



Cornell University Employee Assembly

Cornell Employee Assembly

Minutes of the October 20, 2021 Meeting 12:15-1:30 PM
Zoom

I. Call to Order

- a. Chair J. Withers called the meeting to order at 12:15pm.

II. Roll Call

Members Present [19]: D. Barrett, M. Brooks, J. Cannella, S. Coil, J. Creque, H. Depew, J. Duong, B. Fortenberry, B. Goodell, A. Haenlin-Mott, D. Howell, K. LoParco, K. Mahoney, E. Miller, M. Podolec, K. Supron, K. Tannenbaum, J. Townley, J. Withers, L. Zacharias

Members Absent [4]: M. Benda, M. Cherry, B. Fisher, A. Mittman

III. Land Acknowledgement of the Gayogho:nq̓ (Cayuga Nation)

- a. J. Withers stated the Land Acknowledgement.

IV. Approval of October 6, 2021 Minutes

- a. Motion to approve October 6, 2021 minutes was **approved** unanimously.

V. Open Forum

- a. Gordon L. Barger, Sr. Director, Benefit Services and Administration, open enrollment presentation.
 1. G. Barger stated that the information being presented has not been made public yet and that this information will not be publicized.
 2. G. Barger stated that for retiree health insurance, the pre-65 health is the default for all those under age 65, and that for 2022 this plan will increase in 7.0% costs for Cornell, so for individuals costs will go up \$5.00 a month and that for families, costs will go up \$26.00 a month. G. Barger stated that for those above 65, there are 3 available plans. Two plans will see no rate increases, while the Medicare Advantage Prescription Drug Plan (MAPD), the newest plan, will experience a rate increase of \$1.00 a month for individuals and \$6.00 a month for families.
 3. G. Barger stated that for active endowed health insurance, there were many high cost claimants the previous year that increased costs, forcing the weight of this increased cost to be shared among Cornell faculty and staff. G. Barger noted that luckily, the full 7% increase will not be reflected in increased costs, but rather through only a 2% increase for staff. For dental plans, Metlife has been capped at a 4% increase for 2022. For life insurance, Cornell renewed with Cigna/New York Life to continue coverage.

4. G. Barger stated that H.S.A. contribution limits have been announced, but that due to Congress, F.S.A. contribution limits have yet to be established; 2021 rates will be offered until this announcement.
5. G. Barger stated that on 10/25/2021, an email on open enrollment will be sent to endowed faculty and staff before the open enrollment period begins from 11/1/2021 to 11/24/2021.
6. E. Miller read aloud a question of if the presentations for the virtual benefit fair would be recorded.
7. G. Burger stated that live attendance would be emphasized, but that recordings would be posted.
8. E. Miller questioned if there was a breakdown of costs between Cornell and staff for active endowed health insurance.
9. G. Burger stated that the model for cost sharing for the active endowed health insurance is 90% of costs paid by Cornell and 10% paid by staff. However, G. Burger noted that Cornell is currently paying at a higher rate by not passing on costs, but that a return to this cost breakdown will eventually need to happen.
10. G. Giambattista questioned if there were something the Assembly could do in reference to improving wellness, noting the large increase in high-cost claimants in recent years. G. Burger stated that Cornell has an aging demographic of faculty and staff, as well as regional issues thanks to growth rates on diseases, but that many of the high-cost claims are due to sudden anomalies such as strokes or heart failure. G. Burger stated that, for example, the Ithaca region has a much higher rate of muscular skeletal issues.
11. K. Tannenbaum asked that G. Burger address questions in the chat about the vision plan. G. Burger addressed a question on limitations as far as the fact that only certain contacts are covered. G. Burger stated that if the asker of question contacted him separately, he could have more details as far as what difficulties they are experiencing. G. Burger addressed a question from M. LoParco on glass coverage and similarly asked her to contact him separately.
12. J. Duong questioned if G. Burger's office had more plans to work through and settle the retirement contributions that were taken from staff during the pandemic. G. Burger stated that J. Duong's question is much higher of a concern than the scope of his office can singularly address, but that the amount returned will not be exact as it would be taken as an employer contribution outside of pre-existing plans.
13. K. Tannenbaum noted that employees themselves may go on Workday and submit an amount of contribution that they desire as retirement contribution for that specifically selected pay period. G. Burger reiterated this sentiment but noted that the CURB Plan is entirely separate.
14. J. Withers thanked G. Burger for his time.

