

AHE SENATE MEETING MINUTES

December 10, 2024

In-Person and Online Via Zoom



Attendance:

In Person

Bem, Greg
Carlson, Bobbi
Campbell, Holly
Cary, Chris
Case, Emma
Clark, Sam
Cosner, Rebecca
Daily, Bev
Deffe, Cindy
Deyo, Robert
Dimick, Susan
Dubois, Rick
Eggerman, Jason
Flock, Barb
Franklin, Jackie
Gamble, Anna
George, Kathy
Guthrie-Martinez, Megan
Green, Sabina
Kier, Laura
Lopez-Schindler, Lenora
Martens-Haworth, Megan
Martin, Melinda
Megow, Lyn
Momono, Christina
Nelson, Thomas
Newcomer, Tybre
Nix, Jason
Pearson, Michelle
Phillips, Cozette
Rambo, Bill

Roe, Timothy
Satake, Katie
Satake, Scott
Stack, Brian
Vogel, Rob
Woods, Laura
Zirotti, Laurent

Online

Amstadter, Logan
Anderson, Amy
Anthony, Jared
Bagwell, Geoff
Bailey, Ian
Bishop, Adriana
Bjerke, Joy
Boyle, Mariah
Browning, Kristen
Butcher, Jacob
Butler, Susan
Cartwright, Ben
Cavegn, Ambrose
Compton, Renee
Condon, Jill
Cuisinier, Eddy
Cusack, Jessica
Doyle, Diamond
Drake, LeighAnna
Fadeley, Megan
Fick, Karen
Grover, Michelle
Hain, Ronda

Hein, Valorie
Henry, Chad
Hopkins, Jaye
Johnston, Landon
Jones, Tina
Krestian, Kenny
Lackey, Ray
LaPlante, Roger
McCoy, Jennifer
McKirdie, Rob
McLean, Scott
Michel, John
Moore, Michele
Morgan, Heather
Morrow, Corrine
Murphy, Helen
Nemri, Kamilia
Osborne, Diana
O'Sullivan, Mikey
Pelham, Alex
Rasmussen, Angela
Roewe, Liz
Smith, Angela
Stasney, David
Steele, KayDee
Stephens, Sam
Throop, Judith
Trujillo, Cindy
Wanke, Colette
Wash, Shawn
Wylie, Mark

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 2:45 p.m. by Bev Daily.

Minutes

Approval of Minutes

Holly Campbell motioned to approve the minutes; Lyn Megow seconded. The motion passed.

Old Business

Bargaining

Since we started bargaining in the Fall of 2023, to date, the bargaining team has gone to the table 58 times, for approximately 2 hours per session. That is about 116 hours at the table actively bargaining. We have also had at least 75 meetings as a team or with the Bargaining Commission here at WEA, totally up to at least another 130 hours of time.

We recently signed tentative agreements (TAs) on several articles. For example, we signed TAs for updates to Appendix D (Seniority "RIF" units) and Appendix H (Workload Categories). These are mainly housekeeping updates, not substantive changes. We have also signed a tentative agreement for all of Article 3 (Working Conditions). This included finalizing new language on topics such as security cameras and the recording of meetings.

Another TA was for Article 7, which relates to leave. In this article, we have incorporated language that broadens the definition of when bereavement leave can be used. We also reached an agreement to allow adjuncts with longevity status or above to have access to the same bereavement leave as their full-time colleagues, rather than having to rely only on the use of sick leave for such a situation. Article 7 will also contain a new section related to PFML (Paid Family and Medical Leave).

