

Summary of Open Forums

Hosted by the Classified Professional Staff Executive Committee
August 2016

****The original summary was compiled after the forums on August 10 and 12. The information items in blue and red are updates/subsequent follow ups from August 15 to October 12.**

The Classified Professional Staff Executive Committee hosted two open forums during Kick-Off Week in August 2016. The first forum was held on Wednesday, August 10, and the second was held on Friday, August 12. Thirty-six Classified Staff members attended Wednesday's session and fifteen people attended on Friday. The intent of the forums was to introduce the Executive Committee Team, discuss Classified Staff's mission and goals, and identify key issues to focus on in the upcoming year. The forums also provided the opportunity for the membership to review various avenues of communication and to clarify the process for addressing concerns.

At both forums, Classified Staff members provided feedback on their most pressing questions and concerns. The tone of the forums was extremely positive; however, many of the issues discussed point to the overall need for increased communication and transparency on campus. Many of the Classified Staff members present felt that they are often left out of the decision-making process, even though they are usually directly affected by policy and procedural changes on campus.

Below is a summary of the issues discussed. Specific next steps are listed for many of the items. In addition, the Classified Staff Executive Committee will request to present this information to the Administrative Team.

****Carrie, Joan, and Sara presented to Team on Tuesday, September 27. This was a productive discussion that covered the issues brought up in the forums, as well as general Classified Staff updates. Carrie has been invited to meet with Dr. Cumiskey periodically to discuss issues pertinent to the Classified Staff.**

The following issues are currently being widely discussed (in the forums, in Classified Staff meetings, and on an individual basis), with concerns spanning multiple departments/roles.

1) Reclassification study.

- Where are we in the process? No one has heard any updates lately.
- How and when will information be communicated? Will we receive advance notice of any changes?
- Will we have the opportunity to voice concerns and provide input prior to any decisions being made?
- *Next steps: Request that HR provide information sessions prior to implementation of any changes.*

**** Tasha Welsh attended the September 6 Classified Staff Executive Committee meeting to address these questions. She indicated that while the Reclassification Study is behind schedule, the information presented this summer has not changed. She will be communicating with Jim Fox this week (the week of September 6), and then hopes to send out information to employees by the end of September. Once employees receive their questionnaires, they will probably have two weeks to complete them, and then supervisors will probably have one to two weeks to review. The plan is to receive the results back by mid-December. Once Mr. Fox provides us with the recommendations, Tasha anticipates that we will create a task force to decide what to do with these recommendations. The task force will provide the method of input for the staff; it has not been developed yet.**

****Tasha provided an update at the October 12 Classified Staff Executive Committee meeting. She spoke to Jim Fox today, and is expecting to get information out to employees by the end of October. The Faculty Compensation Study and the Staff Compensation Study are two separate processes. For the Staff Compensation Study, there are some areas on campus such as IT and accounting that will be compared to industries outside of higher education. A Staff Compensation Study task force will be formed as the process progresses.**

It has been 20 years since the last Compensation Study. Since then, so much has changed with technology, job descriptions, etc. We decided to undertake the study after a combination of requests from staff, Human Resources, and BAT-FAT. It was deemed best to have an unbiased third party leading the study. How recommendations are implemented will depend on the magnitude of the findings as well as budget. Some changes might be enacted immediately and others will need to be addressed over time.

2) Department of Labor Regulations.

- There is the fear that these changes will be handled similarly to when non-exempt employees transitioned to hourly time sheets. Employees were notified of the new policy via email at 4:30 p.m. before Christmas break; this is also when they found out they would lose two weeks of their salary that year. While employees were told they would recoup this pay when they retire, there is doubt that this actually happens. Employees did not receive enough information in advance of the changes.
- How does the change affect employees out on leave at the beginning of the year?
- There are departments (example, Enrollment Services) with multiple employees in the same role/grade. If jobs are essentially the same, how will distinctions be made in who gets a salary bump and who doesn't? It does not seem fair to base the decision solely on current salary.
- There is the concern that employees who remain at exempt status will be expected to perform Director/Certified Staff level roles at Classified Staff level pay. This brought up a larger discussion that there are already many instances on campus where this is happening. There are several Classified Staff members who are

“departments of one” due to budget cuts and retirements; how will the Department of Labor regulations affect these employees?

- There is the concern that employees who become non-exempt/hourly will have difficulty accomplishing their responsibilities in 40 hours a week and will be asked to give up professional development/committee service. The transition of non-exempt employees to hourly has already brought up some concerns about campus/committee service during work hours (i.e., adopt a highway project).
- We need to ensure that staff members, no matter their grade or exemption status, who want to gain additional skills and seek professional development, are allowed to do so. This will only serve to positively benefit the college.
- *Next steps: Request that HR provide information sessions prior to implementation of any changes.*

**** Tasha Welsh attended the September 6 Classified Staff Executive Committee meeting to address these concerns. Daryl Gehbauer, our Administrative Liaison, spoke to these issues as well. This is a complex topic that is the source of much anxiety among Classified Staff.**

Tasha has met with heads of Human Resources departments at various colleges. HR is currently working through the unique situations that arise because of the DOL changes. Tasha hopes to send out additional information next month. Carrie asked about the possibility of information sessions; Tasha suggested it might be more beneficial for HR to meet individually with the employees that the change affects. There will be a smaller number of employees impacted by the changes than was originally anticipated.

