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**ACADEMIC STAFF ASSEMBLY MEETING MINUTES**

**272 Bascom Hall**

**Monday, February 14, 2022**

**3:30 to 5:00 p.m.**

Provost Scholz called the meeting to order at 3:31 p.m.

**Guest: Rebecca Blank, Chancellor**

Chancellor Blank reported on COVID cases declining on campus, in Dane County, and across the state. There are a number of strategies in place for the spring semester. For COVID testing, there is a combination of antigen testing available at Memorial Union and Union South, as well as PCR testing at the University Club. We are continuing to require indoor masking at present and making N95 and KN95 masks available to faculty and staff. Dane County has announced that it is ending its current mask mandate after it expires on March 1. UW-Madison will be discussing what will happen with the campus mask mandate in light of this news. Chancellor Blank reminded everyone that booster appointments are currently available through University Health Services. She encouraged individuals who are able to do so to get their booster doses and, for those who have received boosters outside of UHS, to upload their status to help get a better picture of where the university community is at.

The Title and Total Compensation Project has been implemented after a number of delays. For the first time, we have a way to compare staff salaries to those at other institutions. Based on feedback from ASEC and others, the timeline for TTC appeals was extended. The Office of Human Resources is providing school/college/division HR reps training on a number of issues related to TTC. We will continue to look at areas where we’ve had appeals, as well as job categories that may need further work. On compensation in general, we ran the performance bonus program, with $5 million allocated through December. There was also the discretionary compensation fund, with $4 million in base adjustments allocated for staff between December and March. Finally, the state approved 2% increases, which were effective in January. There will be another 2% increase coming in January 2023.

Jay Rothman has been named as the new UW System President. He has been the CEO of the law firm Foley and Lardner LLP since 2011. He has a great deal of management experience running complex organizations and has worked closely with business and political leaders. He starts in his new role on June 1. Chancellor Blank plans to meet with him in March to discuss issues for UW-Madison. Applications for the Vice Chancellor for Finance and Administration have closed, and the search firm has a good level of interest in this position. The semifinalist interviews will be conducted in March, with the finalist interviews scheduled for April. Applications for the Chancellor position will close on March 11. Semifinalists will be interviewed in April, with finalist visits scheduled for early May. There will be an opportunity for the campus community to engage with the finalists. Chancellor Blank’s last day on the job will be May 31, and it is expected that the new Chancellor will be named by then.

Chancellor Blank addressed the Board of Regents on Thursday and delineated a number of achievements that the campus can be proud of over the last ten years, as well as noting staff’s contributions to those accomplishments. There are also a number of challenges that the institution faces, which the new Chancellor and the Board will have to work on in the years ahead. A video of the presentation is available on the Board of Regents website and on the Chancellor’s blog.

**Guest: Joshua Schiffman, Director, Employee Assistance Office**

Joshua Schiffman provided an overview of the Employee Assistance Office (EAO). The office provides a confidential venue in which to work through either personal or work-related concerns. EAO provides individual or group counseling, management and co-worker consultation, customized trainings based on departmental/unit needs, crisis response, and grief/loss support, in addition to navigating referrals to other resources. EAO has recently added a new staff counselor. Currently services are offered in a virtual format, although for individuals who don’t have confidential space in their office, EAO offers a dedicated space in the Lowell Center to have those confidential interactions. In 2021, 57% of the clients that EAO saw were academic staff, with the majority of those being new clients. Another option for employee assistance services is LifeMatters, which is a third-party provider that the university works with to provide services at any time, including outside of conventional business hours.

**Automatic Consent Business**

The Academic Staff Assembly minutes of Monday, December 13, 2021, were approved.

**Reports**

ASEC Vice Chair Mallory Musolf reminded attendees that the deadline for applications for the Spring Academic Staff Professional Development Program is Monday, March 21. Registration for the Academic Staff Institute is now open. This will be held on April 13 at Union South.

Jenny Dahlberg presented the ASPRO report. There is still a discounted promotion to become a member, and Jenny encouraged interested individuals to contact her with any questions about joining. There are over 30 bills currently in the Legislature that ASPRO is tracking. There are seven that ASPRO has registered opposition to, largely centered around legislation influencing curricular decision-making. ASPRO has also registered in favor of some legislation, such as the proposal for the new Engineering Building.

Beth Larson, Co-Chair of the Committee for Women in the University, presented the annual report of that committee (ASA #776). Beth highlighted some of the work of the committee over the past year, including meeting with campus and UW System experts to talk about needs and initiatives for women on campus. There was an ad hoc committee that worked on policies to address challenges related to COVID and used to support caregivers. The committee also fielded a survey to guide future work and help identify priorities. Survey respondents indicated childcare as the top challenge, which intersects with the other top four challenges: compensation, gender climate, promotion/advancement, and racial climate. The committee received many recommendations from open field questions, and the committee has developed subcommittees to examine those recommendations this semester.

Alissa Oleck, Chair of the Nominating Committee, presented the Academic Staff Executive Committee slate (ASA #777). Those running include Stephanie Elkins, Alissa Ewer, Shane Hubbard, Julie Johnson, Albert Muniz, and Keith Poulsen. The petition process for adding candidates to the slate will be sent out after the Assembly meeting.

**Academic Staff Executive Committee Candidate (ASA #778)**

The Assembly voted to elect Shane Hubbard to the Academic Staff Executive Committee.

**Resolution on Prioritization of Staff Salaries by UW-Madison Leadership (ASA #779)**

Veronica Scott, ASA District #448 Representative, moved approval of Academic Staff Document #779, the Resolution on Prioritization of Staff Salaries by UW-Madison Leadership. Seconded. Approved.

**Provost Report**

Provost Scholz reported that 13 UW-Madison colleagues were recently recognized as fellows of American Association for the Advancement of Science. The Provost recognized Kevin Niemi, former Assembly member and ASEC Chair as an academic staff employee who was one of the fellowship recipients. Turning to enrollment, this year we have seen an increase of 12% in applications. It is the first year that we have received over 60,000 applications from students wanting to attend UW-Madison. Applications increased in almost every category. The semester is off to a good start, with 92% of classes being held in person. A number of meetings and events are being held in person as well, and university sponsored travel is also taking place. We have the capacity to do around 5,000 PCR tests per week, and we continue to make antigen tests available. There is movement to revisit mask mandates in light of the expiration of Dane County’s mask mandate. There is also a great deal of thought and discussion about mental health with respect to our students and our colleagues. Provost Scholz emphasized the importance of self-care as we navigate the uncertainty and disruption that has come about during the pandemic.

Meeting adjourned at 5:00 pm.

*Minutes submitted by Jake Smith, Secretary of the Academic Staff*