

PB&B Committee 02-03 Year End Report

June 2003

Committee Members

Full Year - Sheryl Beeler (Chair), Leslie Miller, Dell Livsey, Becky Rogers, Joan Sanman,
La Dawn Conner

Partial Terms - Jenelle Feddersen, Juanita Phelan

Distinguished Service Award Proposal

It was brought to the attention of SAC that the Distinguished Service Award had remained at \$500.00 since 1983. PB&B Committee studied the proposal and recommended that SAC ask Administration for the Award to be raised to \$750.00 after taxes. SAC voted on the recommendation and passed the motion. It was sent to Administration. This issue is noted in the November SAC Minutes.

The Administration supports the recommendation to increase the Distinguished Service Award from the current \$500 to \$750. Reasons stated, "Because the Distinguished Service Award is an excellent way of honoring those staff members who go above and beyond the call of duty, I support the request to increase the monetary amount of the award from \$500 to \$750, as set forth in Staff Advisory Council Resolution 021113PBB-6. I will forward your request through the appropriate administrative channels for review and action.

Interim Long Term Disability Policy

The PB&B Committee was asked to study the Interim LTD Policy, (OSU Policy and Procedures #3-0750), and express our concerns or comments. We had 3 different concerns on the policy. It was recommended that a letter be drawn up from SAC to Administration expressing our concerns on the 3 issues for the interim policy. The letter was sent to Administration (Recommendation Number #021113PBB-7. This issue was noted in the December SAC Minutes.

No response from Administration at this time.

Student Union Garage Parking for Seminars and Training

PB&B Committee studied the issue of parking in the Student Union Garage for Seminars and Training. PB&B recommended that CIS and HR work with the Student Union to provide a registration option allowing departments to pay for the employee's parking in the SU Parking Garage during the time of the class plus 30 minutes before and after to allow for preparation and class delays. SAC voted and passed the motion and a letter was sent to Administration. This issue was noted in the December SAC Minutes.

Administration's response was that departments could purchase parking tickets, which could be billed to the department, allowing employees to park in the parking garage. These can be purchased through the Student Union Business Office.

Martin Luther King Day as an Additional Holiday Recommendation

The PB&B Committee was asked by different constituents to once again look at the reason why Martin Luther King Day was not observed by Faculty and Staff. PB&B Committee made the following

recommendation to SAC. The motion was voted on, passed, and sent to Administration. Recommendation #021113PBB-8 reads as follows:

Oklahoma State University is the only Big 12 University that does not recognize Martin Luther King Day as a paid holiday for faculty and staff.

Few people have had as much impact upon the American consciousness as the late civil-rights leader, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., who believed in the freedom, equality, and dignity of all races and peoples. In light of recent events at OSU, we believe it is important for the university to visibly embrace those ideals for which Dr. King fought by allowing staff to celebrate his life as a paid holiday on Martin Luther King Day. This should be a day to remember Dr. King's lifelong work for peace by reflecting upon the importance of cultural diversity and change through non-violence.

For these reasons, the Staff Advisory Council hereby recommends that OSU Administration make Martin Luther King Day an additional paid holiday for all faculty and staff.

NOTE: When this was proposed to Administration in past years, SAC was informed that Administration was unwilling to add another day of paid leave to OSU's leave policy. Therefore, if Martin Luther King Day were to become a paid holiday, faculty and staff would lose a day of holiday pay from some other time (such as 5 paid days at Christmas rather than 6). It should be noted that OSU faculty and staff currently receive 13 days of paid holidays. Several other Big 12 schools provide more days than OSU: University of Texas, Texas Tech, and Texas A&M all provide 15 days of holiday pay, and the University of Nebraska provides 14.

Administration counter-offered to the recommendation with the following:

Although the current number of holidays does not warrant an additional paid holiday, the request for MLK Day as a paid holiday could be accommodated by a change in the current holiday schedule. Currently OSU provides New Year's Day plus six holidays at Christmas. This provides a complete week plus two additional workdays off work. The policy could be changed to add MLK Day and reduce the number of days between Christmas and New Year's from six to five. Mandatory leave holidays could be formalized in the policy to add additional flexible or those years where the addition of a single day or two might be desired.....

PB&B Committee and Tonya Magness met with Anne Matoy to discuss Administration's counter proposal and found it to be unacceptable. We had asked for an additional holiday and that is not what they offered. Our response to Administration was as follows:

SAC response to Administration's Counter-offer on Recommendation 021113PBB-8

SAC recommendation 021113PBB-8 stated very clearly that we desire an *additional* paid holiday to celebrate Martin Luther King Day. This was not intended to be a starting point for bargaining with Administration on what other holidays should be taken away, or mandatory leave days formalized at Christmas time in order to accommodate the request.

SAC finds Administration's counter-proposal completely unacceptable.

