

The Welfare Council advises the Senate Chair and the Steering Committee on matters that support, encourage, define, and evaluate the quality of the faculty and retention of faculty members including academic freedom and responsibilities; faculty benefits and compensation; faculty diversity; and programs that improve the quality of faculty life. Below is a summary of the items of discussion during 2017-2018.

Implementing the Climate Survey Action Items

Jodi Gentry, Vice President of Human Resources, presented the action items gleaned from the 10 forums held at locations around campus and online. Based on this information, she has worked on the following items this year. 1. Improving the understanding of health benefits and Peoplesoft with ALEX, online assistant. 2. Working to implement a small escrow account, across state health plans, to allow for small fee issues, without sudden plan cancellation or loss of benefits. 3. Hiring Consultant Company to explore in depth UF faculty and staff benefits, to try to improve areas where benefits may differ from peer institutions. 4. Working to enhance or restore retirement benefits. 5. Improving on campus access to childcare benefits. Overall, the mission is to improve campus climate through optimization of all aspects of faculty life and benefits.

Benefits and Compensation

The Council discussed the Office of Human Resources' initiative to hire a benefit and compensation consultant. This has been initiated. We discussed taking a long-term view of compensation and the need for transparency in the process. We discussed how our current system of retirement benefits is having an adverse impact on recruiting in some colleges, and UF's external competitiveness. In addition, we discussed how we should go about setting and managing expectations when it comes to compensation and benefits at UF.

Mentoring Programs Across Campus

Mentoring is extremely important at every level of learner and faculty. The University and all individual Colleges have programs in place, but often are not highly visible online and may not be uniform across campus. The Welfare Council has continued to try to formulate and possibly post a "Best Practices" mentoring centralized set of guidelines. There was some discussion of trying to include this with the new Office of Diversity. This is an ongoing project for the new Welfare Council Chair and team.

Consensual Relationship at Work Policy

UF did not have a formal policy on consensual relationships at work. Stanford had a working policy in place that could easily be adopted at other institutions. It is standardized and has worked well. A review and update from Jodi Gentry and Title IX officer on policies related to workers relationship was presented and a plan was made to move forward with steps to implement this through the Title IX office and HR. The process of implementation is ongoing at this time.

Issues Surrounding OPS Employees

Problems arose after the loss of wages due to Hurricane Irma. The OPS employee classification is intended for temporary employment. However, UF relies extensively on these employees for full-time and permanent work.

UF Student Government drafted a resolution in support of OPS employees, for the immediate payment of lost wages and to correct the systematic problems of OPS employment. Based on the invitation following a presentation on the OPS lost wages and the misuse of this employment classification at the November Faculty Senate meeting, this was under discussion in the December 2017 meetings with the Welfare Council, Budget Council, and Infrastructure Council. The Faculty Senate Chair tasked the Infrastructure Council to address these concerns, and then present the findings and solutions to the Steering Committee.

Welfare of Male and Female Faculty

Early in the 2016-2017 academic year, the Council reviewed data from the recent Climate Survey (available June 2016). In addition, in 2016-2017, Dr. Carolyn Tucker presented data from the survey of female faculty - Barriers to Professional Goal Attainment among UF Women Faculty Inventory. In early 2018, Dr. Tucker is invited to return to address results from her campus wide survey on male faculty, in comparison to her earlier findings on women faculty. The data findings will be another method to try to improve the welfare and satisfaction for all faculty across campus.

Faculty Club

A Faculty Club is an important collaboration element of the University's Strategic Development Plan. The Faculty Club is still under discussion by senior administration as to location, design, and need. This initiative cannot move forward until space is committed.

Childcare Benefits on Campus and Parking

Throughout the year, there were ongoing discussion of ways to improve job satisfaction and accessibility to work with improved parking. There are plans in place to build more parking areas. The parking problems and limits are directly linked to limited childcare on campus for working parents, by creating more problems when they arrive later after having to drop off small children. Discussions are ongoing on ways and locations to support more childcare facilities on campus.

Election of Chair

Suzan Alteri (Assistant University Librarian) was elected Chair of the Welfare Council for the 2018-2019 year. The Council looks forward to her continued service and leadership.

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