01/18/2012

Introduction—12:08 (Christina) – Overview/Timeline

Check-ins (12:09)

Matthew—Introduction of new GLBT student rep

Lambda Legal, Hormone Replacement efforts, Helped U of W get HR on their insurance plan. Discriminatory to not provide this to individuals. They provide legal advice and support for students.  (12:12)

H&W: Bruce, no updates. Pharmacy construction delayed due to asbestos abatement.

CSHAC website: Posted a summary of the last meeting, posted a graph on the website. Discussed phone instructions when calling into H & W. Sometimes lose power on Saturdays, IT issue. Hopefully won’t persist too long.

Bruce: Process of hiring a faculty counselor to start in the fall of next year. Ph.D. counselor level, may teach here and there, but primary role to provide clinical services. Looking at a variety of specialties. Expertise areas include GLBT, men’s issues, etc. I’ll update you as we go along.

Pat: No updates.

Christina: Discuss survey and tentative plan for the future.

Bruce: (12:17)—Spent a lot of the break developing a survey, refining it, honing it. The survey will explain the current situation, will ask questions about the importance of various benefits included in the plan structure, cost reductions associated with various benefit reductions, scheduled to come out February 3rd. Working on getting a forum setup with GPSA after we have the results. Hopefully be able to keep people apprised and answer questions at the forum. Hope to have it 2nd week of February. Hope to make decisions in February about benefit restructuring. Need to head into March with a good game plan about where were going. Still have some outstanding issues. No info about the waiver for benefits mandated by the affordable care act. When we get the answer will post it for people.

Clarification of emailed information about affordable care act.

Student: Concerns about non-stipend students being able to take the survey. Problems with emailing students (tech issues discussed). Students can contact the website to request survey (12:23)

Only graduate students on assistanceships are eligible for the graduate assistance insurance. This is for graduate students basically employed by the university. Not every graduate student can be on the plan. Discussion of survey deadline, methods comparison of survey vs. forum.
Concerns about survey: Information suggested that 17$ per month was to be taken out of each paycheck. However, does not add up to the total amount that has been put forth. Clarification: Confusion may be about payroll deduction. The wording was “approximately” 17$. Key point that there will not be a profit made off of this.

Student: Testimonial about stipend/insurance package, undergraduate McNair completion, low-income family background discussed as rationale for attending WSU given excellent student stipends/insurance package. 20,000$ a year in loans to afford home costs. “Wife and I work hard...” (details about lifestyle). Increase in health care costs would be a major blow to current students and may deter future students from attending. Raises/retrospective raises would allow us to afford insurance cost increases.

Bruce: Nobody on this committee makes those kinds of decisions, Christina and I will be speaking with the President and the student advisory committee tomorrow. Really, the executive committee has to make tough decisions about how to manage this and if they can help us out. This will not be a public meeting.

President Floyd instituted a student advisory board to give opportunity for President to interact with students more often than would otherwise be possible.

Pat: I’ll pass these comments to Dean Grimes. He is aware of budgetary problems, upper management is aware also. All departments are struggling with this, especially when the state is not providing the resources that we need.

Robert: Not only are student struggling, but all employees are struggling with this as well. We are well aware of these issues and Pat has the Dean’s ear. At this time, more costs on students when you don’t have resources.

Student: Graduate students can no longer take out unsubsidized Stafford loans.

Pat: That is federal, and I’ve been looking into it. There is over 1500 students on graduate student insurance expected to pay 300$. This is going to happen one way or not. You students have an opportunity to select which benefits are more important than others.

Student: Problems with survey. Forced to pick benefits, no room for feedback. Discussion of advocacy for students, comparison of employee benefit costs versus graduate student costs.

Bruce: I have no problem advocating for students, Christina will be there with me advocating for graduate students. I have no problem advocating that option #1 graduate students don’t absorb this cost. We know you’re on a limited stipend and this cost increase hurts.

Student: (12:45) Survey may be misleading when interpreted. Won’t reflect the actual sentiment of students.

Christina: We will take all this information into consideration and pass it on at this point.
Bruce: I think we took for granted that if students could choose not to have pay for the increase, they would. That’s why we put that option first. We will represent that those are the preferred options. However, we also need to have a plan C, in time enough to continue offering some kind of reasonable product and move forward.

Student: Survey discussion: Was the content exhaustive of all possible options/modifications? Christina: My understanding is that it is exhaustive.
Student: On the survey, the options that you list to cut you have like 4 or 5. At the meeting a month ago you had more.

Pat: They were all there, just presented differently. We wanted to make sure that everyone could understand them. They weren’t listed like the original presentation.

Bruce: We’ll keep you posted about the forum and get the word out. We are a committee and we do have to make recommendations. We can’t keep using this committee to solicit general feedback. We have to work pragmatically to digest all the input in February and move forward with the plan. We’re going to have to move into action mode once we get the results of this survey to come up with a plan.

We’re eliminating some things but there are a lot of things being added due to affordable care act. With everything that’s added, this is where the additional costs come from. If we can’t afford everything, then which benefits do you want to cut.
Student: Its not about regressing, its about growth. Like education, should be moving forward.

Redistribution of wealth works for poor people. The problem is that WSU graduate students have become insurance wealthy. Now, our insurance does not match the federal healthcare setup. Thus, now we have to pivot.

Student: (expressed frustrations about bus route system and potential risk of being hit and not being covered in the ER).

Bruce: You’ve raised an important point. The recommendations we make have to include a complexity of factors. We have to factor in utilization data and graduate student feedback, but we also have to factor in the once a year bus accident that costs that one student 400k. These are things we look at each year. What we ultimately recommend will be an amalgamation of these factors. Probably nobody will be happy, but we will do our best.

12:56

Student: Date for the GPSA forum? Will that be before February 14th? How does Wednesday the 8th work? Bruce: That’ll work.

Student: Do you know where the meeting is tomorrow? 3 o’clock tomorrow in the Eastside ballroom.
Location for GPSA forum? Eastside of the CUB ballroom.

Student: Don’t want to waste time complaining, just want to make sure we’re heard and being taken seriously

Christina: Because of the time crunch, at our next meeting we will need to be action-oriented. I wonder if I could have another meeting for students to express more of their frustrations.

Student: Is that not what the GPSA forum is for?

Christina: Yes, but I want to make sure that students have an opportunity to express their frustrations.

Student: I think students will want to be at the GPSA forum and the next meeting as well.

Christina: You can be, but we will need to be action oriented.

Student: Too many meetings will divide students and cause confusion, ultimately with less students showing up for each.

Discussion of how results of the survey will be interpreted.

Bruce: Again, we can’t just keep soliciting input. We will be looking at the central tendencies of the survey, feedback, etc., but we will have to move into an action mode and come up with a plan during February.

Student: Will you make sure that the results of the survey will be posted before the GPSA forum.

Student: Question about the survey: The reduction of the annual maximum from 200,000 to 100,000, is this allowed?

Yes, this is a moving target with ACA. Eventually, they want to phase out the maximums over time. Depending on how the supreme court rules in March, this may not go away.

Student: The survey mentioned dental benefits, but did not mention any specific types of restructuring. Discussion of ways to restructure dental benefits, deductibles, etc.

1:07

Pat: We are not going all or nothing on any of the benefits. We are looking into this though. Dental benefits are important. Perhaps moving away from two cleanings a year to one per year.

Wrap up: Thanks for attending. Next meeting will be in February.