potential annual savings from these changes after a five year implementation period were estimated to be between $27.2 and $48.8 million. Senate Fiscal rejected several other potential savings opportunities. A written description of the recommendations will be available soon.

3. At the request of senate leadership, the committee reviewed proposed changes to university rules 3335-5-07 and 3335-8-35 concerning the academic calendar. The changes are required in order to account for the new summer calendar, to take effect in 2016. There was some general discussion, and a potential inconsistency between the second and third paragraphs of the proposed 3335-5-07 changes was pointed out. This will be reported to senate leadership. There were no significant objections to the changes.

4. The committee reviewed a proposal by the Faculty Association of ARP Participants to allow ARP participants a one-time opportunity to join STRS, and to allow all ARP participants to receive medical benefits and retirement benefits from STRS in proportion to their contribution to STRS via the mitigating rate. FAARPP will submit the proposal to university leaders and ask that they send it to STRS with their endorsement. There was a brief discussion.

5. The meeting was adjourned.