

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING

September 23, 2020

Video Conference on Microsoft Teams

MINUTES

Present: Richard Branda, Jeanine Carr, Fred Curran, Stephen Cutler, Mary Jane Dickerson, Alan Gottlieb, Michael Gurdon, Judith Van Houten, Dwight Matthews, Beth Mintz,

Absent: none

Call to Order: Chair Michael Gurdon called the meeting to order at 11:17am

1. RFAO Board Meeting

- Presentation from and Q & A with Human Resources Director Jes Kraus and Employee Benefits Manager Greg Paradiso, who asked that this information be held confidential until October 1, 2020.
- Jes Kraus introduced the topic for discussion as a proposed change in the health plan for retirees. He stated that the UVM health plan is self insured for claims and its management is put out for bid every 5 years. Currently retirees are offered health insurance to supplement Medicare by Blue Cross/Blue Shield of VT through Plan J or Medcomp and dental insurance by Delta Dental. Now BC/BS of VT in partnership with BC/BS of Michigan is offering a Medicare Advantage Plan (Vermont Blue Advantage). This new medical health plan appears to offer the same coverage with a 20% reduction in cost to members.
- Ingrid Temer and Pam Getsie from BC/BS were introduced to the Board to give an overview of the new plan. A copy of the PowerPoint slide presentation was provided to the Board. In summary,
 - Medicare Advantage (MA) plans have a long history of popularity and success nationally with a 34% increase in enrollment in the past year.
 - BC/BS of VT holds the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) contract for the UVM insurance. It plans to partner with BC/BS of Michigan, which has a long experience and a large number of enrollees in its market leader MA plan, while BC/BS VT has a strong local network. Both are non profit. With the formation of an MA, CMS transfers risk to BC/BS.
 - An MA integrates medical and prescription coverage into one enrollment. There is decreased cost to UVM and retirees because the financial risk is taken on by the MA and administration is more efficient and cost effective for BC/BS.
 - There will be no change in benefits and networks in VT and nationally. There will be enhanced telehealth visits, better worldwide urgent and emergency care, and preventive care. Cost sharing is unchanged.
 - Medicare Parts A and B are unchanged.

- UVM will make a public announcement to retirees around Oct. 1, 2020. There will be welcome kits mailed, new ID cards, and a call center for questions.
- Retirees need to take no action to enroll. They can decline enrollment but cannot stay in the old plan.
- The plan becomes effective 1/1/2021.
- Following the presentation there was a discussion and question period.
 - The prime motivation for a change was that a VT MA was not available previously. It is a new plan and offers the same coverage for less cost.
 - VT MA will also be offered to other companies.
 - Coverage for retirees who live outside of VT will be unchanged. The local VT MA will be available to all VT MA w n n ú

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\ Video Conference on Microsoft Teams

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° none

\ Chair Michael Gurdon called the meeting to order at 11:06am

1. Minutes of August 21, 2020, and September 23, 2020, approved as written
2. RFAO Board Meeting
 - Report from United Academics (Beth Mintz)
 - o Further negotiations regarding contracts and collective bargaining will continue on Oct 20, 2020.
 - o There is an impasse on the negotiations about conditions of employment in the COVID world.
 - o UA has been supportive of RFAO efforts to understand the proposed changes in retiree health benefits
 - There followed a discussion of the proposed changes in the health care plan for the University of Maine system. Under the proposal, retirees will have to file for reimbursement of health care costs after paying upfront and choose new health care plans. It was estimated that this change would save the System \$2.5 million / year. However, lawmakers, the union and retirees raised concerns to the chancellor and asked for reconsideration of the decision.
 - Faculty Senate Report (Mara Saule)
 - o Since the last Board meeting, there have been Faculty Senate meetings on August 24 and September 21, 2020. Details of the agendas and minutes are available on the Faculty Senate website.
 - The August 24th meeting discussed proposed changes to the spring academic calendar, provided an update of the Childcare Working Group with a final report due in December, and gave an overview of the activities of the by laws committee.
 - At the September 21st meeting, v of Grad

and an online option for existing CGS in Complex Systems & Data Science. There were discussions of the Liberal Arts General Education Requirement and of a UVM reorganization committee. The latter is in an

exploratory phase and is reviewing past studies. There will be further

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING

November 17, 2020

Video Conference on Microsoft Teams

MINUTES

Present: Richard Branda, Jeanine Carr, Fred Curran, Stephen Cutler, Mary Jane Dickerson, Alan Gotlieb, Michael Gurdon, Dwight Matthews, Beth Mintz, Jack McCormack, Lee Thompson, Judith Van Houten, Mara Saule

