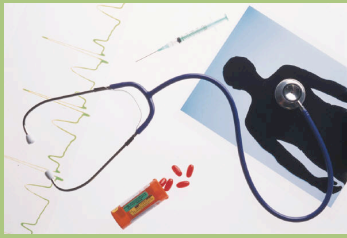


Association Notes




January 2009

Bargaining Update - Tentative Agreement Reached

On Friday, January 9th, the Faculty Association and the District reached a tentative agreement for the 2008-2009 academic year (and beyond). Of significant note is that we believe the multi-year health care odyssey has come to an end, meaning that we have a sustainable solution that will carry us forward for years to come.

Key Provisions

- The two-tier system for lifetime medical benefits will be eliminated.
 - Starting in 2010, the District will cover health care up to the PersChoice level for full-time faculty.
 - Due to the dire financial circumstances confronting the state, there will be no pay increase for 2008-2009.
 - Yearly sick leave for full-time faculty will increase to 11 days. Part-time and overload sick leave will be increased by about 15%.
 - An extra half-day Flex Day will be added in the fall semester.
 - The 2009-2010 draft calendar was adopted.
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- The Faculty Association will work with Academic Senate to develop evaluation language relating to SLOs.
 - The provisions for distance education will be extended through the end of the contract.
 - The Faculty Association will receive 20% release time for future negotiations.

What now?

Obviously, you need a lot more detail about what was agreed upon. You will get this here as well as through a special Faculty Association meeting once we return to school. The date has been set for Thursday, February 5th at 1:00, with the room to be announced. Ample opportunity will be provided to discuss the significant provisions of the proposal. Once the issues have been vetted, a full membership vote will take place. A copy of the tentative agreement can be found [here](#).

Details on Health Care

The two-tier system

As you know, we have been working to eliminate the two-tier system for medical benefits for over a year. This desire was acknowledged by the faculty in the fall survey. Responding favorably to our request, the District agreed to drop the system. Those of you who had been paying for the benefits can inform Human Resources (after ratification) that you wish to stop the salary reductions. You will be reimbursed for your payments on January 1, 2010. Note that although we will not be receiving a pay increase for 2008-2009, those who had been subject to the two-tier system are getting the equivalent of a 3.75% raise since they no longer have to pay to receive the lifetime benefits.

PersChoice

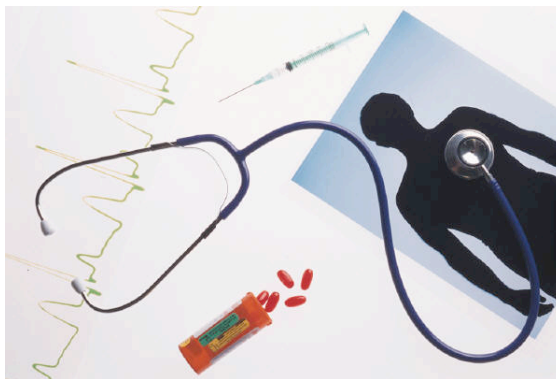
The District has been pushing the Association for years to move coverage to PersChoice in order to slow the rising costs of health care. Fortunately, we were able to hold off on this move long enough to trade it for dropping the two-tier system. We agreed that health care would be covered up to the PersChoice level. As has been discussed before, there are only a few key differences between PersCare and PersChoice. One, the lifetime maximum benefits, is no longer relevant. Although PersChoice caps payouts at \$2 million, CalPERS will switch those hitting the level to PersCare, even in the middle of the year. The District will pay for the coverage. The letter from CalPERS confirming this can be found [here](#).

A second key difference between the two plans involves copays. Whereas PersCare has a 10% copay for various services, there is a 20% copay for PersChoice. This may result in additional yearly health care costs. However, this does not apply to certain services such as office visits, outpatient hospital visits, and urgent care visits, where both plans simply have a \$20 copay. Also, both PersCare and PersChoice cover various treatments at no cost, including preventative care, periodic health exams, gynecological exams, and immunizations. Finally, the

differences are capped to \$1,000 per year for individuals (\$2,000 per family) due to maximum yearly copay limits. There are a few other minor differences between the two plans (such as coverage for substance abuse). A comprehensive comparison between all health care plans can be found [here](#).

You do have the option of still receiving PersCare, however, you will be responsible for the cost difference. Those individuals who are not covered under PersCare will have no changes in their coverage. Also, retirees are likewise unaffected.

Just so you know, the administrators have had PersChoice for several years. In addition, they have their own two-tier system, requiring a 10% salary reduction for five years in order to receive lifetime medical benefits. Classified staff do receive lifetime medical benefits, but had to take a reduction in their pay increase (of 2%) several years ago. In addition, their coverage is limited to the HMO plans.



Sick Leave

The District agreed to increase full-time sick leave to 11 days per year, from 10. In addition, sick leave for part-time and overload teaching will be increased. Instead of receiving one hour of sick leave for every 20 hours of instruction, we will receive one hour for every 17 hours of teaching. Beyond the obvious benefit of the change, this will have the effect of bolstering retirement income since unused sick days translate into years of service.

Tax-Free Health Care

A little used benefit is the flexible spending account administered through PayFlex. This allows you to spend pre-tax dollars on health care, saving you money each year. The District has agreed to pay the \$54 yearly fee for full-time faculty.

Opting Out of Health Care

One last benefit the District agreed to was that the stipend for declining health care will increase to \$2,500 yearly (on a trial basis).

Other Provisions in the Tentative Agreement

Salary



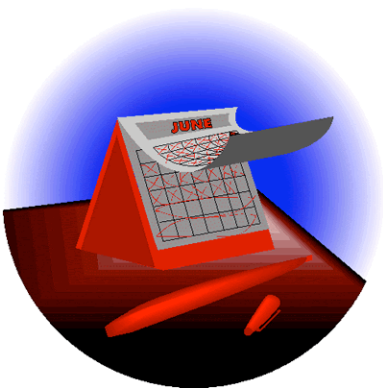
As noted above, there will be no salary increase for the current school year (2008-2009). Of course, this is not welcome news to anyone, however, it is completely expected given the multi-billion dollar deficit facing the state. We still do not know what impact this will have on colleges. The current prediction is that funding at Rio Hondo will drop by several million dollars. On a positive note, no plans have been announced to cut terms (such as intersession or summer), programs, or personnel as was done in the early 1990's, when facing similar financial woes.

Distance Education



We still do not have final resolution on distance education. Even though a joint Association-District committee was established a year ago that made recommendations in April, the District was still not comfortable finalizing language for online education. We did, however, agree to extend the interim agreement through the end of our current contract (June 30, 2010). This allows for the teaching of two classes on load and two classes overload for each semester, plus up to four classes during the summer. We will continue to work with the District to reach a final agreement.

Other Matters



The 2009-2010 calendar was adopted and is pretty much the same as in the past. The only noteworthy change is that we agreed to an additional half day of flex in the fall to be used for District-wide tasks (such as NIMS/SIMS training). In addition, the Association will receive 20% release time to be allocated among those serving on negotiations committees (or for other tasks). The final matter is that the Association will work with the Academic Senate to adopt language relating to SLOs for contract faculty evaluation.



Thanks to all of those who helped reach a tentative agreement. Negotiating team members included Jim Chandler, Dennyse Clark, Doreen Kaller, and Adam Wetsman (with support from Cameron English, Mark Littrell, and Kathy Pudelko). The executive committee of the Association provided valuable assistance throughout the process. Several dozen faculty members helped by researching information necessary for negotiations. Finally, all of you deserve praise for your support throughout the process. Thank you all.