Tasha was concerned about the comment that non-exempt employees who previously transitioned from salary to hourly felt they did not receive timely information. She indicated HR had worked hard to provide information in advance of the changes. With the DOL changes, the transition to arrears will not happen in December. Instead it will take place gradually, with affected employees being salaried until the end of the fiscal year on June 30. Employees in this situation will need to track their time for overtime purposes.

Tasha further addressed the transition to arrears that took place when non-exempt Classified Staff moved from salaried to hourly. No one lost pay, although Tasha and many members of the Executive Committee have been approached with this concern. Tasha spent a great deal of time explaining how this transition worked. She is going to put together a transition calendar that will illustrate to employees how this process worked and will show that no one was shorted a portion of their salaries.

Employees out on leave at the beginning of the year should not be impacted by the changes.

In terms of departments with multiple employees in the same role/grade, HR will work to maintain equity. There are a few unique positions on campus that will be bumped over the

salary requirements. The intent is not to shift job responsibilities or make certain people take on extra tasks. Tasha will make sure that the Administrative Team is aware of these concerns.

Tasha and Daryl reiterated that employees will not be asked to take on responsibilities “unofficially.” The only way that employees will be asked to take on additional work will be if their job descriptions are changed. Additionally, the College is not opposed to paying overtime if needed. Supervisors will be encouraged to allow flex time.

Tasha hopes to meet with the employees impacted by the DOL changes next month. It was apparent by the end of the Executive Committee meeting that employees still have questions and concerns regarding this topic. Tasha indicated she would be happy to return to another meeting to answer follow up questions. Additionally, staff can forward questions to Carrie.

****Tasha attended the October 12 Classified Staff Executive Committee meeting to provide an update on the DOL changes. In response to the concerns about the transition to arrears that took place when non-exempt Classified Staff moved from salaried to hourly, Shelly Mueller has compiled a transition calendar to illustrate how the process of going in to arrears worked and when/how those two weeks are accounted for at retirement. Shelly will attend the November 1 Classified Staff Executive Committee meeting to explain the calendar.**

Tasha is finalizing the list of employees who will be moving from Exempt to Non-Exempt and is developing a communication plan to discuss the transition with those employees and their supervisors. Tasha will be presenting the list of employees to Team very soon. Tasha plans first to meet with supervisors, and then to meet with the employees as a group to explain the transition. She will then send out a campus announcement. Shelly and Tasha are also developing options for transitioning these employees to arrears. Anyone who is deemed non-exempt under the new regulations will remain salaried through June 30, 2016. (Employees in this situation will need to track their time.) After that, the transition to arrears will take place over a 6 month or one-year time period, so that the change is implemented gradually.

Sara and Carrie noted that many employees are experiencing anxiety over the DOL changes and are unsure of where they fall within the new regulations. Carrie asked if Tasha could send out some general information to all grade 8 and 9 employees, indicating that if they are not contacted by HR by a certain date, then they are not impacted by the changes. Tasha also addressed the academic/administrative exemption for educational institutions, which means many employees (such as advisors) will probably not be impacted by the DOL regulations after all. Tasha will be getting information out to employees after she presents to Team.

Tasha and Shelly will attend the November 1 Executive Committee meeting.

3) Paperless College Catalog

- Who made the decision to stop printing college catalogs? There are many concerns about why this was not a shared discussion, when so many people on campus utilize the catalog.
- There are numerous employees (Classified, Certified, faculty, etc.) who utilize the catalog all day, every day. The paper catalog offers many advantages, such as ease of use, convenience, ability to record notes in the paper version, etc. The online catalog is not user friendly; there are issues with loading the online catalog, and the search feature is difficult to utilize. Were these factors considered?
- Staff were initially told they could put their name on a list to receive a copy of the catalog printed in house; no one was notified that this is not happening. Additionally, changes were not communicated with departments who were expecting to receive paper copies of the catalog.
- The online catalog poses challenges for students who are not comfortable with technology or who do not have access to the internet at home. The online catalogs also pose a challenge for the Future Focus Plan in COL101 classes, for the reasons listed previously and because the paper copy is easier for students to interact with.
- **Degree plans are no longer listed in the College Catalog. There are numerous concerns about the accuracy of the information available online.**
- **The current degree plans posted online are outdated. There are mistakes on the academic maps that we are expected to utilize in lieu of the course sequences we used to find in the catalog.**
- **Who is responsible for maintaining the degree information online? Since the academic maps are decentralized and not updated by one specific person, how do we guarantee accuracy of information? There is the potential for disconnect between various departments responsible for information.**
- For the above reasons, many employees feel that not having the paper catalog makes it more difficult to perform their job responsibilities.
- *Next steps: Forward concerns to VP of Student Services, who has agreed to investigate these issues.*

