



Minutes: August 9, 2023 (12:30-1:45)

Approved by ASA 9/13/23

Attendance		<i>Absent (A), In Person (IP), Virtual (V), Non-voting (NV)</i>			
V	Jessica Berge	V	Michael Gorman	V	Becky Mueller
IP	Heather Conte	IP	Christine Hoover (NV)	V	Huckleberry Rahr
A	Ciera Edwards	V	Brenda Johansen	A	David Reinhart
IP	Tatiana Fadeeva	IP	Becky Jones (NV)	IP	Brian Schanen
V	Nicholas French	A	Nadine Kriska	IP	Jessica Walz
A	Dana Gordon	IP	Kirsten Mortimer	V	Abbie Windsor

Meeting called to order at 12:32 p.m. by Chair Becky Jones.

Chair Becky Jones introduced Chancellor King and Provost Chenoweth, who attended the meeting to discuss the Academic Staff Promotions Resolution passed in the spring of 2023 by ASA, but rejected by the Chancellor in the summer of 2023.

Mike Gorman notes that his concern with the Chancellor’s feedback was about the creation of a situation where staff must leave the university in order to advance. Inherently, the paths described in the Chancellor’s response are going to be finite in the number of opportunities, which will mean that staff are pinned in place waiting for a position to open in order to be able to advance. Mike also notes that the paths indicated do not necessarily require the same skill set as the staff member’s current position.

The Chancellor responds that he appreciates that, and the opportunity to attend the meeting. He notes that he is hearing 3 things: 1, you don’t want staff to leave (good staff) – we want to retain them, and this is still important; 2, promotional opportunities; 3, compensation. He goes on to say that, while he appreciates the spirit of where this is headed, he does believe there are career progression opportunities for staff at the university. Since being here, the Chancellor has seen staff be able to take advantage of these. That pathway continues to be open. He is hearing so many different avenues for all staff. The Chancellor is establishing a university-wide committee on compensation and benefits to sit and talk about this collectively. He believes this is how we should be approaching this conversation and looking for pathways to create and retain staff, and continue upward trajectory in terms of compensation. We should utilize this university-wide compensation and benefit committee to bring these issues together collectively and find more comprehensive approaches to this. The other piece the Chancellor notes is that it does provide a financial implication while we are still in a deficit of \$8.5 million. We just received \$1.2 million in cuts additionally, and this promotions process would be an immediate financial commitment for the University, which gave the Chancellor pause in moving forward at this time.

Brenda Johansen notes that, after reviewing the wording of the original resolution as submitted, there was very careful language inserted to allow for individual departments and chairs to be the ones to approve funding for a promotion prior to the promotion process being completed, and the purpose of this resolution overall was to create a standardized pathway across all departments employing academic staff, because a pathway like that does exist for instructional academic staff. Brenda notes that she is hearing the Chancellor’s concern about the budget, and that ASA shares that concern, but also remains



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concerned about the loss of qualified staff. Brenda asks whether the language of the resolution does not inherently address the Chancellor's concern about the budgetary impacts?

Provost Chenoweth notes that, in other promotional processes, the funds are not at the discretion of the departments. In fact, there have been challenges and conversations with governance groups that do not appreciate having the funds being in the hands of departments, because some departments can fund and some cannot. Some departments have ways to raise additional revenue and some do not. The Provost notes that leaving compensation and pay up to a department is dangerous. The Provost also notes that the more general language of "if promotional funds are available" is a problematic phrase, because there are not promotional funds available – there is no pool of funding available for promotions. The Provost notes that, if the path here is to allow people to generate new levels, then the promotional dollars should be removed altogether. He also notes that if funds are available for one cohort, but not for the next, that's problematic. The Provost notes that, if the goal is to provide a level for folks, without promotional increases, then striking that language would put the resolution in a different situation.

Brenda responds that ASA's overall goal was to make an equitable type of pathway for all academic staff, regardless of their instructional status, and asks the Provost to clarify how he differentiates this from the instructional academic staff promotional status, as no response has been forthcoming on where the funding will be coming from for that process in the future.