Absent: none

Call to Order: Chair Michael Gurdon called the meeting to order at 10:01am

1. Minutes of October 20, 2020, approved as delivered
2. RFAO Board Meeting
 - United Academics Report (Beth2020 c members. The general

y issue for UVM and would probably not be pursued
rned about a possible computer security issue than

y the UA executive board of a potential relationship
Possible models being considered are a voluntary
A, an Associate Membership with UA after paying the
ociation dues adjusted for associate membership (about
pers but might be cumbersome. It seemed preferable
m an affiliation with RFAO. Then any retiree who is
ctions with UA regardless of prior relationship to UA.
an affiliation with UA in that we have a position on

ntinue discussions with UA, that written proposals
tion, and that a UA representative be invited to a
osals.

Facultw Hnization chaired by

ors College.
e would be 4 possible colleges:
d environmental sciences
an experience

- Engineering, business and technological innovation
 - The main points of discussion were the rationale and context for this long term vision and a concern that consideration now will distract from the serious short term problems of UVM.
 - It was noted that there has not been much input and engagement by faculty and emeriti to date.
 - Nevertheless the timeline is to refine the plan in the period of January March 2021 and begin implementation in April.
 - During the RFAO board discussion, there was a question of whether our organization should be involved in the process. The board shared the concern that proceeding now will distract from dealing with serious current UVM problems. There was also a question of how the reorganization would impact the research component of the University.
- Review of and feedback

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING

December 16, 2020

Video Conference on Microsoft Teams

Report (Mara Saule): There were 186 in attendance.

Memorials were read.

Two programs were offered for consideration: a doctorate in occupational therapy and a program in community center design. A lengthy discussion ensued regarding the appropriateness of bringing on new programs when others were being cut in the College of Arts and Sciences. Afterward the programs were approved.

There were discussions of revised guidelines to terminate programs and of academic

At the last meeting with Thomas Chittenden as chair because he was elected to the Vermont legislature. The Vice Chair will succeed him until the next election.

Minutes Report (Beth Mintz)

Several concerns regarding the proposed cuts to programs in the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS).

Loss of jobs for staff, non-tenured faculty and tenured faculty lines

A diminished role for liberal arts education at UVM

Budgeting issues. There is a concern that CAS subsidizes programs in other Colleges and that these subsidies should be eliminated before the loss of positions.

Contracting. The contract is still in mediation, with no movement on salary differences, which probably will go to fact finding by the VT Labor Relations Board.

Representation. A role for the RFAO on the UA executive board as a non-voting member was discussed in their constitution. There was discussion of another type of affiliation such as a representative for UA to communicate to retired UA members who might then become more involved in UA affairs. The role of RFAO in an invitation to retirees to express an interest in joining a part of UA will be discussed further at our next meeting.

Mr. Cate, Vice President of Finance and Administration, joined the meeting at 2:31pm.

Several issues in the areas of Human Resources and Finance were discussed.

- o Mr. Cate feels that UVM finances are sound overall because of financial discipline over the past decade. He stated that there is a structural institutional deficit that requires budget reductions each year, but each budget is balanced

to the major. As students migrated from CAS, there was an
Currently there is a \$2 million deficit that needs to be covered
by some that CAS is contributing more funding than it is

to the

getting back. Mr. Cate believes that perception is more apparent than real because funding shifts can be hard to follow through complex budgets.

