

Minutes

Provost Level Employee Communication Council meeting – November 12, 2003

Present: Brian Bader, Doug Moseley, Michele Monger, Suellen Hill, Linda Hunt, Michael Kidd, Deb McDaniel, Ann Zook, Sarah Seat, Faye Snyder, Brenda Boyd, Jo Ann Addison, Jason Dalton, Iva Gillet, Alan Cohn, Rebecca Peters, Glenn Taylor, Deirdre Davie, Anda Webb (*ex officio*), Carolyn Laquatra, Jean Varner, Kathy Woodson, Susan Fogler (past chair), Chris Loss (guest)

Jo Ann Addison called the meeting to order. The meeting began with introductions by all attendees.

Ida Lee Wooten gave a talk on the Commonwealth of Virginia Campaign (CVC), the annual charity drive of the employees of the Commonwealth of Virginia (<http://www.virginia.edu/cvc>), and encouraged UVA classified staff to participate by making a donation to the campaign. Over 1,000 local, regional, and national charities participate in the campaign. A donor may opt to designate a charity as the recipient of a donation, or leave the donation undesignated. If one does not see a charitable organization on the list of participating groups, one may contact the CVC and recommend that it be included.

Katherine Mawyer, service sales manager from the UVA Credit Union (<https://www.uvacreditunion.org>) next spoke about her organization. The Credit Union currently has many offers to save money primarily through low loan interest rates such as home equity loans, the "Got Wheels" program for automobile loans (especially attractive this time of year as auto dealers seek to reduce current inventory for next year's models), balance transfer on credit card debt, a holiday loan, and online bill payment. The Credit Union has offered financial workshops in the past and is planning new ones for the future. Trained counselors in its financial counseling program meet free with members to discuss fiscal planning. Due to the size of the Credit Union's membership (some 45,000 customers) this counseling program is currently only available to people who have been denied loans.

Anne Dawson and Jeff Overweg of the Benefits Office next gave a PowerPoint presentation about Open Enrollment 2003, running this year from November 3 to December 12, 2003. The presentation, available on line at <http://www.hrs.virginia.edu/OpenEnroll/ftclass.html> (Open Enrollment PowerPoint Presentation link) is identical to that being given at various times and locations around grounds. The Benefits Office is striving to ensure that all employees are informed about Open Enrollment 2003 via email, interoffice mailings, home mailings, ongrounds presentations (well attended, as evidenced by over 400 attendees at a recent meeting in Newcomb Hall), and presentations at the various council meetings. For further convenience an after work hours presentation on Open Enrollment 2003 will be given at 6:00 PM on November 19 at Darden Business school where free parking will be available. As of November 12, some 3,000 responses, out of 12,000 plan participants, have been received. People who have not responded by next week will receive a reminder from the Benefits Office about their enrollment status.

During Open Enrollment, participants may add eligible individuals to the plan and must drop ineligible participants from it. For the health plan this year, two programs are being offered: 1) Point of Service/POS (the current program) and 2) Direct Access/DA. The deadline for Open Enrollment is 5:00 PM on Friday, December 12, 2003. If one does not respond by then, one is automatically enrolled in the new DA program. Enrollment may be done via fax (924-4486), via interoffice mail, or by dropping off a completed form in either of two drop boxes located on grounds, one outside Carruthers Hall on Emmett Street and the other in the main hall between McKim Hall and Jordan Hall in the Health Sciences area. Once an individual has enrolled, the

Benefits Office will reply with confirmation that enrollment has been received. A health program selection may be changed up until the December 12 deadline.

For the POS program (the current one), monthly premiums increase. Also increasing are patient copayments, the first increases since 1995, from \$10.00 to \$15.00 for a visit to a primary care provided (PCP), \$100.00-\$200.00 for inpatient treatment, \$50.00-\$75.00 for outpatient treatment, and \$50.00-\$75.00 for an emergency room visit. Out of pocket limits and deductibles also increase under options 2 and 3 of the POS program. Under the DA program (newly offered) a participant does not need a PCP referral and pays out of pocket expenses through a cost sharing process with \$350.00 (individual) and 700.00 (family) annual deductibles, and 20 percent copayment for lab/diagnostic work, inpatient/outpatient treatment, etc.. with a maximum out of pocket for coinsurance of \$3500.00 per individual. Premiums for the new DA program are generally lower than the POS premiums.