Another article where we were able to reach a tentative agreement is Article 24 relating to adjuncts. This agreement would be that (upon approval of the full contract) longevity, associate, and associate plus adjuncts will be paid off of a salary scale, instead of receiving stipends. All longevity, associate, and associate plus adjuncts who teach at least a 50% load will see no change in their take-home pay in the short-term. Those teaching over 50% load will see an increase, and those teaching less than 50% load will see a decrease. However, there are very few adjuncts with longevity, associate, or associate plus status teaching less than 50% load. Additionally, although they may see a decrease in the short-term, they will eventually see an increase. This is because the major advantage of a salary scale is that, unlike stipends, these amounts will increase with COLAs in the future. This was an issue where both sides of the table had a shared interest, we problem-solved together, and reached a solution that both sides were happy about in the end.

Administration has also put forward a new proposal related to Counseling. However, since administration previously asked to connect the salary scale and Counseling into a package deal, we are currently unable to respond to their Counseling proposal. At this point, we are not going to be able to reach agreement this quarter on the salary scale, so we will be resuming conversations in January.

Everything that has been bargained over the past year has happened through a collaborative approach that has worked well. We have had productive bargaining throughout the past year.

The biggest challenge at this point is salary. The Chancellor had no problem convincing the Board that it was necessary to invest in market adjustment increases for administration's salaries, so we have stated that he now needs to use that same enthusiasm to convince the Board of Trustees that it is worth investing in faculty

salaries. During the last two years with local funds and market adjustments, the Chancellor's salary has increased 29%, the Presidents' salaries have increased 22%, and the Vice Presidents' salaries (VPI, VPL, VPSS, and VPSA) have increased 26% to 29%. During that same time period, faculty salaries, as well as Dean salaries, have only increased 15%. This 15% increase for faculty came only through COLAs, meaning there have been no market adjustments or local dollars invested over the past two years on faculty salaries. We have informed the Chancellor's team that faculty salaries at CCS have consistently ranked in the bottom quartile of CTC salaries in the state, and that this should concern the Board if we are truly committed to attracting and retaining quality faculty to create the best community college experience in the northwest.

We may need help convincing the Board of Trustees that investing in faculty is important so stay tuned for more information about potential approaches to make your voices heard. We may need to call for faculty action. We will be considering options. For any organization, your values are connected with where you spend your money. Currently, looking at our District, it would appear like they value executive administration more so than faculty who work directly with students on a day-to-day basis.

We will be going back to the bargaining table in January to continue working on the salary schedule and the section of the contract related to counselors. Your AHE bargaining team is working together well and is working hard to represent faculty's opinions. We may need to ask faculty to share their thoughts with the board or the chancellor.

A member asked if they have decoupled counseling from salary? At this point, administration still sees counseling and salary as linked together.

New Business

Support of Faculty

We want to say that we support our faculty. Given the political change and unrest, whether you are happy or unhappy, we understand that there are concerns about all the unknowns about what may or may not happen. AHE is 100% behind all of our faculty and we will be fighting for you and supporting you moving forward. We have talked with the chancellor and he has committed to supporting all faculty as well. The power of the union is that we can support and shield you from any potential repercussions or other issues that come up down the road.

Public Information Requests

Evaluations are available for public records requests, so it is fine that they are sent through email. We requested some information from our state assistant Attorney General. Parts of employees files that are available in a public records request requires CCS to notify us individually, as well as AHE, if your personal information is being shared. This can include things like salary, home address, and other personal information. The only thing that is exempt is information that would be personally embarrassing, but only if they do not discuss issues of misconduct. It needs to be information that is offensive to a reasonable person or not of legitimate uses for the public for it to be exempted from a public records request.

Some of us feel pretty exposed by this. Public records requests do have to have specifics around what someone actually wants (it can't just be everything from one person, for example).

Be careful about what you put in an email. Certainly anything put in an email is likely accessible through a public information request. Be aware of these issues because as we start to see more lawsuits we are anticipating more public records requests.

Transitory information includes information that you can get rid of relatively quickly. We are working on putting together clarity on what information you have to keep and for how long. This may be particularly relevant for things like faculty text messaging students, for example.

We are working on gathering more information about this and will continue sharing more information as we learn more.

