

**FACULTY WELFARE COMMITTEE  
ANNUAL REPORT  
2007-2008**

*Faculty Welfare Committee* (FWC) members for 2007-2008 were: Charley Adams (Public Health), Augie Grant (Journalism and Mass Communication), Darris Hassell (Spanish, Regional Campus Representative from USC Lancaster), Esmail Jabbari (Engineering), Don Jordan (Center for Science Education), Tim Mousseau (Biological Sciences), Abdullah Sakarcan (The School of Medicine), and Bob Best (ex-officio member as Chair of the Faculty Senate). The Committee was chaired by Beth Bilderback (Libraries).

At its first meeting, the FWC voted to continue the previous year's work, focusing on three benefits of particular interest to faculty:

- tuition aid for faculty dependents
- preventive health care
- faculty friendliness of Sasaki Campus Plan

The report will first address progress on the agenda and then discuss issues brought to the Committee in the course of the year.

**Tuition Aid for Faculty Dependents**

The Committee conducted a survey in Spring 2007 to determine the top five concerns of USC faculty. Second behind salary and salary compression was benefits, including tuition aid for dependents and increased preventive care. Recognizing tuition aid as not only a benefit for faculty but also as a significant recruitment and retention issue, the Committee continued its investigation of the issue.

The FWC held meetings with Jane Jameson, Vice President of Human Resources, and Chief Financial Officer Rick Kelly and Budget Director Leslie Brunelli. The discussions centered around rising tuition costs, the static nature of the State lottery, scholarships and the existing USC academic-based dependent scholarship, similar benefits at SEC and ACC institutions, and funding possibilities. It was determined that the Life and Palmetto Fellows scholarships cover only a small percentage of tuition costs, that they are threatened by decreasing lottery profits, and that a significant portion of freshmen lose the scholarships due to a drop in grade point average. In terms of peer institutions, 67% of SEC and ACC institutions offer some type of waiver for faculty dependents and of those institutions 75% offer a 50% or more waiver of tuition fees.

Leslie Brunelli pulled together financial information from the Fall 2007 semester enrollment. Using the receipt of the Faculty/Staff Dependent Scholarship as the tag, she identified 143 undergraduates. Realizing there may be more dependents enrolled than flagged, the figures presented were a base-line for estimating costs of a tuition aid program. Also, the information related only to the Columbia campus, so additional

information on students at the branch campuses has to be compiled. Initial figures indicate a fund of \$300,000 a year would provide dependents enough to cover the difference between scholarships and actual tuition fees. Again, more study needs to be done to determine definitely what the cost would be to the University.

While the Committee made some advances in determining potential cost to the University of offering tuition aid, the need for a study of the cost due to loss of faculty to other colleges with such a benefit was acknowledged but not undertaken. In terms of establishing a tuition aid program, the Committee determined that an act of the Legislature would be required if public monies were used; this would also open it to all state employees. To keep expenditures down, the Committee feels a fund should be established through donations or the existing Faculty/Staff Dependent Scholar fund expanded to provide larger scholarships (currently a maximum of \$750 per semester.) The upcoming capital campaign may provide a way to accomplish establishing such a program. The existence of the tuition aid benefit itself is viewed as one measure of the faculty's value to the university. The FWC believes that this benefit would bring rewards far greater than the actual cost of the benefit.

### **Preventive Care**

Improving preventive health care coverage through the BCBS State Plan has been on the Committee's agenda for several years. Last year the Committee heard from many USC Faculty about preventive health care and drug coverage concerns. Also, the Faculty Welfare committees from the College of Charleston, Clemson, and USC-Aiken acknowledged this issues as important to their faculty and expressed interest in joining together to explore the issue of preventive care. One of the Committee's recommendations at the end of last year was to establish a committee with representatives from The School of Medicine and The School of Public Health in addition to members of the Administration and other faculty. It was hoped such a committee would have the resources for the necessary research and would be able to speak with a stronger voice in advocating such benefits.

Dr. Christine Curtis, Vice Provost for Faculty Development, set up a Health Initiatives group last fall with representatives from many areas including administration, Public Health, and other faculty. Initial discussions focused on preventive care and drug coverage, options for improving coverage, and comparisons with other institutions. The FWC is a part of this group and will continue to work with Dr. Curtis on this endeavor.

### **Sasaki Campus Plan**

The University's expansion of the campus through Innovista, Horizon, and the Sasaki Campus Master Plan raised questions about productivity and livability on a growing campus. Committee members recognized the importance of involving the faculty in the planning for expansion to address issues such as parking, eating facilities, transportation

around the expanded campus. These and other issues affect faculty productivity and accessibility to students. The FWC requested Bob Best, Chair of Faculty Senate, to invite Rick Kelly to a Faculty Senate meeting to discuss the Sasaki Plan and other expansions to begin to understand the impact on the faculty. The Committee looks forward to this happening in the coming year.

#### **Other issues:**

The Faculty Senate passed a resolution at its April meeting directing the Faculty Welfare Committee to re-examine class scheduling and the possibility of establishing another Monday-Wednesday time slot around the noon hour for scheduling classes. The FWC met in May with Bob Askins and Elaine Belesky from the Registrar's office. Our discussions ranged from altering time between classes, alternatives to standard classroom space and planning for more efficient use of space, extending the teaching day beyond 5:00 and starting earlier, the potential for additional 75 minute classes on Monday-Wednesday, and ways to determine travel time between classes for faculty and students due to parking issues and shuttle schedules. There was discussion also about having smart scheduling, where students and their advisors would know immediately if classes taken together had enough travel time. Further conversations revealed that Mr. Askins is working with Derrick Huggins in Parking Services on shuttle schedules and parking to determine the impact on class scheduling. The Committee is encouraged by the ideas suggested at the meeting and will continue to work with the Registrar's office on this issue.

As part of the Committee's continued concern about preventive health care options, 250 flu shots and 45 cardiovascular screenings were funded through the Faculty Enrichment Fund and made available to all faculty on first-come basis. We hope to continue these benefits and encourage faculty to support the fund when making donations to USC.

Expanding the parental leave policies at USC has been a concern of the FWC for several years. The Committee spent a great deal of time researching the issues and comparing policies at peer institutions. Christine Curtis, Vice Provost for Faculty Development, and her staff worked on drafting a series of family-friendly policies. In August 2007, Family-Friendly Policies for USC Columbia Faculty went into effect and address three areas: tenure clock and third year review, modified duties, and dual career accommodations. The FWC would like to acknowledge the very great value and importance of these changes, which represent a significant effort to create a more supportive work environment. The new policies may be accessed through the Provost's website.

The FWC is pleased to report that Human Resources added a Roth 403(b) plan to its retirement fund options during 2008. The Committee researched the issue in 2006-2007 and found that seven out of eight peer southeastern universities offer (or will offer at the end of 2007) Roth-style accounts to their employees. Considering this option to be a considerable benefit for faculty, the FWC worked with Human Resources to facilitate adoption of Roth-style retirement plans at USC.

The issue of the low per diem rate for travel again came before the Committee. The current maximum reimbursement is \$32 a day within the U.S., which means many faculty pay a significant amount out-of-pocket for meals while traveling for the University. While this rate is set by the State, the Committee is investigating ways to increase the per diem.

Respectfully submitted,

Beth Bilderback, Chair  
University Libraries