



Staff Advisory Council Meeting: November 6: 3:00 – 5 PM  
Rincon Room – Student Union Main Campus

- I. Call to order – Claudia Arias at 3: 02 PM
- II. Introduction by Claudia Arias of guest speaker, Interim Provost Andrew Comrie

Provost Comrie opened the floor for questions after a brief introduction. He says everyone is very busy on campus. He understands that staff concerns and perspectives are somewhat different than any other group on campus. Therefore he understands the importance of having conversations with university staff members. His job is like a CEO of a large company, with a 1.6 billion dollar budget, 15,000 employees and 40,000 customers (students).

Question 1: What is the most surprising thing about being Provost?

Answer: Two answers, one serious and one humorous. The serious answer is being surprised that people really listen and respect what he says. He has been on the UA campus for over 20 years, but being Provost brings respect. The humorous answer is that having a golf cart at his disposal to drive between meetings is a nice campus perk.

Question 2: Why are ERE rates calculated differently for different employment groups?

Answer: Employee Related Expenses (ERE) for each employment category are based on the number of employees in the pool and the average salary rate. In most cases an employment change from classified staff to appointed personnel is valid based on changes in job duties. AP generally assume more responsibilities and risks. To save money, some departments have artificially migrated staff to AP positions. Some departments gravitate towards hiring AP, instead of staff, due to lower ERE rate. President Hart and Provost among others are looking into possibly having staff and AP in the same ERE pool, simply because the benefits are similar. As more low-paid APs are added to AP benefits pool, eventually the rates would be more equal anyway. There will always be different ERE categories for grad students, undergrad students, post-docs and other temporary employees. When employees are paid from state accounts the ERE is paid by central administration. Departments paying employees from grants and other non-state funds feel the budget hardship from higher ERE rates.

Question 3: Is it easier to eliminate an employee whose AP contract is ending, than to lay-off staff?

Answer: Not necessarily. Lay-offs will always be possible for a variety of reasons for both AP and classified staff. One of the main reasons is lack of funds. Human Resources will assist departments with making tough decisions. There is no safety net for either employment group; not even for his position.

Question 4: Is there any plans in the future for employee salary increases?

Answer: The University of Arizona is already a very lean organization. Over the past several years, the State of Arizona has cut 180 million dollars from the University of Arizona budget. Many people have experienced no raise in salary for more than five years. Many staff members lost their jobs. There are 67 less faculty now than three years ago.

A 1% salary increase across the board would mean that the University of Arizona must come up with an additional \$3 million dollars every year for payroll. In the past, sometimes the state has allocated a special budget across the board for state employees. The only other source of revenue for the University of Arizona is to increase tuition or cut expenses and services available. Many students are already taxed beyond what they can endure. Just a few years ago annual UA tuition for an in-state student was \$3,000. Now it costs the same student \$12,000. Out of state students pay more.

President Hart and Provost Comrie realize the university has some serious staff shortages. We are all spread very thin! Often the best faculty members are recruited by other institutions. Faculty departures ultimately affect student recruitment, staff morale and research budgets. There are many equity and market salary issues that must be addressed. It is possible to allocate raises over a stratified disbursement. There is talk of a proportional increase that will benefit lower paid staff most, since they are more greatly affected by cost of living expense increases.

President Hart must also consider State of Arizona politics. If she is requesting more money for a campus budget, but then gives generous raises to all, it will be political suicide. She is having talks now with ABOR and the state legislature about this issue.

The state legislature will set the new 2014 university budget sometime in May. This gives very little time for administration to make a decision about salary increases. Provost Comrie explained that a raise promised for future is a "bet" at best. It is very difficult to make budget estimates in advance.

Question 5: Will salary increases be based on merit? If so, will central administration make performance reviews a requirement?

Provost Comrie believes an employee who is being given a "raise" should be rewarded on merit and performance. In the recent past, the state requested that merit be considered when distributing salary funds. Funds are distributed fairly between all permanent employment categories and that practice will continue in the future. Provost Comrie commented that annual performance appraisals provide valuable feedback for both employees and supervisors. Having good communication about how employees and supervisors view work goals and duties is productive. An employee needs to know if he/she is on right track. Written reviews are not completed by all units on a regular basis. Human Resources Office has some very good tools and tips for performance evaluations.

Question 6: How does RCM affect staff?

RCM (Responsibility Center Management) is a model for managing funds. About half of all educational institutions use an RCM model. Each college, department or unit is a responsibility center. Administration and central business offices are cost centers. Student instruction hours follow the department or unit. This creates an incentive for faculty and colleges to provide instruction. Revenue formulas must be calculated that will make the most sense and cover costs of instructional support,

including staff and central administration. The University of Arizona is still trying to work out a formula model that meets all of these needs.

Question 7: Because staff in Sponsored Projects and Procurement have been cut, faculty members are becoming disenchanted with the slow responses from these central service groups. SP and Purchasing employees sound tired and overworked. What can be done to improve services?