- Access of retirees to software. Mr. Cate believed there were budget implications, but the magnitude was unclear. The funding would involve both licensing and IT support. The RFAO board suggested that the number of interested retirees would be small, perhaps 10% of our members. Mr. Cate will discuss the issue further with Simeon Ananou.
- Mr. Cate was asked whether retiree health insurance payments could be moved from student financial services. He stated that part of the problem is that some retirees are active on the internet while others only use paper. Therefore exclusive electronic billing is not an option. He was willing to look into other options.
- There was feeling by board members that the HR website is updated too slowly and that it is more oriented to people about to retire than to those already retired.
- Retirees can not set up Teams.
- Review discussion with Richard Cate and plan any next steps.
 - Invite Jes Kraus and Greg Paradiso to discuss the HR website to separate information for those planning to retire from information for retirees.
 - Get an update on vision care, which may be a software issue for billing. Beth Mintz will write a note to Mr. Cate regarding vision care.
 - Poll members for those who need access to specialized software for academic activities. A first step could be to ask members to check to see if they already have access to software.
- New Business. Steve Cutler brought to the board's attention a letter he wrote to Patricia Prelock as an individual retiree rather than as a member of the RFAO board. In the letter he declared that UVM is an ageist institution with rampant ageism. In his opinion retirees are not included in the university community. As evidence he cites retiree exclusion from university COVID testing and from related university communications. This letter led to a video conference involving Steve, Chair Gurdon, Dwight Mathews and Jim Vigoreaux. Concerns were expressed regarding how retirees are viewed by the administration and about an apparent lack of respect for their contributions to the university.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:43pm

The next meeting is scheduled for: **Wednesday, January 20, 2021 at 2pm**

Respectfully submitted, Richard Branda

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING

January 20, 2021

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EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING

February 17, 2021

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EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING

March 17, 2021

Video Conference on Microsoft Teams

MINUTES

Present: Richard Branda, Stephen Cutler, Mary Jane Dickerson, Alan Gottlieb, Michael Gurdon, Dwight Matthews, Beth Mintz, Jack McCormack, Lee Thompson, Judith Van Houten, Mara Saule

Absent: none

Call to Order: Chair Michael announcement was provided, indicating that the Board will be held on March 22, 2021, at the Virtue soccer field. There will be platform speakers but no guests or faculty.

- b. United Academics Update (Beth Mintz):
 - i. It appears that the contract talks are approaching agreement and the provisions to drop software access will not be included.
 - ii. There were continuing concerns expressed about UVM retrenchment and consolidation as it might affect loss of faculty positions, programs cuts and recruitment of students, and about a lack of transparency in the process.
 - iii. There has been a petition circulating indicating no confidence in the administration, but its dissemination using UVM IT is being discouraged.
 - iv. Chair Gurdon sent a letter to RFAO members via listserv informing them that members can receive information from UA directly if they opt in at info@unitedacademics.org. That office will then compile a group list.

This involvement would be open to any members who have some interest. Not only former UA members, but also College of Medicine retirees who were outside the bargaining unit, and even former administrative staff. It is unknown how many responded.

- c. Discussion of Further Experiences with Vermont Blue Advantage
 - i. Another zoom conference with members was urged to address various problems being encountered by members and whom to call for information about our specific plan.
 - ii. There has been confusion about deductibles and copays and a sense that members are not getting accurate information about these from the reps in Michigan. Because many members are elderly they cannot carefully watch these costs and advocate for themselves.

Board would like to know when it will happen and when this communication problem will be resolved.

- d. Summary Findings from Software Access Survey (Chair Gurdon)
 - i. Chair Gurdon surveyed RFAO members regarding their use and need for access to software for their continuing academic and scholarly activities. There were 40 respondents. Eleven research based analytic programs were noted but all but one (EndNote) was listed by less than ten members. EndNote use was less than twenty. It appears that the cost to UVM of adding retired faculty use of these software packages should be low.
 - ii. Although students, staff and faculty have access to myUVM, many retired faculty do not. This is a problem for retired faculty who need access to continue their academic activities. It was suggested that Simeon Ananou be invited to a future board meeting to discuss further.
- e. Response from Cate/Prelock. Richard Cate responded promptly that he would follow up to Chair Gurdon's letter but would have to confer with the legal office and others. Chair Gurdon will conta

Video Conference on Microsoft Teams

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h Richa He warmly welcomed two new members of the Committee, Ruthanne Johnson, filling the positions of Fred Curran and Jeanine Carr, respectively, who recently resigned for personal reasons.