I. Business of the Day

- a. EA Resolution 2: Support for Interim Policy 6.3
 1. M. LoParco noted that she had a meeting coming up with stakeholders and that any concerns one might have should be emailed soon, emphasizing that since the

last meeting she has not received any emails with notes or concerns over the Resolution.

2. J. Duong stated that he feels the Resolution does not address any concerns that pre-existing policies addressing power imbalances have not already addressed, and that the policy unnecessarily puts itself too much into the personal lives of staff.
 3. M. LoParco stated that J. Duong's concerns are valid and that she would bring up his concerns in the next stakeholder meeting.
 4. J. Cannella stated that the policy offers a level of parallelism between faculty and staff, in particular noting that it prevents student-facing staff from lording their power and position over students. J. Duong stated that he has not heard of a situation that hasn't been covered by pre-existing policy, to which J. Cannella offered a scenario between a student and a registrar. J. Duong stated that this scenario is covered by other policies that already exist.
 5. B. Fortenberry noted that the Student Assembly passed a resolution in support of this policy and that there have been experiences in student dining where staff have put students in an uncomfortable position.
 6. M. LoParco stated that the policy is also in place to help protect staff as well by giving them a grounds to stand on.
 7. J. Duong noted that the policy does not protect staff from advances from other staff and possible unwanted advances, an issue that should be solved rather than creating a blanked policy such as Interim Policy 6.3.
 8. M. LoParco noted that Interim Policy 6.3 did arise due to a situation.
 9. B. Fortenberry motioned to vote on EA Resolution 2. J. Cannella seconded the motion. The motion was approved.
 10. EA Resolution 2 was approved with a vote of 14-2-2.
- b. Liaison Appointments
1. J. Withers stated that there was a staff member, N. Fanelli, who volunteered to act as Employee Assembly Liaison to the University Assembly Campus Committee on Infrastructure, Technology, and the Environment. B. Goodell nominated N. Fanelli for the position, to which B. Fortenberry seconded. N. Fanelli was approved for the position unanimously.

II. Committee Reports and Updates

- a. Executive Committee - A. Haenlin-Mott
 1. A. Haenlin-Mott stated that there is now a confirmed time for the President's Address to Staff on November 12th from 12:00-1:00pm and that this Address will be done in a hybrid format. A. Haenlin-Mott noted that foods and drinks would be offered after the Address in a grab-and-go format.
- b. Communications, Outreach and Recognition Committee - E. Miller
 1. E. Miller invited all the EA members to use Teams, a helpful communication tool. E. Miller stated a call for nominations has been sent out for the Employee Assembly Employee Appreciation Award, but that no nominations have been submitted yet. E. Miller stated that the next outreach event is the President's Address which will require some volunteers to help run the event, and that the next EA Voice Newsletter will be released November 8th. E. Miller also noted that there are red polo shirts available for EA members.

2. E. Miller noted that a group can definitely be nominated a second time around.
- c. Elections Committee - J. Duong
 1. J. Duong encouraged people to remind others to vote.
 2. B. Goodell motioned to extend the meeting by ten minutes. J. Cannella seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.
- d. University Benefits Committee - B. Goodell
 1. B. Goodell stated that a benefit specialist will be joining every Committee meeting to act as liaison.
- e. Employee Welfare Committee - K. Mahoney
 1. K. Mahoney noted that the chat has a link to the Restorative Talking Circles program, a new program meant to build community and reflection rolled out by HR. K. Mahoney highlighted that October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month and that October 21 is Go Purple Day.

III. Liaison Reports

- a. University Assembly and Committees
 1. B. Fortenberry stated that, in light of time, he would save comments for the next meeting.
- b. Faculty Senate
 1. J. Creque stated that the Faculty Senate is doing a hybrid format for Zoom meeting, with much discussion over certain Zoom features. J. Creque stated that discussion over Interim Policy 6.3 also occurred.

IV. New Business

- a. Open Discussion
 1. E. Miller motioned to adjourn. J. Cannella seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

V. Adjournment

- a. The meeting was adjourned at 1:39pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Office of the Assemblies