****This was a widely mentioned topic in the forums, as the changes to the printing and format of the catalog impact staff members' ability to do their jobs. This issue also points to the larger concern about communication on campus and decisions being made without consideration/consultation of involved parties. Carrie is working with Kim Harvey on this issue. Additionally, several members of the Executive Committee spoke to Daryl after the meeting on October 12 to clarify the concerns and challenges regarding the Catalog.**

4) COS Transition

- There was no communication of these changes until after a decision had already been made. Why didn't employees receive the opportunity to provide feedback about the COS transition, as it affects every department on campus?
- There is concern that it is now too late to do anything, since the changes go to the Board this week.
- There needs to be clarification about what "outsourcing" means; if COS is no longer run by Jefferson College, then it is outsourced.
- How much money – if any – are these changes actually saving us when you factor in all the printing that will now take place on departmental copy machines?
- *Next steps: Submit a "hot seat question." Continue to monitor the situation.*

****It was acknowledged that communication surrounding the COS Transition could have been better. However, the anticipated challenges have not materialized and the transition has gone smoothly. Based on feedback from our constituents, the Classified Staff Executive Committee decided at the September 6 meeting that the COS Transition is no longer an item of concern.**

5) Employee Discount at the Bookstore.

- Employees were not notified that there was no longer a 10% employee discount on books.
- Classified Staff members have researched this issue and discovered it was an oversight left out of the contract negotiations with Follett. Employees are now being told to take advantage of the price matching, which isn't the same thing.
- The 10% employee discount on textbooks is still advertised in the current Faculty/Staff Handbook on page 99.
- *Next steps: Discuss with administrative liaison in next Classified Staff Executive Committee meeting.*

**** After the September 6 Executive Committee meeting, Daryl reviewed the current contract and discovered that Follett did change the language to exclude textbooks from the current discount calculation. Daryl spoke with Follett's senior management and they agreed to add the discount back. A campus announcement about the bookstore discount was subsequently sent out on Monday, October 3. The discount has been restored, retroactive to July 1, 2016. Anyone who was initially denied the employee discount can bring their receipt to the Bookstore between now and December 16, 2016 to receive a refund to cover that portion of their expenses.**

The following questions/concerns brought up in the forums were addressed by other staff members present.

6) Parking Permits/Parking Spots

- There needs to be better communication about parking passes expiring.
 - Staff from campus police indicated future employee passes will not expire. Police are not ticketing employees for expired passes. (Since the forums, employees have noticed the current stickers do contain expiration dates.)
- There are numerous concerns about faculty/staff parking spots no longer being labeled. Students and visitors are ignoring posted signs and parking in these spots.
 - Staff from campus police have discussed this issue with Buildings and Grounds and anticipate that it will be resolved and the spots will be marked.
- *Next steps: Follow up as needed in the next Executive Committee meeting.*

****Faculty parking spots are now labeled! Some parking stickers were printed with expiration dates and some were not. Faculty and staff do NOT need to worry about expired stickers.**

7) Emergency Preparedness/Crisis Training

- Is there training for emergency/crisis situations available?
 - Staff discussed current initiatives on campus, including the Active Shooter training that will take place during Faculty Work Day. Additionally, employees/departments can request specific training from campus police.

**** Intruder Training was held on October 4.**

8) Modern Think/Great Colleges Survey

- Many employees are afraid this survey is not anonymous. Employees are concerned if they answer honestly about their role on campus/years of service, they will be easily identified because the preliminary questions asked are very specific. Employees fear retaliation by the administration.
 - Staff mentioned that the survey is led by a third party, so we probably cannot alter the questions. However, completing the preliminary questions about years of service, job title, department, etc., is optional.
- *Next steps: Make sure the Administrative Team is aware of these concerns.*

****Carrie brought up the concern about anonymity in the August PLC meeting. The Great Colleges Survey is an ongoing campus-wide discussion.**

9) Faculty/Staff Handbook

- Where would employees find hard copies or online copies of previous editions of the Handbook, in case they need to compare versions or make note of changes?
- *Next steps: Classified Staff President will research this question.*

****Carrie discussed this with Tasha. Past editions of the Faculty/Staff Handbook will be added to the Employee Tab as time allows. For now, employees can contact Carrie or Tasha for copies of the Handbook (2004- current). Tasha also has a paper copy of each handbook in her office that employees are welcome to view. The Library has copies, but these will soon be in storage. (This was simply a question asked in the forums; it was not tied to a larger concern.)**