Benefits and Finance Committee Meeting
October 23, 2015

In attendance: Mark Hampton, (Chair); Carolyn Burton, Kate Laking, Laura Johnson, Bari Lynne Kersey, Eugene Hamilton, Ken Schweitzer, Joe Holt

The minutes from September 18, 2015 were unanimously approved.

Discussion on Health Care – Plan Year – Mark stated that open enrollment for employee health benefits is currently at the end of the fiscal year, a very busy time especially for faculty. He continued stating that with improvements made in administrative processes now is a good time to consider changing open enrollment to the end of the calendar year. This would align more with property and casualty insurance renewals, in addition to the affordable care act, retirement plan, and flex spending account limits. Laura noted that salaries budgets are viewed on a fiscal year basis, not calendar year and expressed concerns how this will affect the budget process. Mark suggested that Laura, Kate, and Carolyn meet to review budget impacts of this possible shift (fiscal year to calendar year) of employee benefits. Joe stated that annual performance evaluations for employees should continue to be completed at the end of the fiscal year (June 30th). To eliminate any hardship for employees in the event that health care premiums increase, employee raises or cost of living increases should align with employee health benefit or calendar year. Joe continued, stating that the Board of Visitors and Governors are committed to merit increases for employees; once we have the funding.

Update on United Health Care Rebate – Carolyn explained to the committee that a rebate is required under the Affordable Care Act for fully insured plans that do not spend at least 85% of the premiums on health care services. United Health Care over-estimated and this year’s rebate is approximately $71K. The committee discussed best options to use the rebate, these included:

- provide a cash rebate to employees; note: this normally has a tax impact to employees/administrative fees which could cost as much as the rebate itself
- apply it to the premium for the coming year (which is how the college used the 2013 rebate)
- enhance plan benefits for the next plan year or defray reasonable expenses of administering the plan (which could include implementation of a replacement online benefits enrollment system that integrates directly with the college)

A motion was made by Joe Holt to apply the rebate to the premium for the coming year, and to enhance plan benefits for the next year/defray reasonable expenses of administering the plan; which could include implementation of a replacement online benefits enrollment system that integrates directly with the college. It was seconded by Bari Lynne Kersey, all were in favor.
Bari Lynne reminded the committee the importance of sharing information with employees so that everyone understands the options pertaining to the rebate. Carolyn agreed and stated that she will add this to the agenda for the November staff meeting and will be on hand to answer questions.

**Professional Development** — Mark stated that employee professional development should be college-wide and that the college used to have funds for employee tuition benefit; however, this was eliminated with benefit reduction in 2013. Since the recent retirement of the graduate program we now provide $35K graduate assistance ($5K for seven coaches) to the Athletics Department. Mark stated that equity is a concern for all staff and faculty and therefore we have identified $10K from contingency funds for FY16 ($1K for 10 people) for professional development. Employees should inquire about professional development through their supervisor regarding available funding. The committee agreed guidelines for professional development need to be clear to ensure employees understand what is expected of them. Mark stated that he will ask Victor Sensenig, Assistant Provost for Institutional Research and Assessment to benchmark similar colleges who offer opportunities for learning and professional development. Mark reminded the committee that Washington College offers lynda.com which can be accessed from the OIT webpage. Lynda.com is an online learning company that can help employees achieve personal and professional goals.

**Other Business** — The committee agreed other topics to discuss should include: the college’s bereavement policy, holidays (specifically staff having to work on Labor Day), Chester River bridge closure and to re-visit summer flexible hours.

The next Benefits and Finance Meeting is scheduled for Friday, November 20, 2015 at 9:00 in the Bunting Conference Room.