

## Budget Council Minutes

March 19, 2021

3:00 p.m.

via Zoom:

<https://ufl.zoom.us/j/91451275266?pwd=cUNvMnpkTmhKWTQrK0pJbEczZGsvQT09>

**Present:** Ashley Ghiaseddin, Keith Schneider, George Kolb, Mei-Fang Lan, Laurie Bialosky, Ariel Pomputius, Kevin Trejos, and Shannon Edwards.

### 1. Call to Order

- The meeting was called to order at 3:04 p.m. by Budget Council Chair Ashely Ghiaseddin.

### 2. Approval of February 19, 2021 Minutes

- The minutes were approved.

### 3. [Retirement Benefits Update](#) - Shannon Edwards, Director, University Benefits

- Shannon has recently joined UF from a corporate space and shared how UF must navigate its benefits in a higher education space and as an entity of the state.

- An analysis completed by Sibson reflected that UF has strong health insurance packages and very reasonable premiums, but retirement and leave are weak in cross-comparisons to other peer or similar institutions.

- UF employees are required to be in one of the three plans.

- The majority of employees are in the pension plan and the majority hired in the last ten years are in the ORP plans.

- Pension plan offerings outside of government and higher education are dramatically decreasing.

- Employees have a single opportunity to join the pension plan but to join when currently enrolled in another plan, payment must be rendered.

- UF HR is addressing how to best supplement retirement. While the university can press the state for best options, many are governed by state statues. Thus, UF has a somewhat limited voice in crafting various options. Addressing fees, vendor changes, and investments are also a part of this state landscape. VP Gentry is meeting w. State University System (SUS) HR administrators to help facilitate the SUS speaking in one voice to provide feedback and make requests.

- Florida Retirement System (FRS) options were discussed:

- Pension Plan - 8 years vesting period; Mandatory 3% employee contribution
- Investment Plan - 1-year vesting period; Mandatory 3% employee contribution
- SUSORP - Immediate vesting; Higher employer contribution of 5.14%; this plan will be going out to bidders soon.

- UF has an investment consultant who is reviewing investments to, among other things, reduce any associated fees.
- The Voluntary 457 Deferred Compensation Plan and its investment providers were reviewed.
- 403b plans changed January 2021, with Fidelity Investments becoming the sole recordkeeper for UF defined contribution plans.
- UF's transition to Fidelity and the RFP process was briefly discussed following a council inquiry regarding the physical presence of benefits vendors. Although this vendor brought in a national team to service UF, the university has dedicated benefit representatives in Ocala and Orlando. There is interest in having a 'brick and mortar' Gainesville location to further assist employees with Fidelity-related inquiries.
- Points of discussion included:
  - Increased paid family leave implemented in January 2021.
  - which employees are impacted with which plans.
  - how UF can positively impact retirement plans so that employees are able to supplement their retirement and defer their compensation, and generally impact their financial and retirement picture.
  - portfolio and default options for employees.
  - how UF can impact the state plans and options.
  - mandates for employees when a contract is moved. UF must follow IRS guidelines when any plans are moved, with attention to liquid and non-liquid assets.
- Director Edwards encouraged employees to discuss retirement strategy and investment strategy with TIA or Fidelity or whichever vendor is being utilized by an employee. This assistance is complimentary. Additional guidance may be needed if other portfolio options such as if college savings plans, etc. are added.
- Employees need to look at which benefits are most important to them in each stage of life.
- Life/disability insurance is offered through UF and there are multiple options for vision and dental plans.
- UF HR seeks to ensure that employees are well-educated about their options and are, for example, performing needed tasks, such as updating beneficiaries.
- Council was asked to consider if there are other things which UF should offer that employees want or need. One area which UF could improve upon is to offer strong employer contributions, which would help with faculty advancement and retention.
- Leave messaging and communication goals from VP Gentry and the UF HR team were discussed.
- UF has not moved to PTO, as they had contemplated doing in summer 2021. Director Edwards will stay in touch with Faculty Senate regarding leave updates.
- UF HR seeks a consistent approach to the leave roll out for both in-unit and out-of-unit employees.
- The ALEX AI tool was recently used as an educational walk-through to assist in

educating employees about benefit options and answering their benefits questions. UF is no longer using this tool but is instead distributing invitations targeted to faculty and employees for bi-weekly in-person orientations/Q&A's with HR specialists. They are not mandatory, but such in-person benefits consults may be especially helpful to new hires.

- Additionally, Director Edwards has spear-headed organizational improvements to UF call-in areas/call center employees.

#### **4. Election of 2021-2022 Budget Council Chair**

- Ashley Ghiaseddin was elected Chair of Budget Council.

#### **5. Administrative Liaison's Report/Updates** - George Kolb, Assistant Vice President, Financial Analysis and Budget

- The third round of the CARES Act is underway, and funding looks to be approximately \$86 million for UF, with half for student aid use and half to the institution. The new state budget may have an additional 10-11 billion dollars. CARES has some time restrictions related to its usage but may also allow the state and UF some flexibility in its expenditure.

- Closing council inquiries and discussion included:

- Who are considered UF peer institutions? <http://senate.ufl.edu/resources/faculty-information/peer-institutions/> is a resource page containing peer institutions.

- Budget Council, the Sustainability Committee, and Infrastructure Council have all discussed the ([UFICO ESG Policy Overview](#)), which is posted on the [Budget Council - Agenda / Minutes 2020-2021 web page](#) and was noted at the February Faculty Senate Steering Committee meeting. Council agreed it would be helpful to present/share this policy with Faculty Senate; the Office of Sustainability can likely provide additional information regarding campus communications on this topic.

- Council would like to hear budget updates from VP Kaplan at its May meeting. The Faculty Senate Secretary will send an invitation to gage his availability. He is addressing this item at the next Faculty Senate meeting and the [03.25.21 Faculty Senate agenda link](#) was shared in today's council's meeting Zoom chat.

#### **6. Adjournment**

- The meeting adjourned at 4:16 p.m.