

Minutes

Provost Level Employee Communication Council meeting – November 9, 2004

Present: Jo Ann Addison, Brian Bader, E. Howard Booker, Brenda Boyd, Alan Cohn, Deirdre Davie, Vickie Faulconer, Iva Gillet, Lorrie Jean, Carole Lohman, Chris Loss, Becky Marshall, Kent Merritt, Rebecca Peters, Rob Schuett, Jean Varner, Bridget Ganey

Jo Ann Addison called the meeting to order and attendees introduced themselves.

Ida Lee Wooten, Director of Community Relations, spoke first about the Commonwealth of Virginia Campaign (CVC). This year there are some 1,300 local, regional, state, national, and international charities to which a UVA employee can “lend a helping hand” (this year’s theme for the CVC). Some 13,000 salaried employees at UVA are sent pledge cards for the campaign, which in the late 1980s under United Way stewardship became a combined campaign, after adding additional charities. UVA employees gave \$600,000 last year, \$200,000 more than the second state contributor, Virginia Commonwealth University. Statewide contributions totalled \$3.2 million dollars last year. Donors need not be affiliated with UVA to contribute; contact Ms. Wooten at ilw2t@virginia.edu for a blank contribution form. The campaign ends December 3, 2004.

Anne Broccoli and Linda Way-Smith (UVA Health Plan Ombudsman and Director, Division of Employee Benefits) next spoke about the current health plan open enrollment which ends at 5:00 PM, December 3, 2004, the flexible spending account program, and the tax deferred savings program. A PowerPoint presentation of their talk is appended to these minutes and will be on the UVA Human Resources (HR) website.

Highlights of the presentations from Ms. Broccoli and Ms. Way-Smith follow (details may be found in the appended PowerPoint document).

The health insurance programs this year are now known as the High Premium Program and Low Premium Program. An employee is automatically reenrolled in their current program unless one makes changes on a health plan program election form. Open enrollment ends Friday, December 3. One may add an eligible spouse or dependent(s) or drop an

ineligible dependent. There are enhanced orthodontic and dental benefits. A new tier has been added to the health plan: “employee and child.” Pharmacy co-payments have increased.

Some comparative monthly premium costs:

	High	Low	UVA Pays
Single	33.00	16.00	302.00
Family	250.00	161.00	790.00

Premiums are up 5 percent (Low) and 14 percent (High) from last year. Corresponding UVA contribution increases are 12 percent (Low) and 22 percent (High). The weekly amount paid out by UVA in health care claims is \$1.3 million.

When asked about increases in premium costs next year, Ms. Broccoli indicated that this is likely. Some strategies to keep costs down include using formulary drugs, consultation with doctors about needed treatment, and practicing preventive care. It was pointed out by a Council member that it is difficult to price things out as evidenced in medical bills with many different and confusing charges. Ms. Broccoli also noted that staff may log in to the Southern Health website to check past insurance coverage and health costs.

Three different medical situation scenarios to illustrate the annual out-of-pocket costs for a single person with monthly premiums factored into the total costs were presented. Details can be found on the attached PowerPoint presentation.

A Council member asked about why an endocrinologist who treats her husband on a regular basis is considered a specialist, unlike an OBGYN doctor. Ms. Broccoli indicated that this (specialists not considered primary care providers) is the protocol and among the reasons for it is that specialists charge more than a primary care provider practicing general medicine.

Ms. Broccoli concluded the open enrollment presentation by outlining some factors to consider when choosing the program in the health plan, such as monthly cash flow, average annual health costs (one's history may be looked up at www.southernhealth.com), tolerance for unexpected/unplanned

expenses, participation in the Flexible Spending Account Program, and having an opportunity to change one's program next year.

In discussion following the presentation, it was pointed out that the national trend for health care costs is seeing double digit inflation every year. Enrolling in the Low Premium Program might save a person money over a period of several years even when hit by a bad year of medical expenses. Last year witnessed a great number of dependents added to the UVA health plan.

When asked about retirement health care programs, Ms Broccoli responded that if one retires under the age of 65 and does not have Medicare, one may participate in the UVA health care plan but must pay the employer and employee contribution. Over the age of 65, one may be in "Advantage 65" with Medicare coverage.

As an example of distinguishing between preventive and diagnostic medical tests, Ms. Broccoli described the cases of an EKG being administered as part of an annual physical (preventive) and during a hospital admission with chest pains (diagnostic). Many diagnostic tests will now incur a 10% co-insurance charge under the High Premium plan and a 20% co-insurance charge under the Low Premium plan.

Linda Way-Smith next spoke about Flexible Spending Accounts at UVA, which she said were dramatically underutilized. It is a calendar year program which requires reenrolling every year. Money put away in them is "use or lose" so one can best plan with known charges and regular treatments. (Money "lost" remains in a fringe pool to offset costs of the programs the next year.) Reimbursement is by direct deposit or check. Changes may be made only in response to a major life event such as childbirth. Minimum and maximum amounts which may be put away in flexible spending accounts are \$240 and \$5,000 per year. Money can be used for drug copayments, vision care, certain over-the-counter costs, uncovered dental, and chiropractic services. It may not be used for cosmetic surgery, health insurance premiums, and vitamins or herbal supplements.

Dependent care costs may be paid from Flexible Spending, which is severely underutilized by people with children in day care and/or with adult dependents who have known, regular dependent care expenses.

The program actually allows one to receive reimbursement of flexible spending money until March of the following calendar year, as long as receipts for expenses are dated from the previous calendar year, and people enrolled in it receive plenty of notification about the status of their account.

Ms. Way-Smith talked about the Tax Deferred Savings Program which has new annual limits (\$14,000 for age 49 and younger, and \$18,000 for age 50 and older). One must complete a salary reduction agreement on the HR website to change deferral amount. Three vendors supervise the program. About 65 percent of the faculty and 40 percent of classified staff participate; hospital staff participation is less.

The Council next discussed a brochure describing the Provost Employee Communication Council to be used at the next new staff Welcome (Resource) Fair on November 18, 2004, (2-4 PM). (The next fair is in April 2005.) A copy of the brochure is appended to these minutes. It will be a tri-fold sheet with an insert listing the Council members and their contact information.

Concerning old business, the Council finalized its 2004-2005 meeting schedule. A copy of the schedule will be posted to the Council website (<http://www.virginia.edu/employee/>). At the December 2004 meeting there will be an informal exchange of gifts among Council members.

Finally, Alan Cohn initiated a discussion on how best to disseminate information discussed at our Provost Level Employee Communication Council meetings to other UVA employees who are not represented on the Council, as well as to constituents represented by the Council. (Mr. Cohn attends all employee-level council meetings.) Recent organizational changes in the different departments that make up the Vice President areas may require revamping of the Council website in order to improve linkage among the various councils.

The next Council meeting is December 14, 2004, in Room 200, Ruffner Hall. Guest speakers are Becca White of Parking and Transportation and Ralph Allen of Environmental Health and Safety.

Submitted by Brian Bader

TO BE APPENDED:

1. POWERPOINT PRESENTATION
2. COUNCIL BROCHURE