Furthermore, SAC fails to see why OSU cannot lead Big 12 schools in the number of paid holidays offered to staff and faculty. Administration's response indicated that this was unacceptable, yet no formal explanation was provided as to why. SAC believes that leading the Big 12 in one aspect of benefits would be a good recruitment tool, something to boast about, and something in which to take pride. We believe that this would be a morale booster at a time when raises are scarce and staff morale is low. We believe it would be a symbolic gesture to acknowledge the importance of diversity at a university criticized for its lack thereof.

SAC formally requests that Administration reconsider their response to our original recommendation with the understanding that we will not “bargain” on this issue.

As of this date we have heard no further comments from Administration on the MLK issue.

Priority Enrollment Recommendation

PB&B Committee was asked to review the Priority Enrollment for Staff proposal. Recommendation #030108PBB-9 was made as follows:

In accordance with our mission to promote the high morale, well-being, and professional welfare of staff, the Staff Advisory Council recommends to Administration that staff members employed 75% full time or greater be allowed to enroll in classes at OSU via priority enrollment. We believe that this is a morale boosting benefit that Administration can provide to staff members at little or no cost, and it will enable OSU employees to enroll in classes that best fit their work schedules in accordance with their departments’ and personal needs. As indicated by the number of staff fee waivers on file with the Registrar’s Office, there are only 175 – 200 staff members (75% FTE or above) currently enrolled in classes at OSU. SAC believes that this number is small enough that it will not overburden the priority enrollment system or cause hardship to the other students currently allowed this benefit.

Background for this recommendation:

Prior to 1999, OSU staff members were allowed priority enrollment. However, many other student “categories” were also allowed this advantage. Because there were so many students using priority enrollment at that time, the system became ineffective, and the decision was made to limit priority enrollment to three groups: student athletes, honors students, and students with disabilities. Staff was removed from the list.

No response from Administration at this time.

Child Care Facility Recommendation

PB&B Committee made the following recommendation:

Child Care Facility Recommendation

The Staff Advisory Council **unanimously** recommends that OSU Administration take the necessary steps to create a licensed child-care facility for the children of OSU staff, faculty, and students. We believe this should be a top strategic planning and budget priority.

This childcare facility should:

- Have 100-150 slots
- Offer priority enrollment to OSU staff, faculty, and student parents
- Accept DHS subsidies
- Have flexible hours designed to meet the needs of OSU families
- Have national accreditation through the NAECP or NAYEC
- Meet Oklahoma DHS licensing requirements for child care centers
- Meet the requirements to receive the DHS’s 3 star rating

For additional information, supporting materials, and a thorough proposal on this issue, we refer Administration to Stephanie Graham and Traci Burd’s Dec. 2002 research paper entitled “Meeting Standards: Providing Adequate Child Care at Oklahoma State University” as a starting point.

Recommendation Background:

In 2002, SAC distributed a Child Care Survey to OSU Faculty and Staff. An overwhelming majority of respondents said that they believed that there was a need for a childcare facility at OSU. Few issues addressed by SAC in recent years have received as much universally favorable attention and support from OSU faculty, staff, and students as the need for child care services.

It should be noted that OSU is in the minority of Big Twelve Conference universities when it comes to providing child care services. Kansas State University, the University of Missouri, the University of Texas, the University of Oklahoma, Iowa State University, Texas A&M, and the University of Colorado all offer child care services for faculty, staff, and students. Texas Tech is presently performing extensive research about childcare centers at other universities to determine if a campus facility would be beneficial to its institution.

This recommendation #030108PBB-10 was made in February to Administration. The Child Care Survey was sent to Bureau for Social Research requesting services including a cost analysis.

The Day Care Survey was presented to the E-Team on March 31st. Members of the SAC Tonya Magness, Sheryl Beeler and Leslie Miller, along with Stephanie Graham presented the recommendation for the need of a Day Care Facility at OSU. Stephanie made the same presentation to the E-Team that she presented to SAC. Also, survey results from the SAC survey were distributed.

President Schmidly and the Administration believe that a Day Care facility is needed at OSU. Members of the E-Team have begun research on the process and development of such a facility or community agreement. There will be much discussion on this topic before a resolution is found. However, knowing that it is a priority with the Administration is a great accomplishment for all staff, faculty and students. The Council again wishes to thank Stephanie Graham for her research and her willingness to present her class project to the E-Team members.

Racial and Ethnic Harassment Policy Statement

The PB&B Committee was asked to look at this policy and give our thoughts and input. We took the following comments to SAC and they agreed on the comments as stated below. The following comments were sent in a letter to President Schmidly February 17, 2003.

The policy begins with the statement, "Oklahoma State University (OSU) is committed to creating and maintaining a community in which students, faculty, staff, guests, and visitors work, study and teach together in an atmosphere free of all forms of harassment, exploitation or intimidation, including but not limited to harassment based on sexual orientation, racial, ethnic, national origin, disability or status as a veteran." It then proceeds to single out racial and ethnic harassment without ever mentioning the others.

The committee felt that the special emphasis placed on racial and ethnic harassment, while certainly a valid and legitimate concern, nevertheless falls short of providing the same sort of protection to those individuals who might be harassed based on sexual orientation, national origin, disability, or etc.

