BSUFA Meeting  
8/27/04  
Hagg-Sauer 107  
10:00 AM

Called to Order by President Dave Larkin.

- A clarification. The first Senate meeting of the year will be Monday September 13. This is the second Monday, but the first Monday, Sept. 6, is Labor Day.

- Introduced Wendy Larson, the office secretary. Wendy’s hours are Monday through Friday between 12:00 and 1:00 PM. If you call the office you will probably have to leave a message but she will respond as soon as possible. She will also respond to phone messages left for Larkin if he is out of town.

- Larkin thanked the BSUFA members for electing him. He said he would do his best to respond to the members. To make sure that he gets messages they should be sent both to dlrkin@bemidjistate.edu and to BSUFA@bemijdistate.edu. That way he can’t claim that he didn’t get a message.

- Self-introduction of all members present. Asked to stand and identify themselves and indicate what committees they serve on.

- Welcome to new faculty members. Dave will come visit all new faculty members within the first few weeks of school.

- Introduction of Mandy Wick, BSU’s representative on the statewide salary equity committee. Wick distributed a spreadsheet indicating those faculty who were found to be below average in salary considering their rank and years of service. Wick cautioned that this is an unofficial list, not for publication. It is subject to correction by MnSCU if errors are found. An official list will be distributed soon.

  Wick discussed 2 issues. First the committee needed to catch up on annual reviews for new hires and new terminal degrees between 1997 – 2001. MnSCU had not kept up and did not believe they had to keep up. That issue is settled now, and they will keep up in the future.

  The new model for salary review began in 2002. The committee is currently working on those new hires and terminal degrees. They will begin 2004 hires and degrees as soon as the rest are finished.

  The second issue is that the review committee worked for a review benchmark whereby everyone’s salary would be no less than -1 standard error of the predicted salary difference either of the 7 campus average or of one’s own campus average, whichever was better. What they got was a campus model. It isn’t the best, but considering that MnSCU was pushing for a -1.5 standard error, this isn’t so bad.
The list of proposed salary adjustments is mostly males. That is because so many women were adjusted because of the lawsuit. The statisticians did evaluate salaries both campus wide and statewide to ensure that women were not lower than average.

- Russ Stanton was introduced. He is director of Governmental Relations for IFO. He deals with budgets and retirement. Stanton invited all new faculty to attend the 11:00 meeting to help them decide between TRA and IRAP for their retirement plans. They have 90 days to make a decision, and if they don’t elect one or the other, the default will be IRAP.

  Stanton indicated that this is probably the most important decision a new faculty member can make. It may make a few thousand dollars difference over a few years but by the time of retirement it can make a difference of hundreds of thousands of dollars.

  Stanton also made clear that although IFO had input into IRAP and into changes in TRA, the IFO doesn’t endorse, sell, or get a kick back on either of these or any products.

- Stanton also addressed the retirement workshop that will occur on 9/24/04. This is for those who plan to retire within the next 5 years. There are a number of new retirement benefits and a couple of new provisions in the new (tentative) contract including the Health Reimbursement Accounts that can be rolled forward and used to pay for health care up until Medicare takes over. Stanton encourages everyone to come, even if they have been to a retirement workshop before. He suggests that faculty could use a “tune up.”

- Finally Stanton discussed his role as Director of Governmental Relations. He has worked for 19 sessions as a lobbyist and before that was in the house. He has been involved with the legislature since 1972, a full 1/3 of a century. In all that time he says, the last 2 years have been the worst. Following the Wellstone memorial, there was a huge shift both ways across party lines. But, the outcome was that we gained 43 new conservative legislatures.

  There was a real struggle to get this contract ratified, and if it had not passed we would have lost 3 salary steps and the career steps would also have been lost. This entire session was spent protecting what we had rather than working for new gains.

  We need to anticipate the next election. Unless we as members are organized and active in election issues we will face the same problems as this time, or worse. We need some changes. Legislators listen to those voters who make noise. If you vote, your senators and representatives will care about you. If you don’t go to the polls and make your needs known, they won’t be working for you.

  A September 3 meeting is planned to discuss the proposed contract. More information will follow.

- Nancy Black, the new IFO president was introduced. Black has been at Metro State since 1986. She is an anthropologist. She distributed a brochure outlining the goals for IFO. We need to communicate more clearly with the campuses. The mission of the union is the betterment of higher education. IFO promotes faculty welfare and wants to improve public
education through faculty politics in government. We are only as strong as those people who serve. We need to move together and forward.

Black discussed the proposed contract in the context of the State budget. Things are tough all over and Minnesota actually looks good when compared to other states. But because of health care cuts to MinnCare, we won’t look so good in the future. While in IFO there is basically salary equity, nationally women are losing ground. Currently for every dollar a man earns, a woman earns only 75.5 cents. Louise Mengelkoch was acknowledged for her willingness to take a stand against discrimination. We know that when women are paid equitably, men’s salaries rise also.

Marilyn Vigil will be at BSU next Friday to discuss the proposed contract. Look at the IFO website for details. Black supports ratification. The negotiators did the best they could, given the financial and political climate. They worked for 15 months. There were a few gains. The low end of the salaries were raised a step at each level. Returning faculty in 2004 will get 1 step, or a 2.4% increase.

Previously when faculty have been promoted, they have had to wait for ratification of the contract. Now there will be an immediate increase in pay.

The new Health Reimbursement Account has the benefit of rolling forward each year. If you have $500 left over, it doesn’t revert to the State, it carries over. The advantage is that whatever is left when you retire can be used to pay for your health insurance premiums. We are the only union that has this benefit.

As we know, last year the State imposed the $93 dependent care cost on faculty. We went to court to protest the imposition. The judge ruled that the State was engaged in an unfair labor practice and called the situation “union busting.” We were granted a temporary injunction against the imposition. During that time we made all the contract gains. We settled on July 1.

The situation is complex, but the negotiators worked hard and long and deserve our respect. The good news is that this contract will expire on June 30, 2005.

Currently, the resolutions coming from Delegate Assembly are being reviewed. Things need to change. We need professional training in negotiations. It is clear that faculty are not paid enough.

The state is facing $1 billion projected budget shortfall. We as state employees are perceived as feeding at the state trough. We need to ratify this contract, because the only other option is a strike, and in that situation, we would only lose. Consider the most recent state employees to strike, AFSCME and the Bus Transit Workers. Both lost as a result of their strike. If we don’t ratify, the state will impose a contract, and it won’t be this good.

At the Board Office in St. Paul, we have 6 new MnSCU trustees. We recommended 8, but the Governor only chose one of our recommendations. The new board members are
conservative. The student representative is a graduate of Normandale and is now a student at the U of M.

Black has 5 minutes per month speaking with the Board. They don’t want to hear what she has to say. She was able to demonstrate to them that a young faculty member with dependents will be taking home less with this contract than they were with the old one.

Black distributed a handout showing the PowerPoint presentation that will be given next week to highlight the contract.

The Citizens League is currently assessing the state of higher education in Minnesota. There are 3 possible scenarios. The first is that there is no change. The second is that the State Universities fall under the U of M system. The third is that the smaller U of M campuses will join us.

Currently we in the State Universities have ½ of the students but only 7/32 votes.

Acknowledgement of Rich Gendreau for his help as IFO treasurer.

Thanks

Meeting adjourned at 10:55.

Respectfully submitted,
Sharon Gritzmacher
Secretary, BSUFA