Provost Comrie said fewer employees are the result of five very tough budget years. Everyone is working harder. We all hope next year will be a better budget year. He briefly explained that indirect overhead rates for grants cannot be negotiated. The rates are set each year by the feds, who make a careful audit of universities before mandating the rate for each year. Central Administration sets the budget for support services based on a combination of indirect cost recovery from grants, state funds, donations and so on. Until there is more money in the budget, we all must get used to services being a bit slower. The priority to hire more employees is different from the priority to increase salaries. There will be some strategic hiring plans as next year's new budget is mapped out. The university is limited to cash on hand. Employees will be hired when there is enough cash.

Question #8: Since you are the Interim Provost, what are your future plans?

Answer: Provost Comrie has decided to apply for the permanent Provost position. He will have his application in the competitive pool with others. Whether the search committee decides to include him in the final selection of candidates will depend on a lot of things. He does enjoy being Provost more than he expected. He said the job is fun and exciting! He has greater opportunities in administration to shape this great institution. He enjoys working out the best plans with a team of individuals that will make a difference for the future.

Question #9: What has President Hart been doing since she came on board? What are your impressions?

Answer: President Hart has been hiring replacements for directors and VPs, dealing with current internal issues, developing a new strategic plan and building personal relationships with internal and external university connections. She has visited personally with at least one-third of the Arizona state legislators, many community leaders, donors, and of course Board of Regents members, VPs, Department Heads and so on. She wants to hear what all have to say and open a dialog that will enable her to speak on behalf of the University of Arizona to key individual leaders. She has been driving frequently to Phoenix. She works 80-100 hour weeks. Provost Andrew Comrie believes President Hart is doing a great job.

III. Roll call – attendance sheet signed at meeting

IV. Approval of past meeting minutes – delayed until minutes are available at future date

V. Treasurer's report - Carolyn Greeno not present

VI. New SAC Members: none at this meeting

## VII. New Business:

1. Award of Excellence nomination forms are now on the SAC website
  2. Volunteers are needed to help with "On Our Own Time" art exhibit. Send e-mail to C. Arias.
  3. President Ann Weaver Hart inauguration is 3 PM November 30, 2012 in Centennial Hall.
  4. December general SAC meeting will include holiday snacks. It will be informal, with no major business discussion. However, the Director of Parking & Transportation will give a short talk. Bring questions to ask David Heineking about street projects around campus.
- I. Committee Reports:
1. Emily Krauz Scholarship: Applications are in final review stage. Winners will be announced and notified at end of November. (Report from Sharon Bouck and Shanley Ten Eyck)
  2. Human Resources: Fall management workshops are all filled. In early January 2013 new manager training workshops will be announced. They fill quickly, so staff should register right away. Remind all employees that benefits open enrollment ends November 16, 2012. Encourage staff in all departments to sign-up for pay check direct deposit. It costs the university a great deal to print checks. There has been talk by HR of requiring that payroll be deposited to an employee debit card, instead of a bank account, OR require direct deposit for all employees. Claudia would like to ask VP, Allison Vaillancourt to speak to staff at a meeting in the future. Due to some staff losing vacation hours with calendar year roll-over, Claudia asked that we remind staff they can donate a portion of accrued vacation hours as compassionate sick leave for another employee. (Report from Loretta Pedraza and Claudia Arias)
  3. Activities: KUAT phone raiser will be scheduled in December. SAC will meet with new UA community relations person about Stuff the Cat Tran sometime soon. (Report from Claudia Arias)
  4. President's Cabinet and Shared Governance: Will see President Hart's new strategic plan very soon;. It will probably be unveiled to campus community before end of November. It is a three year plan that includes her mission and core values. (Report from Claudia Arias)
  5. APAC: The Faculty Senate requested a division of Appointed Personnel into "teaching" and "non-teaching" categories. Therefore APAC is working furiously with other groups on campus to write the description of duties and responsibilities for the two AP divisions. There is a UA Green mini grant fund on campus available for any group who wishes to enhance a sustainable environment project on UA campus. For example, a green fund award of \$1,500 was given to group at the campus Food Fair who were demonstrating sustainable environment food sources. There is about \$20,000 to be given away each year. (Report from Julia Rudnick)

6. Faculty Senate: Have been discussing the complicated issues involved with a campus no-smoking policy. There are heated arguments on both sides of this smoking ban conflict. Senate is also discussing the possibility of having the campus emergency action procedures printed on every course syllabus so that all faculty members and students are aware. For security and to address campus emergency issues, there was a discussion about having a UA Police Officer present at each Faculty Senate meeting to assist with questions. Senate also discussed the successful transfer of students between Pima Community College and the University of Arizona to complete degrees. (Reported by Amy Morris)
7. Parking & Transportation: A new rep is needed per Claudia Arias
8. UA Retiree Organization: Cynthia Ann will be attending UARA meetings alone as SAC representative beginning in 2013. We first heard of insurance premium holiday from retiree group. Retirees had President Hart as their guest speaker at first luncheon of the year. Cynthia Ann and Sharon have been sharing many UA events and services with UARA that benefit retirees. At the October UARA council meeting two docents from Tohono Chul Park gave a slide show tour. The park was established by a UA Professor. (Report from Sharon Bouck)
9. UA Student Union Advisory Council – not meeting per Claudia Arias
- I. Meeting adjourned by SAC President, Claudia Arias at 4:50 PM

Submitted by Sharon Boucks