

SAS meeting Minutes
April 30, 2012
9:00-10:30 am; 339 O'Shaughnessy

Meeting with Rob Becht and Lori Maurer (HR)

Attending: Lauren Fox, Carol Kraus Lynn McCormack, Jessica Monokroussos, Teena Sexton, Claire Shely, Michelle Thornton, Amy Williams

Lynn began discussion by recalling to SAS that she had already spoken with Rob Becht for 1 ½ hours over a week ago (and informed SAS of the discussion via email) and so this was a chance for the rest of SAS to have a discussion with Rob and Lori Maurer about the recent staff issues and voice questions, concerns and ideas to try to prevent such major issues in the future. Lori could only stay until 9:40 due to another meeting commitment.

Rob stated that there were 7 people within the College that were affected by the 2-month reduction of their positions and that two were within the Dean's Office. He openly acknowledged communication errors and incorrect assumptions that were made concerning department chairs' roles in informing their staff member of the staff changes being made prior to the formal notification letter sent as an attachment to each staff member via email. What he thought would happen didn't in all cases and some staff were unfairly surprised (to put it mildly) by the staffing changes and seeming lack compassionate treatment by the College. In hindsight, he wishes he had sat down in a meeting with the staff member and chair/supervisor in each case and discussed the changes, how it would affect the staff member and what the College could do to help with the transition. Staff whose positions went from 12 to 10 month have the opportunity to work in the college, possibly helping in other colleges, or the university filling in other positions as needed. Lori Maurer stated that she had already been approached by another College looking for administrative assistant help in the summer and were happy to hear that the A and L College had some experienced help available. In those instances, the College would continue to pay staff salaries, at the usual rate, and then behind the scenes transfer funds from the other college to cover the salary. That way there would be no room for error that staff payroll changes could bring.

Given that these types of staffing changes have not happened in Arts & Letters in the past, Rob and Lori are using this as a learning experience and have been very open to discussion, feedback, criticism, and change. What may not seem to be a big deal to someone may be a huge issue for another, and so they welcome the opportunity to bring staffing issues before SAS for discussions in the future and promise to do so.

SAS asked about the possibility of staff that were 12 month, but wanted to be 10, switching positions with 10 month staff members. There would be many logistical issues with doing this between departments/programs, but it is not entirely ruled out. Circumstances would have to be right on both sides for this to take place though.

Rob was asked about the possibility of taking classes during the summer and getting paid for that time for staff who are on 10 month and being paid hourly. He thought that was reasonable and doable, especially given that those staff members are on the hourly system with UltraTime. It would not be a problem for the staff member to enter in the time for class to get paid for it.

Rob was wondering about other staff concerns that might have been brought to SAS. Staff appreciated the email Rob sent out regarding how the staffing changes came about as well as the upcoming information about staff all being eventually changed from “salary” to “hourly.” Currently about 75% of staff within the College are “hourly” and using the UltraTime system. Some who were changed early on had a difficult transition time, but the Dean’s Office and HR is better equipped now to assist with these changes and understands difficulties that might arise. Rob has discussions with staff now prior to instituting a change from salary to hourly so staff know better what to expect, what will take place, and the fact that overtime hours can be easily tracked. Not only should staff be paid for the hours worked by law, as opposed to comp time which HR says must be taken within the same week as accrued, but it helps administrators to know which positions could be overburdened.

It has been mentioned to Rob that there are some staff having issues with the name change of “salary” to “hourly,” so that he can be sensitive to that issue and try to address it as it arises, as he is initiating these changes.

Rob asked SAS if now might be a good time to hold an open forum, town hall style meeting again to discuss happenings affecting staff, good or bad, with no set agenda. SAS agreed and will set up something through survey monkey to allow staff to anonymously submit concerns, questions or ideas that might not otherwise be shared by standing up in front of the group. Non-anonymous emails can be sent to alsas@nd.edu, where the SAS committee will compile them for the meeting. Additionally, people will be welcome to voice their own concerns, questions, or ideas at the meeting. The Town Hall will be in the third week of May, just after graduation.

With discussion of that concluded, the SAS meeting adjourned at 10:30.

Current SAS membership for 2011-12 includes:

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