The Provost responds that it is unique, because there is already a process and policy on the books for that, and we have been stuck with those policies unless we changed them. There is already a path forward for instructional academic staff in the personnel rules, as there is for all other UW System comprehensive campuses, because there is no career progression for them otherwise. He notes that there, again, we do not leave the funding to the discretion of the departments, but rather the Colleges do have to fund them – there is not a central pool. So this has a financial implication on Colleges, because they must fund all academic staff promotions, even though they do not control them. The Colleges do not set the amount, and they cannot deny the promotion based on funds available.

Tatiana Fadeeva notes that, if this policy is not approved, the Chancellor suggests following the committee on joint compensation and benefits. Tatiana asks for a timeline on that.

The Chancellor responds that this committee will begin right after the start of classes. However, he notes that this committee will depend on increased enrollment and retention, because we are running out of cash, so anything done in the financial space means that we need more revenue. He celebrates the fact that we have a potential 3% increase in enrollment this fall, as well as a 4 to 5% increase in retention, which will generate about \$3 million. However, the legislature's cut of \$1.2 million cuts into that, and we now must determine where that will come from. We are also funding the 27 payroll which comes around every couple of years. He hopes that the committee will be ready to talk solutions, but the question is when we will begin to put dollars with those solutions. The Chancellor notes he is confident we will quickly develop pathways, but the challenge will be in how quickly we can move forward with putting money to those.

Mike Gorman notes that, another reason that ASA prioritized this policy was because, when putting together the instructional policy, we hear from supervisors of academic staff that they have no idea what they are allowed to do. We have heard supervisors say that they have the funds to provide a



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promotional increase, but do not know if they are able to devote money. Supervisors do not know what the policies are, and what they can and cannot do. This policy provides a clear set of guidance.

The Chancellor encourages ASA to invite HR to come to a meeting and discuss how to communicate with supervisors. He also notes that there is a more favorable response from the Chancellor's office if there is no financial implication. The challenge is that this resolution has a financial impact.

Brian Schanen asks what pathways are available legally for an academic staff member to have an increase in pay. Is it only when the legislature approves a pay plan or when they change jobs?

Provost Chenoweth explains that TTC differentiates between pay progression and promotion, and that ASA should think about using that as a way to explain the differences to our constituents. It's pretty clear in that that changing titles not changing leveling is promotion, and then that comes with compensation at whatever that new position is, and the TTC site helps people understand that they may be interested in moving to positions that come with less compensation. He also notes that sometimes people may be interested in a different job that comes with less compensation. The Provost goes on to say that, if people take on additional responsibilities temporarily or on an informal interim capacity, such as when a director leaves and the position will not be filled for 3 months and responsibilities are distributed, then there are avenues for compensation. He also notes that, if we eliminate that position altogether and then suddenly have people doing work that they weren't hired for, then there are pathways for base adjustments in that. The unit would then have the funds for that because the position isn't filled, or they would have a supervisor who has a budget and who has a supervisor who has a budget. There are pathways for individual market adjustments. The challenge is that we can all find someone who does our job at a higher rate. There's an analysis that takes place, and some of that is about what funds are available, and some of that is who you believe that peers are versus who other people believe that peers are. There are pathways available, and they are built into our HR processes, and the Provost would want to make sure that the supervisors truly don't understand what's available, versus just not wanting to say no because that's a more challenging conversation. So perhaps we need to educate supervisors on challenging conversations. The TTC slide from System talks about pay progression. And that can be challenging for folks to think about because then they may be worried about what some folks are getting and whether or not it's appropriate, which is why we have supervisors who have supervisors who have to approve of those things. The Provost notes that the reality is that they're dealing with an employee at a level that there's also similar employees at that level across campus, and while that department has the funds, they are aware of other individuals in the same situations that may not have the funds available, so a lack of promotions may be a result of them trying to operate ethically and treat all employees as similarly as we can.

Brenda Johansen asks whether there is a systemic way that the university's leadership is investigating whether promotions happen in any meaningful way, or whether this is something that only one or two units do? Brenda notes that what ASA hears is that there are individuals who have been in the same place in the same title for a decade or longer, with the only pay increase being the cost of living increase from system-level pay plans.

