
Shared Governance Minutes

July 13, 2023

Members present: Rachel Sveda-Webb, Bradley Griffith, Catherin Hoekstra, Tammy Wernsman, Todd Moe, Gretchen Kohlaas, Drew Stacy, Magnus Noble, Kaylee Smith.

SEM Plan: A draft of the plan was given as a handout. Upon a roll call vote, the SGC voted to approve the SEM Plan.

Professional Development Committee: The consensus was that HR should have a more significant role in PD.

Antiracism Statement: The statement was taken to the President's Cabinet, and the PC made revisions. A final draft approved by PC was provided to the SGC and Toyin Fox. Toyin will attend the September SGC meeting regarding the revisions to the accompanying Proclamation.

Grant Employee Vacation Time: A request was made regarding the ability for grant employees to roll over vacation time. Missy Brown will be invited to the SGC meeting in September to share her concerns.

Organizational Changes and the Role of Shared Governance: Todd Moe stated that faculty have asked that organizational changes be discussed in SGC meetings so that information can be communicated with faculty and others that the reorganization may impact. Chair Sveda-Webb will draft a request to President's Cabinet requesting steps for better communication regarding large scale changes and will bring that to the SGC in September. The hope is that employees have an opportunity to ask questions and provide feedback for consideration of those making the changes before they are fully implemented.

Employee Comments: All comments and responses are verbatim.

Comment #1 Safety Trainings: Question. Safety being the topic. Is there any reason we do not take the Convocation Day(s), or anytime classes are not in session, and have trainings on First Aid, CPR, Blood Borne Pathogens and/or training on the defibrillators? Also, could we have massive shooter training?

Response: In progress.

Comment #2 Employee Comments/Responses Location: What is the reasoning behind putting the shared governance employee comment responses on the Intranet where a log in is required to view them? They were previously available on the website for the general public to view.

Response: At this time the comments and responses will remain on the Intranet.

Comment #3 Insurance Rates (3 comments total):

A) Why has nothing been done regarding the outrageous insurance that we are being forced to take here at the college? Not everyone that is employed here or considering employment here require the health insurance and it just keeps getting worse. We have seen nothing regarding pay increases for

faculty and staff for the upcoming fiscal year, but we get the emails stating that our pay is being cut once again, for one reason or another. It has been stated that employee morale is low here at the college and no one knows what to do about it, when things like this keep happening. John A. Logan used to be a place people wanted to work at because of the benefits that came with the job, that over the last couple of years, have begun to be taken away. Employees don't feel recognized or appreciated for the work that they do by the time off at holidays being taken away, longer and expected unpaid hours, and increase in money being taken from our checks. We are all trying to work hard for John A and provide for our families, but at the end of the day the compensation and acknowledgement being shown at the college is almost non-existent, especially when we are expected to take on more and more responsibilities.

B) The health insurance premiums have gotten out of hand. JALC is going to start losing valuable employees to other colleges, universities, and companies because the insurance is not affordable at this point. I have several acquaintances with equal, or even better, coverage at a cheaper cost. Is anyone working with BCBS to negotiate the cost? I don't think simply bringing back the Insurance Committee will solve the problem. That was always a committee and nothing came about it. There were never any changes. I am not sure how lower level employees even justify working here, especially if they're on a family plan. They are only working for insurance at that point. Who is working on this?

C) Why are the LOSA health insurance rates different from the other groups on campus?

Response: I want to thank those who reached out regarding the increase in the Insurance premiums for the upcoming year. I, too, am very dissatisfied with the increase; the executive team and I have been discussing the situation over the last two years.

A couple of items for context: The Team Care insurance contract went into effect long before I arrived at the College. As a point of clarification, our carrier is not BlueCross/Blue Shield; it is, as I mentioned, Team Care; they are a large insurance carrier in Southern Illinois and the Metro area; when I came, I was amazed at the cost and the requirement that all employees be on the plan. There is no current way to negotiate with our carrier as the recent increases are locked in as part of the contract agreed to over five years ago.

After I reviewed the contract in the summer of 2021, I discussed its merits and failings with the executive team. The result was a discussion of engaging a new carrier. To that end, we began looking at alternatives and the current contract to determine if, when, and how we could move to a new carrier with better rates and more choices, including giving staff the individual option of not taking the insurance. We spoke to several brokers and carriers and received information regarding our options.

According to association contracts, College policy, and administrative procedure, an Insurance Committee must be convened to discuss any potential change to coverage. The Insurance Committee has a substantial say in picking our health insurance carrier. I asked the Insurance Committee to meet and discuss the possibility of changing carriers. For an example of what a new carrier had to offer, I brought in a group to present their insurance package. After several meetings and discussions, the Insurance Committee rejected the idea of leaving our current carrier. The work to bring in options constituted many months of meetings and research. With the Insurance Committee's desires considered, it was decided to shelve the idea of changing carriers for the time being.

To be clear, I have never varied in my opinion that we must find a better option for our staff. Even before this latest increase in premiums, I indicated to the Cabinet and the Board that we must convene the Insurance Committee this Fall in an effort to review our options and to change carriers before we sign a new contract; the current contract was for five years and is coming to a close.

We have already begun the work of reviewing our health insurance, and last month the executive team engaged a health insurance consultant to discuss our current plan and options that may be better for the College community. We will actively bring opportunities to the Insurance Committee for review this Fall. I encourage each of you to reach out to your representatives on the Insurance Committee (the committee list will be posted on the Shared Governance Council website after assignments are made in early Fall) and let your voice be heard regarding these options as they are presented.

As Shared Governance is now in place, the Insurance Committee will report its findings and recommendations to Cabinet and the College community through its meetings and minutes. The Cabinet and I will consider these recommendations as we research the health insurance needs of the College.

Kirk Overstreet

Guidelines/Procedures for Employee Comments: PC asked if this can be reworded to say “suggestions and questions.” The SGC felt that to keep open communication and not limit/restrict comment options, it remains as “employee comments,” and the guidelines/procedures will remain the same. Chair Sveda-Webb will draft a process for the SGC to review and revise.

Membership Selection Information for Website: Chair Sveda-Webb will reach out to Robyn Brummett and Pixie Vaughn to see if one of them is willing to take Zack Garrett’s place. Justin Burton will give an update regarding employment groups after the monthly BOT meetings.

Council Member Comments/Open Forum: Chair Sveda-Webb asked if the second Thursday of each month at 2- 3:30 pm is still a good meeting day/time. There were no conflicts. The SGC meeting will continue with the same schedule.

No other comments.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:30 pm.