

**Staff Association Area Reps Meeting
Minutes of March 12, 2015**

Present:

Theresa Bauer
Annette Dietrich
Lawrence Folland
Christine Gillis-Bilton
Jason Gorrie
Tom Graham
Michael Herz
Robyn Landers
Stephen Markan

Carlos Mendes
Darlene Ryan
Dianne Foreman
Katie Damphouse
Lori McConnell
Jeremy Steffler
Sue Oestrich
Terry Labach
Jackie Serviss

Barb Blundon
Tim Ireland
Gail Spencer
Kathleen St. Laurent
Stefaniada Voichita
Barb Yantha
Andrea Rose Santi
Melissa Zapletal

1. Approval of Agenda

Accepted.

2. Approval of Minutes of February 12, 2015 Area Reps Meeting

Christine Gillis-Bilton requested inclusion of a point from the OHD presentation about the availability of psychological health and safety presentations that hadn't been noted. Katrina shared that in the interest of employee psychological health and safety, OHD and Linda Brogden, Occupational Health have teamed together and can be booked to do a half-day departmental presentation on Psychological Health & Safety.

3. Business arising from minutes

None.

4. UWSA membership history and concerns

As has been mentioned at recent UWSA Area Reps meetings, there is concern about declining trend in UWSA membership.

In 1975 the UW President officially recognized over 50% membership in UWSA. This triggered an increase of involvement of UWSA on various administrative committees. In 2008 an MOU was signed formalizing that 1975 recognition and the inclusion of UWSA representation on PACSC, SRC, P&B. Membership was about 65% at that time. Enrolment was converted in about 2003 from voluntary to automatic (with voluntary opt-out) resulting in a high of about 71% in November 2013. At that time HR notified us that automatic with opt-out was no longer acceptable so membership reverted to voluntary. Since then, membership has fallen to about 65% despite various active efforts with new staff at time of hiring, and later by visiting them individually.

Have spoken with Geoff McBoyle about implications if membership continues to fall. We would lose recognition if it were to fall below 50%. The prospect of many retirements in near future suggests membership will continue to fall because not enough new staff are signing up.

UWSA is the only association with no mandatory dues. (The others are FEDS, GSA, FAUW). FAUW made participation mandatory in 1998.

UWSA is seeking legal advice on what can be done, how to deal with change. Will then discuss with UW administration. Planning consultations over the spring and summer, with proposals at the October AGM.

Q: Clarify short-term staff situation.

A: of all our terminations about 50% are due to retirement and the other 50% have less than 2 years of service (roughly 30 of 60 people). Only about 20% of new staff sign up despite our efforts.

Comment: For UWSA to continue to exist, with recruiting not succeeding, we would need to convert to mandatory membership and dues. So let's do that.

Comment: People don't sign up because they don't perceive the value. Need to demonstrate more value. They'll be annoyed if they're forced to join. What about setting up a mentoring system to foster interest.

Comment: It was only through access to SRC that we learned about the high loss of new staff in first two years. This suggests there may be real problems. That access to SRC information is an example of value of UWSA.

Comment: Aside from new staff not signing up, what about long-time staff not signing up? Is there any investigation of those people?

Comment: This fluctuating membership is bound to happen again every so many years. Maybe not a good use of time to have to go through it repeatedly. Converting to mandatory membership now to fix this may be better.

Comment: The other associations that have mandatory dues are structured differently and operate differently. If UWSA switches to mandatory dues we may need to restructure UWSA to provide more accountability to all membership (similarly to a union).

Comment: Should think about long term strategy, not just short term tactics about encouraging new staff to join.

Q: What is the drop-out rate of long-term staff?

A: Very very low.

Comments: Reasons for not joining? Mostly apathy. People feel UWSA will represent them anyway, so why bother to pay.

Comment: There may be a perception that new staff or non-UWSA members feel that they will not be accepted on various committees unless they are well-connected to UWSA already.

Response: There are often numerous applicants for positions. The quality of some applications is poor (e.g. Very little written material where required.)

Comment: Recommend reading Wikipedia page on Rand formula for membership dues and representation for salary negotiations.

Closing request from Carlos: Please spread the word to your colleagues so more people will be aware of this issue.

Chair: Carlos Mendes

Minutes: RBL