1. Minutes of March 17, 2021, approved as submitted
2. RFAO Board Meeting
 - a. Faculty Senate Report (Mara Saule)
 - i. The March 15, 2021, meeting was delayed until March 22, 2021, for technical reasons.
 1. There was a presentation of a structure for greater academic integration with Residential Learning Communities, including 3 credit courses offered by schools/colleges.
 2. There was a review of the process/procedures to evaluate 3 proposals to restructure within an academic unit (colleges/schools outside a college, school within a college, department), with a vote at the May meeting.
 3. A resolution passed with 98% approval to support the Black Lives Matter movement and fly its flag outside the Davis Center.
 4. There were Senate Constitution and Bylaws revisions to clarify procedures such as electronic voting.
 5. The Senate urged the State of VT to prioritize higher education instructors for vaccination and the administration to allow unvaccinated faculty to switch to remote learning only.
 - ii. At the April 19, 2021, meeting Evan Eyler (COM) was elected for a two year term as Vice President starting July 1, 2021. Ignacio Lopez Vicuna (CAS) and Anthony Julianelle (C and contingency funds. Patty Prelock spoke of proposals to in
 3. There was an update on Academic Restructuring with a formal status planned for the May meeting.
 - b. Update from United Academics (report from Beth Mintz). UVM and U/A have contract agreement. The details will be released after ratification. The e mail UVM were dropped.
 - c. Discussion of the Administration's position on limiting retiree access to software support (Michael Gurdon). Chair Gurdon reviewed his correspondence over th

the Administration regarding retiree access to UVM IT resources. The RFAO Committee had raised concerns because the latest voluntary retirement agreement severely restricts access.

- i. The Administration, in a March 30th letter, indicated that software and IT support for retirees will be limited because of cost, limited IT staffing and cybersecurity issues. In an April 8 letter to Richard Cate and Patty Prelock, Chair Gurdon expressed our disappointment with this stance. In an April 15 response it appeared that this policy of restricted access to UVM IT resources will apply to all retirees.
 - ii. Chair Gurdon proposed that the Administration communicate these changes directly to our members. At this time it is unclear exactly which services are affected and how the changes will be implemented.
 - iii. Board discussion followed. It was reiterated that many retired faculty continue academic activities such as writing letters of recommendation for students, committee memberships, and scholarly pursuits. Many also continue to use UVM e mail. Loss of NetID and access to the libraries will severely impair these and similar activities. There was a question as to whether there is provision for an exception, such as a letter from a Dean.
 - iv. It was recommended that Simeon Ananou be invited to a future Board meeting to discuss these issues.
- d. The Vermont Blue Advantage Plan next steps. (Michael Gurdon). Although the membership was assured that the transition to the new plan would be seamless and transparent, in fact there have been some changes and problems with co pays and coverage. It is unclear how widespread and significant these are. Chair Gurdon has requested that Pam Getsie hold a Q & A forum for members. She has agreed and will find a date in early May with an optimal time around 2pm.
- e. Revisions to the RFAO Constitution (Judith Van Houten & Steve Cutler). Proposed revisions were submitted to the Committee. Additional changes discussed at the meeting were altering the category of Officers of Administration to administrative officers, the timing of nominations and voting in relation to the annual business meeting, and stating explicitly that members are voting members. The future of HERMES needs to be clarified. There should be a statement of purpose but there will be further discussion as to whether this is incorporated into the Constitution or is stated separately.
- f. New Business. Mary Jane Dickerson has indicated that she plans to resign from the Committee for personal reasons. Chair Gurdon encouraged Committee members to propose possible candidates and to keep Committee membership diversity in mind.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:39pm

The next meeting is scheduled for: U

Respectfully submitted, Richard Branda

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING

May 19, 2021

has not met since the last RFAO meeting. At the
of Academic Restructuring,
tract between the University and United Academics
be no raises in the first year and then incremental
difficulties and used a video

