

Committee on Priorities and Resources  
Meeting Minutes – May 5, 2020

In attendance: Professor Javier Corrales, chair; Professor Andrew Dole; Professor Jill Miller; Professor Monica Ringer; Library Administrative Assistant/Bookkeeper Susan Bradley; Director of Financial Planning Thomas Dwyer, *ex officio*; Provost and Dean of the Faculty Catherine Epstein, *ex officio*; Assistant Director of Athletics Kelly Mannix; Chief Human Resources Officer Maria-Judith Rodriguez, *ex officio*; Chief Financial and Administrative Officer Kevin Weinman, *ex officio*; Brooke Harrington '22, *ex officio*; Sydney Ireland '23; Steven Hegarty, recorder

Guest: Chris Casey, Director of Compensation, Benefits, and HRIS

The meeting came to order at 8:30 am.

Proceedings

1. Benefits & Open Enrollment (Maria-Judith and Chris)
  - a. The annual open enrollment period will be May 4 to June 1. Any changes in benefits take effect on July 1. Information has been distributed by a mailing to home addresses and an email to eligible employees. Outside of the annual cycle, benefit changes can only be made after a qualifying event.
  - b. Benefits offerings have not changed from last year. There has been a small increase in medical premiums; but no increases for Dental, Vision & Life Insurance premiums.
  - c. Review of the High Deductible Health Plan (HDHP), introduced last year. An HDHP is a common offering among our peer group. Initial enrollment was about 50 employees and the overall response is positive.  
This remains one of the four options offered. Employees interested in the HDHP should research the costs and benefits of changing plans.
  - d. HR offers an online benefit overview tool called Alex for plan and cost comparisons.
  - e. Additional benefit offerings will continue, including access to discounts and pet insurance through BenefitHub and referral services through Care.com.
  - f. In lieu of a benefit fair, there will be Zoom information meetings this year for benefit overviews, plus a session devoted to a closer look at the HDHP offering. Details are in the open enrollment materials.
  - g. Maria-Judith proposed a follow up benefits conversation with CPR in the fall, to consider any changes that may be in the planning stages for 2021 open enrollment. One potential change is increasing the number of tiers in the medical plans (see the CPR minutes from April 28, 2020.)
2. Benefits Survey, additional review of the Executive Summary
  - a. Plan designs put Amherst in the top of our peer group.
  - b. There is room to improve in the grant-in-aid offering and “voluntary benefits” category. The latter includes offerings such as group auto, home, and supplemental insurance.

- c. In response to a question about negotiating contracts, the college has the assistance of our consultants, Strategic Benefits Advisors, to ensure the best deal possible. Joining a consortium of colleges would make sense if AC self-insured.
  - d. Additional questions may be directed to Maria-Judith and Chris.
3. Working group updates from Catherine and Kevin:
- a. Andrew asked about faculty re-entering their offices. The Governor's advisory currently runs until May 18, and may be extended. When that is lifted, the college will offer a slow return, prioritized and staggered to ensure social distancing.  
The college is not ready to test for COVID-19 on a widespread basis.
  - b. A memo will be sent soon about immediate financial changes, and the creation of a larger committee to take a long term approach for additional spending and budget adjustments.
4. CPR approved the minutes from April 21.

Adjourned 9:20 am.

Respectfully submitted,  
S Hegarty