As long as you have not used a personal email for anything work related, including contacting students, your personal email would not be subject to a public records request. Similarly, your personal computer would not be subject to a public records request unless you have downloaded work related information onto your personal device.

Your personal email address (not the content within your email) is a matter of public record if you have used it for anything related to CCS.

A member asked if we use our phone for the Multi Factor Authentication does that mean that it is discoverable? No - it is not discoverable if that is all you use it for. Your personal devices are only discoverable if you download anything related to your CCS employment onto your device.

District Budget

We have all heard about the concerns related to the budget that have come out from the chancellor. It sounds like we will have to pay back money from the OFM mistake. They believe that there will be 4.5 million less in our overall budget. They are also concerned with the allocation model from the state board. Finally, they are concerned with the forecasts from the state.

In the past, CCS has been very worried about reduction of funds from the state that turned out to not be nearly as bad as they had originally forecasted. That seems likely to be the case this year as well.

These issues are the reasons administration is saying they can't add ongoing expenses, despite the fact that they have increased administrator salaries for more than a million dollars a year of ongoing costs.

The board had discussed remodeling the lodge several years ago. Kevin signed the contract for the lodge when he was new into his chancellor role.

The re-brand was another piece that the board had made plans for when administration believed that they had more money.

Administration could still choose to not spend those dollars at this point.

Bev has the presentation that was given to the board last spring about the lodge and its related costs. It is public, so if you would like to see the proposal you can ask Bev for it.

The plan is to have HR at the lodge but not Benefits. We have expressed, several times, concerns about separating out benefits and human resources and having them across town from each other.

The governor's budget will come out at the end of December. It will not be the final budget, but that will influence the conversation and will be the starting point for discussions in the legislature.

A member asked if some of the reserves will be used to pay down the loan for the SFCC gym remodel to get tuition the same on both campuses? We don't know what decisions will be made there yet. That was a possible use given by the Chancellor but Cabinet will decide how the funds will be used.

AHE will be part of a lobby day, in Olympia, on January 30th. This will include college presidents, WEA higher ed leadership, and students. AHE will be reaching out to some of our AHE Executive Board about attending the lobby day.

There is a bill to make sure that all of the boards across the state would need to have someone who has experience with contracts and labor unions.

Communications

Greg Bem is AHE's new Communications representative. There will be a survey coming out soon to help us gather information about when/how you would like communication/information shared with you. We also are looking into updating and redesigning the website. We are also looking at adding some videos to our website to help members understand various aspects of the contract.

Greg has a lot of experience working with and leading faculty unions, and so we are really excited to have him formally working with us in this capacity.

VEBA

Information was shared related to the Master Contract related to VEBA and the specifics regarding any calls or votes to make changes. Currently, for full-time faculty, 3% of their paycheck is deposited pre-tax into VEBA. For benefit-eligible adjuncts, it is currently 1%. Each group has the opportunity to petition for changes, such as a change to their percentage each year.

A valid petition requires 10% of an employee group to call for a vote. (These are the same rules as are applied to other employee groups such as administrators). Between the two colleges, there are approximately 365 full-time faculty. This means it would require a petition of 37 full-time faculty to call for a vote. There are approximately 120 benefit-eligible adjuncts across the District. So, for this employee group, it would require a petition from around 12 benefit-eligible adjuncts to call for a vote. If there were a successful petition, there would then be a vote, and the simple majority of the returned ballots would determine the results.

Each year, the Benefits Office is required by the Master Contract to send out a reminder to faculty about the things mentioned above. This email came out recently during the week of Thanksgiving and may have created the impression that faculty had only 10 days to generate a petition. This is not the case. Any member could have started a petition at any time during Fall quarter, and the email from the Benefits Office was merely a reminder that the deadline was approaching, since any changes to VEBA take effect January 1st.

There are many resources (i.e. the Benefits Office, the VEBA website, your AHE executive board, etc.) if you wish to learn more about the logistics of using VEBA. This update is only intended to clarify the petition and voting process.