The PB&B committee feels strongly that harassment of **any sort** is unacceptable at OSU, and if the university is going implement a harassment policy, it should reflect this belief.

Therefore, it is the position of the PB&B committee that there should either be one, single policy aimed at protecting OSU students, faculty, staff, guests, and visitors from harassment (in other words, a single "Harassment Policy"), or another policy should be written in conjunction with the Racial and Ethnic

Harassment Policy to apply the same firm standards of protection to members of the other categories, including harassment based on religion, age, sex or gender.

Flexible Benefits Compensation Recommendation - Tax Shelter (457b) Plan

On 1/28/03 the PB&B Committee met with Greg Fox and Dr. Terry Lehenbauer. Both from the Flexible Compensation Benefits Committee. They asked for SAC's support on two issues that they have sent to Administration. They were as follows:

1. The 1600 cap removed from sick leave. They want to remove the cap and track the hours. Employees who were here prior to 1992 in OTR can use 960 hours as a year of retirement. If an employee came up with a sickness that caused them to use their sick leave down to under 960 hours, they could lose a year toward retirement.
2. They want to add tax shelters (457b plan) so employees can contribute up to \$24,000/year, rather than the current \$11,000. We cannot see a "downside to this plan. The features include:
 - 1) Contributions by the employee are voluntary. There are no employer contributions.
 - 2) The employees can elect to stop contributions or change the contribution amount.
 - 3) The employee can contribute the maximum amount under our current (403b) Tax Deferred Annuity plan and then can contribute additional dollars under this 457b plan.
 - 4) The employee contributions are "before tax" so that the employee lowers her/his income that is subject to Federal and State taxes and thus lowers the amounts she/he has to pay in taxes at the end of the year.
 - 5) The employee elects which accounts the money is allocated toward.
 - 6) The employee builds up a better and richer nest egg for retirement!

We have reviewed these items and agree with the Flexible Compensation Benefits Committee on these issues. We ask that a vote be taken by SAC for a recommendation to be sent to Administration giving our support to the Committee.

Discussion was held at the February Staff Advisory Council meeting and a vote was taken on both issues. The Tax Annuity Plan (457b) was passed and a letter was sent to President Schmidly.

The uncapping of sick leave was discussed and was given back to PB&B Committee for additional research. The PB&B Committee took this back to SAC at the SAC April meeting. PB&B Committee had the following conclusion:

Sick Leave Uncapping

Rather than endorsing the uncapping of sick leave, PB&B would like to see the Flexible Compensation Benefits Committee reexamine this issue with the idea of creating a sick leave bank in mind (in addition to the uncapping).

Background for this response: It may be that the uncapping of sick leave is a necessary step in the creation of a sick leave bank for OSU. Because the creation of a sick leave bank is one of the frequent requests that SAC receives from staff, we believe that this is a possibility that should be examined in advance, lest Administration reject the idea of uncapping (as proposed) outright.

In the April SAC Meeting this recommendation was given to SAC and voted on. SAC passed this recommendation and Tonya sent a letter to President Schmidly April 14, 2003.

Flexible Compensation Benefits Committee - Cafeteria Plan

After reviewing the Flexible Compensation Benefits Committee's Spring 2002 Cafeteria Plan Recommendations, the PB&B committee has come to the following conclusion:

In general, we support these recommendations. However, our support is dependent upon two conditions:

1. We support these recommendations ONLY if they are implemented entirely separate from any potential changes to OSU's leave policy. Any changes to current leave policy will be a volatile issue to OSU staff, and SAC will not support any changes to leave without knowing in advance what those changes may be. While we understand that the issue of leave may be addressed in the future, we do not want our support for the current recommendations to be interpreted by Administration as blanket approval for changes they might wish to make in the future.
2. We support these recommendations only if they are implemented in such a way as to ensure that mandatory costs for OSU employees are not any greater than they are now. In other words, if implementing the changes will result in more mandatory out of pocket expenses for staff members, we will not support the changes without further evaluation. This does not apply to **optional** additional expenses.

The committee also has some concerns about the recommendation that OSU allow employees to opt out of insurance, but not ask for proof of insurance from another source. PB&B committee members believe that some (perhaps many) OSU employees are so strapped for cash due to low wages that they will opt out of paying for insurance even if they aren't covered under another policy and will not get the full value back in cash. We believe that this has the potential to create long-term hardship for some staff that may be tempted with that option. Administration should take careful consideration of this particular recommendation.

There was a lot of discussion on this issue at the SAC meeting and it was voted on and it passed to submit the PB&B Committee's comments to Administration.

Performance Evaluations

PB&B is in the process of studying the Performance Evaluation. We have identified the problem areas. There has been an offer by Administration to pay for a survey to be conducted by the Bureau for Social Research. At this time, the committee has chosen to do some in depth research into the Performance evaluation process of other universities and companies. It has been agreed upon to put the survey on hold while this research is taking place.