

**Staff Advisory Committee Meeting**  
**April 15, 2008**  
**11:30am – 1:30pm – Dining Rooms 8&9**

Present: Doreen Burgers, Ron Dunleavy, Pam DeSimone, Heather Dominey, Jeff Fitton, Deborah Healey, Walter Hunter, Angel Hilliard, Karen Leonard (Chair), Nancy Magers, Lori Maguire, Maritza Marti, Chris O'Neil, Sarah Peri, Joe Sarno, Lisa Sheehan, Kristen Soule, Alfred Tente, Amy Umstadter, Courtney Wuethrich

Absent: Ruth Crane, Beth Murphy, Lea Snyder, Steve Tompkins

**Announcements**

Karen welcomed the group and asked for motion to pass the minutes from the 4/1 meeting; Ron made the motion to pass the minutes, and it was seconded by Jeff.

Karen is working on a letter from SAC to Betsy Warner, Director of Compensation & Organization Services. She will forward it to Joe Sarno and Walter for review before sending it out by the end of this week

Karen is also working on letters to President Simmons requesting funding for future events and inviting her to the Best of Brown SAC event.

Karen reminded the group that the next meeting will be at the Brown Faculty Club on 4/29. Mary Hogan will be presenting and the remainder of the meeting will be a discussion of new member recruiting.

**Subcommittee Reports**

**Pam DeSimone – Staff Participation Subcommittee**

SPS is working a replacement for the Human Resources Advisory Board (HRAB). Staff member Linda Murphy also requested that SPS nominate 2 people for Campus Planning Advisory Board. They want to choose one person for this summer and one for next summer.

**Jeff Fitton – Events Subcommittee**

The Events Subcommittee reported that there are 58 volunteers for Rebuilding Together, 27 in the morning and 28 in the afternoon. This number does not include Facilities Management employees. A Morning Mail went out on 4/15 and Rebuilding Together is also on the banner page of Brown's website. Gary Martins and John Colarusso (Facilities team captains) will build individual teams to conduct work at School One.

Jeff also reported that SAC will be collecting for CrossRoads Rhode Island and the RI Community Food Bank at Staff Development Day.

Events is also in the early planning stages of SAC's 10 year celebration.

**Steve Tompkins – Outreach & Communications Subcommittee**

Ron Dunleavy reported that O&C has the taglines that will be presented to SAC. O&C has also developed a mission statement with the help of Heather Emerick. Ron has contacted the Brown Alumni Magazine to get an article written about Kristen Soule (SAC member and Brown alum).

**Guest Presenters: Bert Gordon, Christine Wood, Mike Enos, Heather Emerick**

Bert began with a discussion of the status of replacement of the HR payroll project. She also explained to SAC members that there is a subproject planned for September – a transition from a semi-monthly payroll (24 paychecks) to a bi-weekly payroll (26 paychecks). She is relying on SAC members to ask questions. Following her presentation Heather Emerick will send SAC members an anonymous survey to further gauge their opinions about the project.

HRMS (Brown's pay and benefits management system) needs to be replaced because the system is based on old technology (Cobol). Bert explained the current limitations of our current HRMS and indicated that, because it does not give departments what they need, workarounds are often necessary.

She reviewed the project sponsor group and target dates. In May/June, Brown will send out Requests for Proposals (RFPs) to vendors. She is currently collecting department requirements to better determine needs. Brown anticipates a target date of October for vendor selection and an implementation date of January 1, 2011.

Bert also reviewed the intermediate improvement project: converting two semi-monthly payrolls to one bi-weekly payroll. The conversion has been approved by the ITPRC (Information Technology Project Review Committee). The final decision whether to approve the conversion to a bi-weekly payroll system will be made on May 12<sup>th</sup>.

Bert reviewed the current proposal to convert two semi-monthly payrolls: S1 (non exempt staff and graduate students) and S2 (undergraduate students) with an implementation date of September 1, 2008. A bi-weekly payroll is more efficient and consistent because it's a fixed 14-day standard pay period. While annual salaries will not be impacted by the conversion to a bi-weekly pay cycle, individual pay period totals will change because there will be 26 paychecks instead of 24. Pay day will be every other Friday

Bert explained that in September, S1 and S2 employees will get one paycheck; in October, they will get three. Brown will do a prepaid salary program for September (not mandatory) with up to 2 weeks pre-paid salary which can then be paid back over a 3, 6, and 9 month period.