To assist enrollees in choosing a program, several comparative cost charts with hypothetical medical situations were shown (available in the above-referenced PowerPoint presentation). In a hypothetical case with a wellness checkup and sore throat treatment, the annual cost was higher under POS; in cases with a colonoscopy and a maternity event the cost was higher under DA. In making a program selection during Open Enrollment 2003, plan members are encouraged to take into account monthly cash flow situations and health care cost history (available at the Southern Health website, www.southernhealth.com). Health plan participants are reminded that after December 12, 2003, they may change their program during next year's open enrollment.

The health plan portion of the PowerPoint presentation concluded with a discussion of prescription drug coverage. Eckerd Health Services is the new pharmacy benefit manager. The old tier system has been replaced by a drug formulary. Drug copayments remain the same. Drug prescription preauthorizations and drug mail order arrangements currently in effect should be transferred over to Eckerd, but people using these services are encouraged to check with Eckerd as 2004 approaches to confirm changeover.

At various times during the PowerPoint presentation, questions were asked by council members. Topics included the following. Regarding determination of allowable amounts, the service provider, doctor or hospital, determines this. There will be no health fair this year; the last one was poorly attended. In order to access records on the Southern Health website for individuals over the age of 18, one must have that individual's permission. The healthcare provider network remains in place. Health plan members will now have four cards, one each for Southern Health, United Concordia (dental), vision, and Eckerd Health Services (prescription drugs). With health care costs generally on the increase, complaints from plan participants about Southern Health quality of service arguably become more pointed; a reminder was made that if customer service standards are not met, Southern Health faces financial penalties.

The presentations on Flexible Spending Accounts and the Tax Deferred Savings Program highlighted features and changes in these programs. Current participants in Flexible Spending must reenroll and are reminded that money set aside and not used is lost. One may choose between direct deposit and check reimbursement, with funds available after the first deposit. There is online account maintenance and a \$2.00 monthly administrative fee. Annual contributions may be made between \$240.00 and \$5000.00 (the old cap was \$3000.00). A major change in Flexible Savings is that, due to IRS rulings, it may be used to pay for over the counter medication such as aspirin, cough syrup, and certain allergy medicines. Dependent care Flexible Spending annual contributions range from \$240.00 minimum to a maximum determined by a contributor's tax status. The upper limit is \$5000.00 per household. Dependent care may be used for day care and day camp but not for child support payments.

The Tax Deferred Savings Program has new limits: for age 49 and younger-\$13,000.00, for age 50 and older-\$16,000.00. Savings may be distributed with any combination of three vendors. Participants must sign a new salary reduction agreement. One may sign up at any time and need not reenroll unless one wants to change savings distribution.

Finally, the council discussed old business. The idea to have a brown bag, town meeting open to all UVA classified staff was tabled indefinitely due to logistical challenges and lack of interest. One area reported, for example, that out of 50 queried constituents, only a couple respondents showed any interest.

Discussing further old business, the council revisited a discussion from the October 2003 council meeting about an ill classified staff member, with 20 years of employment, whose termination from employment was done in an apparently callous manner one week before her six-month long period of short term disability ended. Alan Cohn asked that he be provided with details of the case and that he would check on it and get back to the council with findings. Issues about protocol, communications, and responsibilities were then discussed. What is the normal process in such a situation? When does UVA counsel and notify? There should be no surprises in cases like this, if management, Employee Relations, a department of Human Resources (HR), and the individual are all communicating.

It is important that all involved parties be proactive up front about communicating information, but it was pointed out that under certain circumstances, individuals may be prohibited by health reasons from effectively communicating. In certain departments, where faculty are supposed to perform administrative duties which include health and disability issues, some faculty members, because they focus on teaching and not administration, would not likely get involved in such a situation, while others are more involved in such affairs and would. A council member spoke of a personal situation involving childbirth in which she was not informed how and what kind of leave would be used after her child was born.

One recommendation was that HR offer in-field training and resources for classified staff who perform HR duties such as is done by the Office of Sponsored Programs for research administrators, and the Oracle training for timekeepers to help make them more proficient in attending to situations like the one described above.

The next council meeting will be held on December 10 in Clark Hall Room 133A.

Submitted by Brian Bader