

Retention Meeting – Wednesday, January 15, 2020

The meeting began at 3:15pm in the Mears Meeting Room. Those in attendance: Jason Rinaldo, Mark Jones, Amber Meis (Zoom), Gary Pingel, Eric Burks, and Brandi Zimmer.

Eric started the meeting by giving a summary of how this committee was formed. This committee is not specifically outlined in the negotiated agreement but was agreed to through the negotiations process to review the current placement schedule, how it can be improved and the possibility of moving it to a retention (salary) schedule. The current negotiated agreement does not have a traditional salary schedule but a placement schedule. Eric mentioned that even with a salary schedule, there is not always guaranteed movement, there are times when it has to be frozen. Whatever proposal we come up with has to be affordable-based on enrollment, rising costs, other factors, etc. When we come to an agreement on what we want this to look like, we will also have to come up with an implementation plan. Eric reiterated the fact that the College's board does appreciate our faculty & staff and wants to get them as much money as we can afford. Next, Eric asked the group to share their thoughts on what they want from this committee.

Amber expected a salary schedule when she was hired, so she was surprised that we didn't get a raise every year. She feels a salary schedule gives hope to faculty of a raise, some have left not knowing what/if raise will be given. Amber also said she doesn't want this to have a negative impact to any employee, to which everyone agreed. She said we are the only educational institution she is aware of that doesn't have a salary schedule. She has looked at some scenarios, one with a \$750 increment, but it did have a negative impact to some. She also mentioned maybe trying to do a cost of living adjustment every year, at minimum? Amber also discussed the need to add certifications (example – Master Plumber) into the salary schedule. She also thought the current placement schedule might have too many steps, maybe there shouldn't be anything between Associates to Bachelors and Bachelors to Masters. Amber also thought we could add points for professional development.

Mark mentioned that he has no experience with a traditional salary schedule. He said he understands that there is no guarantee of a raise, but it does show intent of what people can expect. Mark mentioned that certifications are so diverse, some programs have a lot, while some programs don't have any. This also led to a discussion of what certifications should qualify, First Aid, English as a Second Language, OSHA, etc? If we got certifications figured out, they could equate to an education level. Amber said she started a schedule based on our base salaries, but it quickly gets complicated.

Gary said everything depends on your starting point. We need to balance current employees with new hires. Gary suggested we view us (the College) as a business, these are goals, not guarantees. He said it is important for all to understand our funding from the state, why enrollment is so important, increased costs of operations due to duplicate campuses. He also recommended looking at efficiencies when we have vacancies. Gary also said there are a lot of factors/benefits that keep people teaching, such as money, number of work days, how much work would have to be done outside of the work day, environmental factors, etc. There is a value to time. Gary recommended we compare our salaries to the job market on an hourly comparison.

Jason likes the idea of comparing our salaries to those in industry, but there is such a different scope of jobs for all of the different departments. He just did follow-up & he has recent graduates who are making about the same salary as he is, with 25 years of experience. He feels the salary schedule gives us something to shoot for. He also likes the idea of adding certificates to the schedule. He feels the schedule should be based on factors such as degree, professional development, certificates, time, etc.

Jason was on a salary schedule while he was in the military, that schedule had an increase every year for the first four years and after that it went up every two years. This schedule included a cost of living adjustment, of which the largest he ever saw was 4%, but it was typically 1-2%. The cost of living was the same for everyone and was split in half, half given in January and half in June. We do have the luxury of sick leave and time off, which the military didn't have. He said the military schedule was based off of where you were in the hierarchy; there was a cap. Jason thinks we need to be creative in how we look at this, if employee's insurance percentage was less, it could help with take home pay and tax brackets so we are looking at total compensation, not just pay.

Eric said the College's goal is to pay and compensate our faculty and staff more. We are looking at total compensation statements to share with each employee, as there are a lot of benefits offered that we don't think about. Eric mentioned that one major difference between the federal government/school districts & us, is that there is a constitutional obligation to support those entities but there is not that same obligation to support us, we have a lot more ups & downs with our budget. Eric likes the idea of looking at program profitability, with a balance for what we incentivize. As Gary mentioned, look at it like a business model, as most departments can do live work. If a program can generate a profit (live work, auction items, etc.) or create efficiencies, how can we share those profits with the employees? How can we incent higher profits and higher enrollment rather than just settling for a comfortable number? We need to get people to treat this place as they would in their personal space/home. He doesn't think we should take money away if you aren't profitable but share if you are profitable. Eric also mentioned the challenges of certificates, what brings value to the College? There might be some that don't have value to the College. This can easily get complicated, but we need to find a way to keep it simple because new hires need to be able to understand it. Our biggest competition is industry, so we need to compare to them, but there are also benefits we offer that they don't. There is a varied demand based on the industry, which will be challenging to work with working within a master agreement. Maybe we could offer supplemental, such as a percentage in high demand areas, such as Electricity or Nursing. We need to find good resources to inform our decision of industry rates. It is tough to compare to industry as the pay and perks are completely different. We also want to incentivize growth & continued improvement, not just about putting in their time.

Brandi mentioned that we need to put a weight to certifications as they aren't all equivalent to each other, such as Electrical Journeyman vs OSHA or NCCER. The schedule also needs to reflect that certain steps are more important than others, but some certifications are more important than a degree. The meat and potatoes are between Associates and Masters. Eric mentioned that Cowley has two salary schedules, one for General Education and one for Technical. This could be a model we look at.

Eric mentioned that we need to come up with a solution that is better, as it will never be perfect, but we don't want perfect to be the obstacle of better.

We will meet on the first Wednesday of the month, our next meeting will be February 5 @ 3:15pm. We will come back with research of what this could look like for that meeting. Eric has pulled several schedules from other institutions but would be interested in seeing a military schedule. We should capitalize on the thought of self-improvement. We need to build a model that is also sustainable.