Bert encouraged all SAC members to provide feedback on the survey that they will receive via email.

**Questions**

**Q:** Is there a BioMed representative on the project governance team?

**A:** Yes, John Deely

**Q:** Are you considering adding finance requirements to the HRMS vendor's requirements?

**A:** Yes

**Q:** Will this be a one-time change?

**A:** Yes

**Q:** Is the conversion to 24 paychecks a definite or a maybe?

**A:** On May 12<sup>th</sup>, they will receive a go or no go decision

**Q:** What is the breakdown of people affected by this change?

**A:** S1 payroll has 1200 employees; the S2 payroll has 2000.

**Q:** Has there been communication about this?

**A:** Not until the go/no go decision has been made. The project team is starting with focus groups. The focus groups will poll impacted employees and managers who implement payroll in their departments.

**Q:** What are advantages of doing it in September?

**A:** Volume is low

**Q:** Is there any consideration for changing the monthly payroll to biweekly?

**A:** Not in the project but it may be considered in the future

**Q:** What are the tax implications if taxes have to be taken out of every paycheck?

**A:** System annualizes paychecks; therefore, there will be no impact on an employee's tax liability.

**Q:** How should billing due dates be changed based on new system?

**A:** Utility companies will work with you to change billing due dates

**Q:** Is it better or worse to have deductions twice per month or once per month?

**A:** It is easiest to have 24 pay deductions per year.

### **Comments**

A SAC member commented that staff and graduate students will be concerned because pay will "go down" and it will be more difficult to meet monthly needs. Walter indicated that, with respect to monthly bills that's true, but not with respect to ongoing expenses because staff/graduate students will be getting paid faster.

Another member said that when you know you're getting paid every other Friday, it will be easier and more regular to budget and it will be easier for students who will now get paid in a more standard way.

A comment was made regarding the ease of combining the S1 and S2 payrolls, especially when graduate students have fellowships. S1 is 1200 staff, S2 is 2000. Another commented that he is not comfortable with "bonus" paycheck terminology, but does recognize that 26 paychecks are better because you're paid for all hours worked (including overtime).

### **Advisor's Report – Walter Hunter**

The final candidates are being reviewed for the VP of Human Resources position.

Walter invited all SAC members to his farewell party on May 29th.

Joe Sarno reported that he discussed (with Drew Murphy, Director of Benefits and an Altus Representative) the staff concerns with Medical Flexible Spending Accounts that were raised at the April 1<sup>st</sup> SAC meeting. The Altus representative stated that products that are not clearly medically necessary (e.g., vitamins, water picks), cannot be auto-adjudicated using an FSA debit card. In such instances, staff members should pay for the item and submit the receipt along with a doctor's note – setting forth the medical need- for the item. Thereafter, Altus will reimburse the staff member for the purchase.

Altus said that IRS rules are liberal with respect to what may be medically necessary, but claims must be supported with documentation – receipt and a doctor's note. A doctor's note is valid indefinitely unless the doctor includes a finite period in his/her note (i.e., "the staff member requires an iron supplement for the duration of her pregnancy). Such items cannot be auto-adjudicated; instead, only clear cut items (i.e., prescription drugs, aspirin) may be auto-adjudicated (purchased using FSA debit card) and only if purchased at an IAS vendor (e.g. CVS, Walgreens).

### **Staff Concerns**

A member brought up that, with all the construction going on around campus, walking paths are changing daily but signage doesn't. People don't know where to walk. Joe will contact Facilities Management to get better signage.

Karen was contacted about the possibility of Human Resources supporting a Runaway Caregiver's Club as part of HR's Wellness Program. This was suggested by 2 staff members who are interested in organizing a few weekends for caregivers to get away. There was a discussion about the type of support Brown could offer. Karen said that the organizers felt that they would have more leverage if Brown's name was used. SAC members felt that neither Brown nor SAC need to be involved. A SAC member brought up that 20 people is considered a group rate anyway regardless of Brown's name.

A suggestion was brought to a SAC member about Brown offering tax preparation assistance for staff. Doreen mentioned that Brown has made the choice to not offer help with taxes for liability reasons.

The meeting adjourned at 1:20pm.