Staff Senate

Clerical Roundtable MINUTES

**March 23, 2023; 12:30 PM**

# **Your Senators**

*Amy Black, Faculty Administrative Assistant, Philosophy*

*Grismeiris De Jesus, Secretary, Communications & Media*

*Peggy Doolittle, Secretary, Parent/Community Relation Office of Annual Giving*

*Melissa Eckenrode, Administrative Assistant, English*

*Kym Fetsko, Administrative Assistant, Weinberg Memorial Library*

*Kristi Klien, Coordinator of PCPS Academic Affairs, PCPS Deans Office*

*Andrea Malia, Faculty Secretary, Communications*

*Pauline Palko, Administrative Assistant, Dean of Students*

* 16 Clerical staff members attended in-person and 13 on Zoom, 5 clerical senators and Patti Tetreault also attended.
* Senator Peggy Doolittle offered the opening prayer.
* Submitted Questions – Patti Tetreault
* *Will remote work option (2 days a week) be considered/offered for the summer?*

Patti indicated that there was a possibility, but that Cabinet had not discussed it yet. She also mentioned that the Staff Senate had a sub-committee working on a Remote Policy proposal that and the committee has an aggressive timeline for presentation to the Cabinet. She did not know if it would be up in place by summer but once decisions are made that information will be shared.

* *Are there any retirement incentives under consideration?*

Patti offered some historical context for this question and explained that in the past, retirement packages were offered to qualifying groups which included a certain period of time with salary and benefits continuation. There are many things to consider when this offer is made- loss of institutional knowledge can be a strain on the University, and one of the financial benefits is often, when someone retires from a position, in these circumstances, the position is then not filled but, that is not the case at this time. Additionally, the expense of funding such a program and the financial capacity to fund the program needs to be covered in a single fiscal year, and there are no funds earmarked for such a program at this time. In determining what groups can be considered for retirement incentives, compliance with labor such as the “Older Worker Discrimination Act” are required. Follow-up question as to whether an employee who has been offered a retirement incentive can extend the date of their retirement beyond the window. Patti explained that on a case-by-case basis such as if a replacement is not found before the date of the window closing (for example, retirement by May 31st) the employee may be asked to stay beyond that date, so the position is not left vacant.

* *Where is the University with funding the compensation plan? Will the University be able to fund any increases?*

Patti explained that the 23/24 Fiscal year budget runs from 6/1/23 through 5/31/24 is what is being worked on right now. The team is considering the goal of funding the compensation plan increases in their budget talks. Further discussions will be held at the end of April to present and approve a budget.

She further offered the explanation for the what the Compensation plan is – the goal was to bring all employees to their target within their pay grade (min – mid- max) rate. She offered the example that a new -hire would start at the minimum rate, and as experience was gained and responsibilities change, they would be reaching the mid-point, finally the max rate is reached when someone is the same roll for a long period of time. In 2017 when the review was started it was discovered that everyone was not where they should be. The compensation plan was rolled out in phases with Phase 1 to get as many folks as possible to that minimum, Phase 2 was rolled out by 2019 and they were able to get approximately 87% at their target rates. When COVID interrupted the process there was a need to evaluate what could still be accomplished. A further consideration is the raising of the minimum wage in Pennsylvania to $15/hr. The University’s current minimum rate $13.50/hr. HR is always thinking about compensation rates and funding the plan in place as well as trying to meet market sensitive positions (such as IT and Police) which are difficult to fill due to high demand for these types of jobs.

* *How can the University afford to build a new building, (even with a grant)?*

Patti explained that the grant makes the building a possibility, she acknowledged that it will not cover the full costs, but it puts the University in a good position to consider the project. The building will relieve the spatial needs for the University’s current programs and leaves room for expanding programs which will generate new revenue. The grant does have some community need based criteria which must be met, i.e., community work force development, before the grant is awarded.

* *There have been quite a few position eliminations, how many more will there be?*

Patti indicated that she honestly could not answer this question. She went on to state that there are times when decisions are made to move forward. There is nothing definitive right now in the budget review (i.e., we need to “cut 5 jobs”) Patti stated again that recent events were divisional restructuring decisions not budget issues, and if there is any anxiety about job security, Patti asks that individuals please speak with her or their supervisor.

* *Supervisor support for staff attending University special events varies across campus. Can HR help to encourage participation at programs that provide professional development opportunities for staff?*

Patti indicated that it would be helpful to know how HR can assist. If it is a matter of issues with Supervisors, she would like those individuals to speak with her directly to see how they can help. If it is a matter of encouraging staff members to attend events, she would be happy to assist in promoting events.

* Please email one of your representatives or [staffsenate@scranton.edu](mailto:staffsenate@scranton.edu) with any questions or concerns.
* Upcoming Staff Senate Events:
  + Nominations are now open for Staff Senate until April 13th
  + April 19th- Staff Senate Meeting 2:00pm BRN 500
  + April 25th- Spring Communication Symposium is scheduled -invite will be sent after Easter break.
* Meeting adjourned at 1:20