Benefits and Finance Committee Meeting
February 13, 2015

In attendance were the following: Mark Hampton, (Chair); Alan Chesney, Eugene Hamilton, Laura Johnson, Susanne Kelly, Andrea Lange, Mark Scott, Ken Schweitzer, Lansing Williams

Mark Hampton, VP for Finance and Administration called the meeting to order. The minutes from January 30, 2015 were unanimously approved. Mark thanked Krista Batchelor, Human Resources Specialist for taking the minutes at the January 30th meeting.

FY16 Budget Update: Schedule & Timetable Update: The committee reviewed the FY16 Budget Process handout provided by Mark which outlined important dates about the budget process. Mark stated that there will be two informational meetings (tentative dates: 2/23 and 2/24) for faculty and staff who submit departmental budgets. During these meetings Mark, Peggy, and Laura will discuss the budget process for the coming year, including the development of the operating budgets for departments, and the items to be funded as part of the implementation of the strategic plan. In addition, faculty/staff will have the opportunity to provide feedback as to how to make the budget process more efficient and transparent. Budget forms will be due back to the Provost’s and Finance Office by March 27th. Peggy will be working very closely with Laura over the next several months in order to better enable her to administer the academic budget, including management of temporarily restricted (TR) accounts. The budget process and logistics handout outlined important details regarding the process in order finalize FY16 budget. Mark stated that until we implement position management; we have to rely on the macro to micro budget process. To date the FY16 budget remains balanced. A preliminary budget is expected to be available the first week of April for Senior Staff to review.

Update on United Health Care: Alan stated that a short presentation will be given at the March 6th meeting and that he does not anticipate a lot of changes this year. AETNA may offer to retirees retirement insurance that may help them transition to Medicare, no cost to the college.

Discussion of Tobacco Free Campus: Alan stated that last semester staff council was interested in reviving the tobacco free campus discussion. Senior Staff reviewed a policy that Alan developed in conjunction with Staff Council. An implementation team was created to determine what it is needed to move forward to a tobacco free campus without having a policy. Alan stated that the implementation team proposed educational programs and smoking cessation programs for faculty, staff and students. These programs will be offered sometime in April 2015. Alan will ask Administrative Council for their support to allow employees permission to attend these programs. It was noted that that employee’s attendance for these program should not leave offices short-staffed. More details about the programs will be circulated around March 1st. Alan stated that after these programs are offered we will explore a timetable for a tobacco free campus.
Past feedback from students and some faculty asked about designated smoke areas. Estimates for designated smoke shelters will cost approximately $30K due to electrical lighting. Mark stated that it is doubtful that the town would approve permits for construction of the shelters due to the historical nature of the community. Gene stated that almost everyone has an unhealthy habit and asked for clarification of why the college is exploring a tobacco free campus. Alan stated that it is part of having a healthy campus for everyone. Strong evidence from parents who smoke indicates they would prefer a smoke free campus for their children. Gene asked if being a tobacco free campus would help lower health insurance cost for employees or if we should consider a premium differential for smokers and nonsmokers. Alan stated that reducing the number of smokers on our plan will have a long range effect on our health care costs. The committee agreed that the college should proceed with the educational programs and smoking cessation classes.

Other Business: The meeting scheduled for March 13th has been cancelled due to spring break. Ken asked about the impact of the Affordable Care Act. Alan stated that five additional employees qualified for health benefits under the ACA and were offered the opportunity and only one accepted. Alan continued stating that several tasks must be achieved with regards to the ACA. The college will need to collect, review, and report pertinent data and report it accurately to the Internal Revenue Service. Adjunct professors and students working more than 30 hours per week must be considered for benefits. Since resident assistants are on call 24/7 the college offered to waive their cost of housing by 50%. The typical hour load for a resident assistant is 15 hours/week. RA’s who are working in the GIS lab are limited to 10 hours/week.

The next Benefits and Finance Committee meeting will be held on March 6, 2015.