MINUTES

Attendance: Liisa Laine, co-chair; Grace Young, co-chair; Sarah Aneyci; Sarah Brown; Geeta Chougule; Dawn Cummings; Laura Dobler; Kristine Dodd; Tara Greenwood; Catherine Hanni; Marguerite Joutz; Annemarie Kennedy; Michael Leitao; Abigail Peterson; Jessica Pontarelli; Jennifer Quiroz; Felicia Raton; Barbara Simoneau; Beth Travers; Yi Vizard

Absent: Daisy Ferreira; Joel Hernandez; Laura Pleasants; Maria Sokolova; Ray Windsor

1. Acceptance of meeting minutes: September 24, 2019

There were no objections to the minutes and they were accepted by all present members.

2. SAC Resignation

SAC regretfully accepts the resignation of Derek Lisi. The chairs read aloud his resignation letter, in which Derek stated that he enjoyed his experience serving on the council and wishes SAC the best.

It was noted that per SAC by-laws, resignations must be submitted in writing (email is acceptable) and addressed to the President.

3. Guest Speaker: Kimberly Roskiewicz, Assistant Vice President of Human Resources Operations, and David Hoffman, Partner for Strategic Benefit Advisors

After a brief introduction from Kimberly Roskiewicz, David Hoffman from Strategic Benefit Advisors went over next year’s plan and talked about where Brown is compared to other universities. His firm provides health and welfare benefits to large employers, particularly higher education, and includes peer institutions such as Yale, Cornell and Columbia.
Open enrollment is coming up. Strategic underwent a bidding process last year to negotiate savings to the administrative fees that Brown pays to healthcare partners. Brown also offers dental and vision, whose current rates are guaranteed through 2020, and life & disability, whose rates are extended through 2021.

**Question:** Were the University savings passed on to employees?  
**Answer:** Yes. Strategic estimated the total healthcare cost, including the reduced administrative fee, and estimated rates and subsidy based on salary.

The current plan designs are choice and high-deductible health plan (HDHP). Employees pay for 3.6% of choice plan care through modest co-pays while Brown picks up 96.4%. For HDHP, Brown pays 86% of the cost. The HDHP was introduced a few years ago to provide more diverse options for employees, and Strategic is still fine-tuning the plan to provide maximum benefits to employees.

The average actuarial plan value is 91.4%, and Brown is the most generous of all of the 14 comparable higher education institutions Strategic works with, paying an average of 96.2% of employee healthcare costs.

**Question:** What does the plan look like for lower salaries if the average is 91.1%(+0.3%)? Are lower-income people doing better or worse than higher-paid employees?  
**Answer:** There’s no real cost difference. Brown is the most generous no matter which way the plan is reviewed at the low-income level. It gets closer to the median only when accounting for the highest salary levels. There is a big range of salary plans at Brown. The range is about $35/month for the lowest salary to $575/month for the highest.

The working rates estimate is $60,170,000, a 2% increase from the current year, which is a very modest increase showing that the plan has performed favorably. Cost savings will be passed to employees using a 4-tier program (employee only, employee + spouse/partner, employee + child/children, and employee + family). The cost for covering spouses is higher than for children (spouses costs 3.21 times more than individual compared to 2.20 times more for children). Incremental adjustments have been made to better align and be more equitable with how rates are established.
Question: Is there a reason dental isn’t done in the same tiered system?

Answer: In healthcare, the spouses and older people cost more than children, while in dental kids cost more because of orthodontia needs. Brown used to be three-tier in medical but wanted to provide more choices. The dental doesn’t mirror it because data didn’t support the same rate tiers. They maintained what the data has shown in the past.

Question: What is the definition of family?

Answer: Domestic partner/spouse and any children up to age 26.

Question: Do the children (particularly grown ones) need to live in your household?

Answer: No, not necessarily. You do have to be married to/in a same-sex domestic partnership, which generally means living together, but children could live at another address.

95% of Brown employees are in the choice plan. There is no difference in payments from this year to next for individuals. For employee + spouse and employee + family, there is a 2.9% increase. Overall, Brown hasn’t changed the plan in years, with no cost increase for half the population and a modest increase for the other half.

Strategic is proposing no increase to the HDHP cost below $50,000 and an increase for the $50,000+ and 100,000+ salary tiers.

Dental is recommending a 3.55% increase for 2020. Dental is based on individual, two-person, and family, without the additional levels of tiers based on salaries.

Open enrollment dates: 11/11-12/2. Human Resources will be sending information to all Brown employees.

Question: With the political climate, some Democrats are talking about moving away from employee-based health plans. Is Strategic taking that into account?

Answer: Strategic is paying attention to Washington, but any major change would usually take 8-10 years, so it’s too early to take action. The Affordable
Care Act that passed under President Obama had all kinds of metrics and mandates that took years to implement, with a lot of focus around making sure employers understood and compliant.

Question: A woman mentioned to a SAC member that there used to be a buy-out program where she would get cash for declining insurance through Brown, obtaining it elsewhere from her spouse. She wondered if there’s an explanation for why the buy-out ended and whether it might come back.

Answer: David didn’t know Brown specifics but provided a broad market view. The opt-out credit was fairly prevalent 10+ years ago but fewer than 10% of employers still offer them because it costs less to cover someone than pay them for declining insurance. There wasn't a value to offer that credit, so most institutions have removed that option.

