

Committee on Priorities and Resources

Meeting Minutes – February 15, 2012

In attendance: Assistant Director Carol Allman-Morton, Dean of the Faculty Gregory Call, *ex officio*, Technical Services Associate Mark Fiegenbaum, Associate Treasurer/Director of the Budget Shannon Gurek, *ex officio*, Alex Hurst '12, Prof. Nasser Hussain, chair, Prof. Jagu Jagannathan, Director of Human Resources Maria-Judith Rodriguez, *ex officio* Prof. Karen Sánchez-Eppler, Treasurer Peter Shea, *ex officio*, George Tepe '14 and Sarah Barr, recorder. Guest: Benefits Administrator Ernest LeBlanc.

Not in attendance: Prof. Rob Benedetto and Luke Lavin '13.

The meeting was called to order at 4:10 pm.

1. Introductions – Committee members introduced themselves to the new student representatives.
2. Minutes – Minutes from February 1, 2012 were approved.
3. College Policy – The committee reviewed its ongoing policy projects.
 - a. Parental Leave – The CPR asked Mark Fiegenbaum and Carol Allman-Morton to present information about the committee's parental leave discussion to the Employee Council. The CPR is currently looking at the impact of extending the parental leave for non-birth parents. The CPR wants to make sure that faculty and staff benefits are as comparable as possible.
 - b. "Grossing Up" Salaries to Compensate for Discriminatory Tax Policy – Ernie LeBlanc presented information about the college's benefits for married couples and same-sex domestic partners as well as the tax impact for same-sex married couples at the state and federal levels.
 - i. Establishing eligibility for benefits – An employee who would like his or her spouse (same- or opposite-sex) to have medical benefits through Amherst College must present a copy of the marriage license to Human Resources. A college employee who wants health benefits for a same-sex partner must sign a Certification of Domestic Partnership affidavit. Opposite-sex domestic partners are not eligible for benefits from the college.
 - ii. Impact of policy change – Ernie LeBlanc presented information about the number of same-sex married couples and same-sex domestic partners currently covered by the college's health insurance plan for families. After reviewing the data, it became clear that there could be many additional same-sex married couples and same-sex domestic partners who are not currently on the College's family plan due to the tax cost so it is difficult to assess the full financial impact of a policy change.
 - iii. Peer institution research – Within the Colgate Group of small private colleges and universities, five of thirty-five colleges "gross up" the salaries of same-sex

married individuals who have family plan health insurance to make up for the added tax implication.

- iv. Next steps – The CPR will continue to consider the impact of “grossing up” salaries for married employees who have a same-sex spouse on the college’s health insurance plan.
- c. Faculty Salary and Compensation Report – Shannon Gurek and Jagu Jagannathan presented a draft of the Faculty Salary and Compensation Report. The CPR will approve the final copy of the report at a later meeting.
- d. Employee Recognition – The President and Human Resources are launching a new employee recognition program. All members of the campus community will be able to nominate employees for recognition. Some members of the committee voiced misgivings and the CPR encouraged Human Resources to be careful when developing the program since most employees take great pride in their work, often going above and beyond their work duties. A committee of faculty, staff and students will review nominations and make recommendations to senior staff. Employees will be recognized at the all-campus picnic on May 29.

The meeting adjourned at 5:35 pm.

Next Meeting: Wednesday, February 29 at 4 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sarah Barr