The Chancellor notes that his hope is that the university-wide compensation/benefits committee will get there institution-wide. He concurs with the Provost in terms of one-offs – he has heard of situations, but they have been one off and individual. He does believe that informing this committee with institutional data will provide a clearer picture. He notes that they had a meeting with the faculty compensation



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committee about gender equity, which was felt to be a major problem. A review of the data, shared with that committee, showed, that there was no gender equity issue in terms of salary among faculty. In fact, there were cases where faculty identified as female were making more money than their male counterparts. He is now working with the same committee to pull race and ethnicity data, which so far shows that there is no inequity in that space either, aside from some one-offs, which he has asked the Provost to review. He hopes that a continued examination of the data will show any university-wide equity issues. However, the question at the end of the day is finding the funding to address those. The Chancellor notes that, if there are any concerns about equity, we should engage HR to study the issue, because any of these one-offs should be addressed.

The Provost notes that pathways are evaluated fairly and decisions are being made to address the issue, aside from the general issue that everyone should be paid more. The other side of that is to make sure that those are fairly vetted, as any promotional increase happening in any Division goes across the Vice-Chancellor's desk to ensure that areas with funds available are not just doing pay raises because they have funds available. He is confident that we are not seeing units giving out money just because they can while other units without funding are not. He provides the example of full professors in their departments making less money than assistant professors in their departments. Those are individual issues that we want to make sure to address if we can. Other issues that fit in the federal space must be addressed because they impact protective classes. We want to make sure that we have the tools available to address serious individual challenges while also making sure that we're not unfairly spending resources on one group of folks and not another, which he hopes that the university compensation committee will help us do, because there are university staff, academic staff, faculty, and even limited staff who don't have any sort of governance representation.

The Chancellor notes that we are also opening up conversations in the graduate assistant space. He notes that you have an administration that hears ASA.

Becky Jones notes that this continues to be a morale issue, because faculty has opportunity for raises and promotions, as does instructional academic staff, but those opportunities are not available for others.

Terry Tumbarello adds a back story to the creation of this proposal. He notes that this was a 2-year process and that ASA was asked to do this by the administration. Terry notes that he understands the budget issue, and that the committee debated the funding portion for the longest. He suggests that there is still no true pathway for academic staff. Those abilities to go from assistant to associate to director are few and far between, and it sometimes takes decades. The reality is that this was a retention issue for ASA, and he can think of many individuals who are in the same positions for many, many years and have no recourse. If those individuals left, not only would the university lose valuable staff and institutional knowledge, but in hiring that position for a new individual, they would need to offer a higher salary anyway. Terry recommends that ASA revisit this, and perhaps compromise with a pause on the funding portion, and focus on the promotional levels.

The Chancellor notes that the commitment remains, but the reality is that we must increase enrollment and retention. He does not want to be in the same position that is happening to our colleagues at UW-Oshkosh. If we had the funds, the Chancellor says this would be an easy pathway forward. He encourages ASA to continue down these pathways, but also to actively discuss how to increase enrollment and retention. We are trying to get to 13,000 in the next 5 years and 82% retention in the



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next 5 years. When we do that and surpass it, it will put us in a very different cash flow situation, where conversations like this will still be important, and we will be able to put cash where we make decisions. At the welcome address, we will do U Matter, because the Chancellor agrees that there are morale issues, and that finding opportunities to address them is important.

**Action Items:**

Minutes from 5/10/23 were approved by unanimous consent.

Chair Becky Jones introduced Kim Nath, chair of Faculty Senate, and Wes Enterline, chair of University Staff Council, who attended the meeting.

**Chair Report:**

Chancellor's Inauguration will be February 23, 2024

Anticipating a 3-4% increase in enrollment – we are up in new and transfer students, as well as overall undergraduate. Tatiana noted that Rock and Waukesha are the only 2-year campuses showing this positive enrollment trend, and Rock is really doing a great job in marketing themselves as a place to get additional things that cannot be found at the Whitewater campus. There are serious concerns for many of the other campuses. Becky Jones noted that there are multiple campuses where more than half of the enrollment are high school students taking a course for college credit. We are slightly down in graduate students, which is mainly COBE, and that seems to be related to a boosted enrollment in online grad programs during the pandemic. Many of the online programs are attracting out of state enrollment as well.

Pay plan – the state budget approved a 4% raise for 7/1/23 and a 2% raise for 7/1/24. This is still with JCER for approval. There was an initial plan from cabinet discussing taking 15% of that pot for merit pay or pay equity, but that is no longer happening. Minimum wage is being addressed – bringing it from \$15 to \$17 per hour. No date has been set for the pay plan to take effect.