4. Wellness Fair
The fair is on Wednesday, November 13th from 10 a.m.-2 p.m.
University Human Resources asked SAC for volunteers, and Grace Young will circulate a sign-up sheet.

5. Holiday Party and Other Event Updates

- Holiday Party
  Date change: The new holiday party date is Wednesday, December 11th at South Street Landing (SSL), 4th floor.

Tara Greenwood reported that SAC has confirmed 8 prizes; can we have two more volunteers? Barbara Simoneau and Annie Kennedy offered to help Tara Greenwood, Dawn Cummings, Ray Windsor, and Maria Sokolova contact people to ask for prizes. Tara Greenwood will share a list and sample email with all of SAC for anyone interested to reach out to businesses. Tara added that people should particularly ask for donations from anyone they have a relationship with.

Mike Leitao wasn’t able to get parking for a year, but SAC understands that it was a stretch. A parking spot was tried when South Street Landing was launched, but due to there being too many issues, Brown can’t offer it as a prize again.

Regarding transportation for the holiday party, Mike Leitao noted that we passed the deadline to coordinate the transportation. The lots around South Street Landing can’t be
opened at 4 p.m. to be free for staff parking. At 5 p.m., surface lots that are not gated are technically open. Brown runs the shuttles through third party and need to let them know ahead of time if we need more drivers. Mike Leitao will send Marguerite Joutz the recommendation of what would be ideal to ensure good participation. Invitations should include all details for helping attendees coordinate how to get there. Some people waited over an hour for shuttles out of Sayles last year, and December is cold for having people walk between SSL and the main campus. Borrowing buses from other departments such as the Athletics Department or the School of Nursing could be considered, but Marguerite asked SAC to explore all current resources first.

Laura Dobler noted that some academic departments aren't happy about the party being held at SSL, as they are already concerned about shuttles being small and inconsistent and parking being difficult.

Last year’s big prize was lunch with President Paxson. (Laura Dobler won but didn’t have instructions on how to follow up, so she never had it.) We can offer it again as a signature prize and clarify how to make it happen once someone has won by sending Marguerite Joutz the winner’s name.

SAC will be collecting for Toys for Tots at the party, and those who bring a toy can receive a raffle ticket.

- **Staff trivia**
  
  This is tomorrow! The Student Activities Office will split the pizza order in half (12 p.m. and 1 p.m. deliveries) so we don’t run out of food by the second set this time. Check out the Today@Brown listing as people are being asked to register teams this year if they have them in advance (teams are helpful for the hosts to know, but don’t worry if you didn’t register). Show up and have fun! Also, bring winter clothing - especially coats - for the drive by the Office of Sustainability and U-FLI Center, who will have a barrel on site.

- **Faculty in Focus**
  
  This is November 14th and will feature Professor Wendy Schiller. Beth Travers is waiting for a title so it can be advertised and Grace will give SAC a heads-up when it’s going into Today@Brown. SAC members have to register; we can’t hold slots.

- **Cultural Potluck**
  
  Only six people are registered on Eventbrite RSVP but 10 have signed up to bring a dish, so there is confusion about how many are actually coming. They may not understand the registration process.

  Laura Dobler updated the room to be smaller (South Street Landing Room 499) and suggested having a couple of power strips on site for people who bring crock pots (Barbara volunteered to bring one). Jenny Quiroz will take the lead on the event. Mike Leitao arranged parking for the speaker, who will present on how culture affects why we
eat what we eat. SAC should promote this event.

- **First-generation Staff Networking Event**
  The Office of Institutional Equity and Diversity is hiring a new part-time person who will run affinity groups. The first-generation staff group will be part of those groups, which aren’t yet fully formulated. SAC can help network once the group is formed and moving forward. Laura Dobler is waiting to hear how it should be advertised. She wants to change up the program so it’s not identical to the first one that was held and doesn’t limit attendees.

- **PawSox Fundraiser**
  It was noted that Sarah Aneyci helped secure $150 to BrownGives from the Pawtucket Red Sox family event in August.

6. **Staff Concerns & Updates**

There were no staff concerns or updates.

We have nine applicants so far who have applied to be on SAC. Please promote that we’re looking for SAC members for next year. The due date is 11/15 and we need to fill nine seats.

Sarah Brown wondered who manages the Working@Brown group on Facebook (Jessica Pontarelli recently acquired it). The group promotes things like BrownGives, and Jess confirmed that she can mention the SAC application on the site.

**Upcoming Events and Reminders:**

- Staff trivia w/ SAO | Oct. 23 | 12-2 p.m. | Kasper Multipurpose Room
- Faculty in Focus event | Nov. 14 | 12-1:30 p.m. | Faculty Club
- Cultural Potluck | Nov. 4 | 12:30-1:30 p.m. | South Street Landing 497 & 498
- Parent Networking Event | Nov. 7 | 12-1 p.m. | South Street Landing 497
- First-Generation Staff Networking Event | Nov. 19 | 12-1 p.m. | South Street Landing 499
- Holiday party | December 11 | 3-5p.m. | South Street Landing

*The next scheduled SAC meeting is on Tuesday, November 12 at 12 p.m. at the Stephen Robert ’62 Campus Center.*