A member asked if we have more information about whether all members have to be included in the VEBA. There are IRS rules that make it so that all members of an employee group have to be at the same percentage if utilizing VEBA. At this time the IRS does not allow individual members of an employee group to opt out of VEBA or to select a different percentage from the rest of their group.

President's and Vice Presidents' Reports

AHE President Bev Daily:

The HSI trainings are how administration keep track of what trainings people need to do. It works by taking an inventory of questions which will help to determine what trainings you would need to take. There are some trainings that everyone would have to do annually, while other trainings that may be required would depend on your specific job. Some trainings would be annual, while others would be one-time trainings. AHE is working hard to make this process as clear and painless as possible.

We are watching the budget from the state closely, and we will also be watching the allocation model process from the state board closely.

There will be a survey coming out about possible ways to save money at the district. Please fill it out and be truthful.

A member asked about the I-732 money. We won't know for sure until the legislature convenes next year, but we think it is unlikely that it will be affected. AHE and WEA will be asking for the COLA's to be fully funded.

SCC VP Jason Eggerman:

The call has gone out for the Vice-President of Instruction screening committee. The emails sent out last week contain a rough draft of proposed meeting times that are currently being held on calendars for this committee. President Martin has asked for a robust pool of names and wants to ensure the committee is representative of the college. She has dedicated six spots for faculty on this committee, with ideally one person from each division. Participating in the process is the best way to ensure your department or division has a voice. Please submit your names to Rob Deyo or Jason Eggerman by Friday if you are interested.

Faculty who requested positions should have been notified by now of whether they received a "yes," a "no," or a "maybe," related to their position request. There were a total of 21 requests this year. Of those, 8 received a "yes," while 9 received a "no." There were also 4 who received a "maybe." If you have questions about specific positions, contact the department chair who requested it. They should know what the response was.

We received a few questions this quarter regarding the Master Contract and whose job it is to hire adjuncts. The Dean is the hiring authority, so they are the only person who can officially offer employment to an adjunct. The Master Contract, however, does say that one of the department chair's duties is to advise the Dean with regards to adjuncts. The reason for this is that a Dean is unlikely to be a content expert in all areas that they supervise. Each Dean likely handles this slightly differently, so it would not be uncommon for some Dean's to simply ask the department chair who to hire, while others may want to interview the adjuncts themselves. However, if a Dean is hiring adjuncts without consulting with the department at all, please let us know.

SCC Extension VP Rob Deyo:

Unfortunately the PACE program is closing down. The program has met a specific need in Spokane for a long time. They will not be accepting any new students, and there will be a teach out for current students through June. We are hoping that those adjunct faculty will land in other departments on campus. The faculty have done a great job developing the program and working with these students over the years.

ESL was granted an annualized conversion and a maybe for an additional tenure position. ABE requests were denied.

SFCC VP Jackie Franklin:

On November 19, 2024, Bonnie Glantz sent an email regarding SFCC position requests. SFCC had 5 retirements and SFCC Cabinet is recruiting for 3 tenured positions and 3 annualized positions. The rest of the position requests were a no. This feels disheartening in that we are losing a tenured faculty position while instead they are adding more administrators.

Update on reorganization is that we heard that it was done. We understand there is an upcoming meeting with the last of the faculty impacted. Please call or text 1-509-991-2348 (not email) Jackie if you have any questions about the reorganization.

Take a break. Everyone deserves it. Enjoy the holidays with your friends and family.

Adjunct Representative Lena Lopez Schindler:

Remind all adjuncts to check the box at the bottom that says they are “currently employed”, and that they also reach out to the benefits office. If you are 50% or more in fall and winter then you are benefit eligible, so please reach out to AHE or HR if you think you should be receiving benefits but are not.

Good of the order:

Rob Vogel made a motion to adjourn. Rick Dubois seconded. The meeting adjourned at 4:15 p.m.