

Business Manager Meeting Notes

April 18, 2005

At the April 18, 2005 Business Managers Meeting, there was a discussion on budget reductions, in particular the position reduction/elimination process, and the need for confidentiality. Due to budgetary constraints, the University must explore reducing or eliminating positions.

Jim Sciarini, Associate Vice President, Human Resources, talked about the process when a position is identified to be reduced or eliminated. The department completes the "Position Reduction/Elimination Information Form" for each proposed affected position. A committee comprised of representatives from Human Resources, Affirmative Action, Legal Affairs, Budget and Planning, and Marketing and Communications will assess the impact of the proposed cuts and may explore alternatives with the department/college. Because at this point it's an ongoing review, confidentiality is to be maintained to avoid unnecessarily alarming affected employees.

Jim went on to explain how the different staff constituencies are notified. The labor agreement with CWA requires 30-day notice of the intention to reduce or eliminate positions. CWA may request more information and/or propose alternatives. The union and Human Resources will inform the employee that his/her position may be reduced/eliminated. Vacancies for those positions that an affected CWA employee may "bump" into are frozen. If it is later determined that a CWA position is definitely going to be reduced/eliminated, Human Resources and the union will communicate this to the employee. That employee has displacement rights, based on retention points, to "bump" into a vacancy or displace a person in his/her classification with fewer retention points. If there are not available positions in the employee's classification, either by vacancy or retention points, he/she may be moved to a position held within the last five years or "bump" down in classification (for example, a Secretary 2 could bump to a Secretary 1 position). If a CWA member is laid off, he/she may be recalled to work at the University as vacancies arise within one year of the layoff date.

A Classified Exempt employee, upon receiving notice of his/her position's elimination, may appeal to the State Personnel Board of Review. The state has previously ruled that a Classified Exempt employee may bump into the bargaining unit, but he/she is considered to have zero seniority. In other words, this would happen only if there is an open CWA position.

An affected PSA person will be informed by his/her supervisor and Human Resources and given 90-day notice. HR will provide the employee with information about open PSA positions.

If people must be let go, UT works with an outplacement service, Spherion, which offers assistance with unemployment issues, career planning, and job networking.

Human Resources will notify affected departments when frozen vacancies may be lifted. For staff persons who will be transitioning to another position, there is some flexibility as far as start/end dates depending on staffing needs of the host and receiving departments, but generally must be completed by the budget implementation date.

Joyce McBride-Hamer, Acting Director, Budget and Planning, talked about the budget planning tool. The deadline for submission of the budget planning tool will probably be postponed. It was originally due to the Budget Office by April 22. Joyce said if an auxiliary or designated cut, this should show up on the budget planning tool as a transfer-out.

Jim said if there are questions about particular positions, contact Randy McElfresh, Director of Labor and Employee Relations, for CWA and UTPPA positions, and Randy or Matt Dills, Director of Compensation and Employment Services, for PSA positions.

Matt Dills said position reduction/elimination is not a proper way to “get rid of” perceived poor performers. The position review process requires reasons for proposed position reductions and eliminations, as well as explanation of how the work will be performed after the cut.

In the event that a CWA position is reduced or eliminated, Jim said be mindful of who will be doing bargaining unit work and clearly identify who will do the work and whether or not they are in the bargaining unit.

Colleges should send the Position Reduction/Elimination Information Forms to John Satkowski or Geof Tracy in the Provost Office. Other areas should send these forms directly to the Budget Office.