Approximately 37 employees are currently under \$17 per hour – all but one are university staff. Wes notes that this is only how many will still be under \$17 per hour after the 4% raise takes effect. Becky notes that pay compression has been discussed as well, but it's unknown how that's going to be addressed.

Budget – The state budget included a \$32 million cut. There is an opportunity for our campus to receive up to \$2 million back, and a proposal was submitted recently, around some specific programmatic areas.

Hiring Pause – All positions are being frozen as they are empty before a recruitment can be started. They are being evaluated by the Vice Chancellors before any further steps are being taken.

UW-Oshkosh – Please take a look at the message from the Chancellor about the UW-Oshkosh layoffs and furloughs.

Deloitte – UW System has a firm going to all campuses, beginning with Whitewater, to complete a financial and operational review. Results should be shared in about 2 months. Governance leaders were invited to a meeting with them last month.



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HR Consultant – a consultant (Mark Holdren (sp?)) has been hired and will be on campus August 17 and 18. Governance leaders will meet separately with him.

HR Grievance Concerns – Becky Jones and Brenda Johansen met with HR Director Connie Putland and Stephanie Hartmann recently to discuss a grievance that has been outstanding since early May and has not yet been handled. We continue to advocate for personnel rules to be followed and timelines to be maintained. Brenda notes that, as a part of the meeting, HR has taken actions. It is their belief that all emails are being responded to promptly, so Brenda asks that anyone who has an ongoing issue with email response let ASA know in order to allow for follow-up. Becky notes that contract timeliness was also raised.

Branch Campus Assessment – UW System completed an assessment of all branch campuses, focusing on goals, plans to improve enrollment, and outlook. The Chancellors received a rubric this week to complete about their individual branch campuses. Three pathways are planned – staying a branch campus, being a satellite location, or closing the location. It may be that a director from System will provide those answers. Becky stresses that Rock County is doing an excellent job and has really promising enrollment. Mike Gorman notes that the difference between a branch campus and an alternate location are two different accreditation models. The fact that Whitewater has housed a College on the Rock Campus, which has its own programs, means that it makes more sense to remain a branch campus. Tatiana notes that Whitewater and Milwaukee are the only campuses that went with the branch campus model.

Chancellor's Leadership Council – new committee being formed with governance leaders and campus directors

University Compensation and Benefits Committee – Becky Jones is currently the representative for ASA, but Tatiana is also interested. Terry notes that we may want to consider requesting a seat for instructional academic staff as well as academic staff.

### **Vice Chair Report**

Mike Gorman reports that he is waiting until the start of the semester when people return in order to assess committee status and update committee rosters. At that time, he'll begin recruiting.

Mike will be the University Staff Council liaison, and will work with Wes to coordinate his participation.

### **Faculty Senate Liaison Report**

Brian Schanen notes no updates as of now (next meeting is coming up).

### **University Committee Reports**

University Technology Committee – Kirsten Mortimer notes that this fall, we will implement MFA with Duo for all students. More information will come out soon. ITS will do their best to get everyone enrolled smoothly, but awareness is key.

### **Discussion**

Brian suggests that we pass the resolution again without the compensation portion, in order to establish it as a part of our by-laws. Becky Jones notes that, if individuals get promoted now, without





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compensation available, then we risk having some individuals promoted with a pay raise, and others without. Terry notes that we could address that in the policy. Terry notes also that what we heard today is very different from what we heard in the written response rejecting the resolution. Kirsten asks whether TTC addresses this and whether the resolution is needed. Terry notes that this is separate from TTC, because TTC pathways is for a retitle, and this is for receipt of a promotion in a current position. You cannot get retitled without demonstrating new responsibilities. Becky Jones notes that not all titles have a pathway. Brenda also notes that it was concerning that the Chancellor and Provost continued to reference that ASA should work with HR, while the message that Brenda and Becky received in the meeting with HR was that they cannot tell any supervisors or deans or colleges or divisions what they can and cannot do, and that HR simply files the paperwork as directed. Brenda notes that it's unclear how to close the gap between the Chancellor and Provost saying that we should clearly work with HR to find these career pathways, while HR does not currently seem to be aware that this a responsibility they have. Mike notes that we could tell HR about their responsibilities, and we could also share that response with the Chancellor and Provost.

Meeting adjourned at 1:46 p.m.