

Extension Educator Council
Minutes
May 15, 2002

1. Staff Awards and Recognition - Alice

Alice and Cheryl Whiting used the Logic Model as a framework for awards and recognition. The time frame is FY 2003 for formal recognition. There will be staff recognition of various sorts at the June 6th Extension conference. At the June conference the following will be recognized: President's Award of Excellence, years of service, Heckel Award, Leitzel recognition, Hazel and Joan retirement recognition.

2. Heckel Award - George

The Heckel Award nominees will be recognized. Nominations for the next Heckel Award start in September, by the November meeting a selection will be made. Announcement will be made at the June all Extension conference.

3. Other Awards - Val

The Presidential Award of Excellence - suggestion was made to put information in the bi-weekly update (and to each staff member) about deadlines for the Presidential Award of Excellence. We need to encourage nominations from staff. The form would be improved if it clearly states that additional documentation is encouraged, and that letters of support can also be added.

The UNH Community Service Scholarship included a member of the EEC this year. Holly leads the committee which is composed of two faculty, an EEC member, and a PAT staff. One candidate was selected from a pool of about 10 nominees.

4. Mentoring Program - Steve

The observation is that there are quite a few new people without the support system they need to be effective early in their career with Cooperative Extension. Program Leaders, Specialists, and Educators need to be involved in the mentoring process. We could perhaps use mentoring models from other Extension programs and implement that.

We will start drafting a procedure, set up a framework, and specify the role of each position. There was a comment about administration recognizing the time that individuals spend on mentoring. But, if an effective system is set up, no one person would have an unfair burden.

Bob Edmonds is heading up the staff development area, which includes mentoring. At our next meeting we will list the important components of mentoring/staff orientation and submit to Bob. After Bob has reviewed the information, we can invite him to attend a future EEC meeting.

5. University's Benefit Cost Containment Plan - Sharon Demers (HR)

SPPC meeting results were briefly reviewed by Sharon. Some items will affect new hires: 3 year vesting (if employee leaves before 3 years the employee would not get UNH dollars); delayed benefits - it will be delayed until the 1st of the month following date of hire (Jim mentioned that we could just hire a person to start on the last day of the month); for those of us on staff - it will remain the same. Tuition benefit - eligibility for staff after the introductory period, dependents wouldn't be able to be eligible until after one year.

Mitigation Proposal

Concern about increases for staff who are at lower end of the salary scale. It is aimed at reducing the impact of the increase of the employee contributions for the benefits plan. The actual mitigation plan proposal discussed in the PAT Council meeting was handed out at our meeting. It explains the key points of the plan.

Salary increases are effective 7/1/02, medical increases are effective 1/1/03.

The Board of Trustees have not voted on this mitigation proposal yet.

Alice asked about a flexible spending account for people to put increases and cashed out annual and earned time days so that those dollars could go to increased benefits. Currently, there are no plans to do this.

George asked if benefit information could come out earlier so that employees can compare plans with spouses/partners to see which would be the most beneficial. It appears that that could be done.

The EEC needs to respond to changes to the following at the SPPC meeting (Jim and Debbie will attend):

- LTD - elimination of TIAA/CREF employee and employer contribution
- LTD - elimination of \$100 minimum guaranteed to employee from TIAA/CREF
- Elimination of survivor income (3 months of salary), but will receive life insurance from TIAA/CREF
- Retiree who is 62-65 will pay 35% of medical plan
- Retiree who is 65+ will pay 35% of family medical plan

The EEC voted on in the affirmative for these changes.

All of this is moot for those under ARC

On another note, Jim mentioned that HR policy manuals probably need to be updated so that they accurately reflect Extension terminology, policy, etc. The Personnel Policy Manual Sub-Committee includes Alice, George, Jim, and Sharon Demers. They will work on the document ahead of time (Sharon Ross will highlight all of the areas that include Extension). Then meet September 11 in the pm.

Since the issue of policy was being discussed, it was brought up that other staff at the University have the opportunity to receive up to 5% increase if they are below the quartile after their introductory period. Extension Educators have not had this benefit so George made a motion that at the end of EE's introductory period, those who are below the quartile can receive up to 5% increase if their performance is acceptable. Val seconded.

6. Merit Increases, Promotion, Market Equalization, Equity Adjustments - Jim

- 4% across the board (Cola)
- 1.5% pool for equity, merit, promotion, adjustments (this 1.5% represents about \$60,000 for increases)

Jim's recommendation is to recommend equity for Assistant Educators who are below the quartile and who have meritorious performance.

Last year:

Outstanding received \$1,300 (about 34 people)
Above Average received \$850 (about 28 people)
(about 13 people didn't get a merit increase)

The EEC recommends that:

1. Those in the Asst. Educator rank and are below the quartile and who have meritorious performance receive equity.
2. Jim will try to get promotion monies out of another pool, and about \$6,000 could be used for equity.
3. Keep merit amounts for this year, depending on money available, but for next year look (we'll discuss in July) look at another system. That is, top 5% will receive outstanding merit, 15-20% will receive above average.

Meeting adjourned at 12:30 pm.