

Lee, Lori

From: Walker, Marianna
Sent: Wednesday, April 21, 2010 9:45 PM
To: Lee, Lori
Subject: FW: Serious Illness and Disability Leave Policy

FYI

See below.

Marianna

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From: Ballard, Steve
Sent: Wednesday, April 21, 2010 5:00 PM
To: Given, John
Cc: Mathews, Holly; Van Willigen, Marieke; Lillian, Donna L.; Walker, Marianna; Sheerer, Marilyn;
Horns, Phyllis; Mageean, Deirdre
Subject: RE: Serious Illness and Disability Leave Policy

Dear Professors Given, Mathews, Van Willigen, and Lillian,

Thank you very much for this response. Certainly, there are many valid points herein and I'm hereby asking Academic Council to include your perspective as we continue our evaluation of FSIL.

I would like to make a couple of clarifications of my perspectives on this benefit. First, I think you are correct that the higher salaries among the BSOM faculty contribute to the cost of the benefits. I also agree that the primary (but not only) driver behind the proposed change is the school of medicine. My clarification is simply this: community based academic medical centers (all 19 of them) are somewhere between stressed out and broke. One of my responsibilities is to ensure that a really excellent school of medicine can be maintained here, in spite of the fact that federal, state, and local (hospital) factors all contribute to its economic stress. I won't belabor that except to say that in my mind the primary motivator for me is to reduce the costs to our school of medicine which will allow them to maintain their current mission. That becomes more difficult by the day, or so it seems.

The second clarification is that you are quite right that the proposed policy changes won't save a tremendous sum of money (I would argue however that the saving in the practice plan are actually quite important over time). That said, Board policy requires us to be strong stewards of every resource in order to protect the academic core. That is what I'm trying to do here... that is, have a policy in line with national best practices, but also one that is prudent given our fiscal situation. We have also implemented dozens of other changes, many quite painful, that save relatively small amounts of money. However, they are cumulative and therefore the combined impact is significant.

The original FSIL was passed during truly unusual economic times and when those conditions change we are forced to re-think many of our services and expenditures.

I hope this helps a little to explain where I'm coming from. I appreciate your perspectives and I remain hopeful we can work this out so that we have a strong benefit for our faculty.

Best regards,
Steve

From: Given, John
Sent: Wednesday, April 21, 2010 12:02 PM
To: Ballard, Steve
Cc: Mathews, Holly; Van Willigen, Marieke; Lillian, Donna L.
Subject: Serious Illness and Disability Leave Policy

Dear Chancellor Ballard,

In your remarks at Faculty Senate yesterday, you brought up the Serious Illness and Disability Leave Policy. You're certainly correct that the process is drawing to an end and, hopefully, a reasonable compromise is near. The Senate passed numerous recommendations yesterday that we hope you and the Academic Council will seriously consider. We were pleased to hear you state that the primary motivation for revising the policy is the costs in the Health Sciences Division. Although this has been evident from the start, it has seldom been stated. The data we have been given shows that the cost per leave in Health Sciences is nearly triple the cost per leave in Academic Affairs, both because salaries are typically much higher in HS and because of lost revenues from the practice plan. It is, to say the least, frustrating for those of us in Academic Affairs to see our benefits reduced when it is the higher salaries of our colleagues that contribute disproportionately to the benefit's cost.

The reason we are writing today, though, is not to express our frustration, but to comment upon your remark yesterday that revising the Leave policy is financially necessary. You needed to leave the Senate meeting yesterday before we discussed this issue in detail, but it is worth bringing to your attention. While we acknowledge that the benefit is costly in terms of lost revenue in the practice plan and lost productivity while faculty are on leave, the savings to be reaped from the proposed revisions are not such as to affect the University's financial health in any significant way. (We are attaching a document that was prepared for the Senate meeting yesterday, which shows the details of our argument. You will also find attached documents detailing FSIL policies at our peer institutions and other UNC campuses.)

In brief, the proposed reduction of the paid leaves from 15 to 12 weeks would save \$125,221 per year in faculty salaries across both divisions. That is, the University would expend \$125,221 less for paid leave. While we recognize that it is possible to value faculty productivity in dollars, these are not dollars that will help the university's financial sustainability. They won't hit the bottom line.

The only savings to hit the bottom line are the increased revenues from the practice plan. As it turns out, that increased revenue will amount only to \$36,389 per year, or a mere 0.0231% of the practice plan's annual budget.

If the motivation for curtailing the Leave benefit is primarily that we need to save money, it seems to us that the potential savings are too minuscule to justify changing this policy. The benefits of the current policy – in terms of faculty recruitment and retention, faculty morale, minimizing the impact on

the classroom and thus student retention and student success – outweigh the potential savings of revision.

Nevertheless, we did agree in Senate yesterday to compromise, and reduce the maximum leave from 15 to 12 weeks because we are concerned with alleviating the budget crisis in every way possible. There were still, however, a number of issues regarding the administration of the benefit, which you will receive via Senate resolutions, that we hope will be implemented, especially in light of the weak justification for any revision.

Thank you,

John Given (Foreign Languages & Literatures) Donna Lillian (English) Holly Mathews (Anthropology)
Marieke Van Willigen (Sociology)

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