

# ***Summary of Important Academic Staff Council Issues***

## ***First Half 2010–11***

### **Changes in the State Government**

Interim Chancellor Marv Van Kekerix and Rosemary Potter, Director of Government Relations, spent much of the December 2010 meeting addressing concerns about changes in the statehouse and the coming budget debate.

Various issues were discussed and both Van Kekerix and Potter invited feedback and concerns from academic staff members to be directed to their offices for further conversation.

Van Kekerix and Potter will continue legislative visits and advocacy for UW Extension services and mission. Van Kekerix said that our best course is to continue to serve our constituents as well as possible so that they will advocate for us.

### **Furlough Impact**

In an earlier meeting, Provost and Vice Chancellor Christine Quinn reported that the furlough impact committee found that we have minimized the impact of furloughs on the public.

Van Kekerix asked whether disseminating impact information would make any difference in how the public perceives us. Would it be worth the effort?

One Academic Staff Council member said that most of us feel as though furloughs have made a difference in our provision of service, but it is hard to say specifically what the difference is. Other ASC members recounted how furloughs led to some cutbacks, but the conclusion was that we made the cutbacks in ways that were not much noticed by our clients.

### **Returned Lapse Funds**

Van Kekerix said that the \$672,700 returned to Extension will be centrally held rather than distributed to the divisions—at least until the next budget is more clearly delineated. The Wisconsin Department of Administration has found that revenue is behind original expectations, and further lapses are likely.

ASC Chair Erik Ernst reported that the committee formed by Quinn to explore what to do with the returned funds had recommended that the funds be distributed to the divisions in proportion to how much each division had contributed to the lapse in the current budget. The plan included a set-aside to support grant writing.

### **“Hire-Fire” Appointment Letters**

The council continues to look toward revisions and clarification of the distinction and use of Fixed Term Terminal (“hire-fire”) appointment letters used within Chapter 10

Some ASC members questioned whether that Academic Staff Policies and Procedures, Chapter 12 (see language below), might be sufficient to handle the budget exigencies some units now prepare for by using fixed-term terminal appointment letters. Another ASC member pointed out that hire-fire appointments offer better employment benefits than ad hoc or LTE appointments, which a unit might resort to if hire-fire language were not available. A question was raised as to whether the Chapter 12 process has been used in the past, and that maybe the use of hire-fire letters was developed to avoid the pain of that process.

Ernst also reported that he had found that the designation “fixed-term terminal appointment” does not appear in any UW-Extension or UW System employment policy or guidelines document. The Academic Staff Council is pursuing action to ensure that academic staff employees with Fixed Term Terminal appointments understand how their appointments differ from fixed term renewable appointments.

**12.01 General.** Notwithstanding s.36.15, Stats., and Chapters UWEX 10 and 11, the Chancellor of each institution or his/her designee may lay off a member of the academic staff holding an indefinite appointment, or may lay off a member of the academic staff holding either a fixed term or a probationary appointment prior to the end of the appointment period, when such action is deemed necessary due to budget or program decisions requiring program discontinuance, curtailment, modification or redirection. Decisions made pursuant to a change in the level of resources available for a particular project or for program discontinuance, curtailment, modification or redirection shall be discussed by the Chancellor or his/her designee with the Academic Staff Council.

### **Title Progression for Program Managers**

The ad hoc committee reviewing UPG 15 (UW-Extension Policies and Procedures Governing Title Prefix Review for Promotion) sought input from program managers regarding the language of UPG 15.05. The concern is that the program manager position doesn’t have a clearly defined title progression.

### **Chancellor Search**

Lynne Blinkenberg, a council member from BAMl who served on the chancellor search committee, said that the hardest part about screening candidates was finding people who looked qualified to lead both UW-Extension and UW Colleges. Members of Academic Staff Council took part in interviews with all of the finalists and offered advice and suggestions toward the final hiring.

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