

**REPORT:** FACULTY SENATE SURVEY ON SALARY & BENEFITS  
**FROM:** Carolyn Collins, Chair of Salary & Benefits Committee  
**TO;** CCSN Faculty Senate  
**DATE:** January 25, 2007

Thanks to all of you who took the time to respond to the "Faculty Senate Survey on Salary & Benefits" last November. There were 287 faculty responses, including 53 administrative faculty and 233 academic faculty. Many of you asked that we share the results, so here they are.

The Salary & Benefits Committee met on January 11, 2007 for several hours to peruse the results and come up with a plan of action. We would like to thank Dr. Frank DiPuma, Director of Institutional Research, for the many hours of work he expended putting the Survey online and later providing the results in various cross tab forms for analysis. We hope this Survey becomes an annual event in which we not only see what the faculty issues are but also where faculty perceive things are getting better or worse. We found the comments to be incredibly enlightening. It felt just like reading student evaluations where the student checkboxes don't tell us nearly as much as the comments on the back.

Table 1 presents a summary of the level of satisfaction/dissatisfaction expressed by the faculty on all rating questions. There was a surprisingly high level of satisfaction with the retirement plans and a not surprisingly high level of dissatisfaction with the health plans. On the salary issues there was a mixed bag. There are significant differences of opinion based on whether you are administrative of academic faculty and also whether or not you are on the salary schedule or not. Please take a look at Table 1 before reading the following synopsis of the committees preliminary findings based on the results plus faculty comments.

Retirement Comments: (94 comments)

Overall, the level of satisfaction with the retirement options CCSN provides and the quality of the benefits in these plans provide were pretty positive. There were many faculty who commented about how pleased they were with the 10.5 % matching by CCSN – a level they considered generous. By far the biggest issue raised was the strong desire for the option to choose a fixed benefit plan not a fixed investment plan. Fully one-fourth of the comments dealt with an uneasiness about having their retirement tied to stock market investment and a wish to have a true retirement guarantee. The many comments about the wanting the PERS option seemed to be rooted in to desire to have a plan that was not stock market based. In light of this, it was interesting to the committee that of our retirement plans, the level of satisfaction was actually lower with PERS than the RPA plans. It seems here that the real issue is whether CCSN can provide faculty with a good fixed benefit plan option. PERS seems to have been ruled out as a possibility for new employees but we need to explore other possibilities that would fulfil this need.

There were a number of faculty that raised questions about why we did not have social security and other wanted to know how their retirement benefits would be impacted if they are also eligible for social security. These questions will be researched by the committee and we feel that a workshop clarifying all these questions would be a good idea for later this year. As a matter of fact, many faculty indicated the desire to learn more about their retirement options. Some felt that if we must manage retirement investments, a support group on retirement planning might not be a bad idea. Our committee will probably be exploring such an option after we get through researching the questions that turned up in the survey. One question that popped up in several comments from more senior faculty was what kind of health plan options will be available to us after retirement. Comments from some of our newer hires focused on the difficulty associated with the mandatory fixed amount of the retirement deducted when the paycheck is still low on the salary schedule. A couple of ideas raised were options for scaling the deduction in over time. Others wanted to understand the extent to which they could borrow against the retirement account, to say buy a house.

Table 1.  
**Summary of Results**  
**Faculty Senate Survey on Salary & Benefits**

		Satisfactory	- Neutral -	Dissatisfied	Number of Responses
<b>Retirement Plan</b>	<b>OVERALL</b>	<b>63.3 %</b>	<b>26.2 %</b>	<b>10.5 %</b>	<b>286</b>
	PERS	56.9 %	31.4 %	11.8 %	51
	TIAA	66.0 %	23.5 %	10.4 %	115
	VALIC	61.7 %	29.6 %	8.6 %	81
	<sup>1</sup> FIDELITY	71.5 %	17.1 %	11.4 %	35
	???	25.0 %	50.0 %	25.0 %	4
<b>Health Plan -Self</b>	<b>OVERALL</b>	<b>39.8 %</b>	<b>31.0 %</b>	<b>29.2 %</b>	<b>284</b>
	PPO-low deduct	42.4 %	25.6 %	32.0 %	125
	PPO-high deduct	33.3 %	20.5 %	46.2 %	39
	HPN	43.3 %	40.2 %	16.5 %	97
	???	23.5 %	35.3 %	41.2 %	17
<b>Health Plan -Dependent</b>	<b>OVERALL</b>	<b>35.0 %</b>	<b>35.6 %</b>	<b>29.5 %</b>	<b>163</b>
	PPO-low deduct	39.4 %	30.3 %	30.3 %	66
	PPO-high deduct	35.0 %	40.0 %	25.0 %	20
	HPN	34.4 %	35.9 %	29.7 %	64
	???	18.2 %	54.5 %	27.3 %	11
<b>Salary Placement Issues</b>	<b>OVERALL</b>	<b>43.8 %</b>	<b>30.4 %</b>	<b>28.8 %</b>	<b>283</b>
	Administrative	30.7 %	48.1 %	21.2 %	52
	Academic	46.6 %	26.5 %	27.0 %	230
	<sup>2</sup> Schedule	49.5 %	25.9 %	24.6 %	216
	<sup>2</sup> Not Schedule	30.0 %	40.0 %	30.0 %	40
<b>Salary Advancement Issues</b>	<b>OVERALL</b>	<b>37.9 %</b>	<b>36.4 %</b>	<b>25.7 %</b>	<b>280</b>
	Administrative	28.0 %	48.0 %	24.0 %	50
	Academic	39.7 %	34.1 %	26.2 %	229
	<sup>2</sup> Schedule	42.0 %	34.6 %	23.4 %	214
	<sup>2</sup> Not Schedule	28.2 %	35.9 %	35.8 %	39
<b>Grant-In-Aid Issues</b>	<b>OVERALL</b>	<b>65.1 %</b>	<b>29.1 %</b>	<b>5.8 %</b>	<b>275</b>

<sup>1</sup> Fidelity was inadvertently left out of the list of RPA's. Results under "Other" were interpreted as Fidelity.

<sup>2</sup> Because of the ways questions were asked some administrative faculty are included in the SCHEDULE and NOT SCHEDULE categories.

Health Plan Comments: (self – 132 responses; dependents – 55 responses)

Wow. This was the one that people were really unhappy about. Many of the comments and concerns reflect universal issues associated with soaring high costs of health care and the maneuvering of both public and private employers to deal with these. Many, many folks bemoaned the increasing costs and decreasing benefits. In fact, it is clear from the comments that many faculty on the low end of the salary schedule simply do not have a real choice and must take the HMO option because they cannot afford the more expensive PPO plan. Many cannot even afford to cover dependents, though they need to desperately. While heart-wrenching, many of these issues are hard to change because they are fundamentally societal and beyond our scope.

However, it seems that there are things that something should and could be done about - or at least attempted. Since we are tied to the State of Nevada Health Insurance Plan, administered by a statewide board, our choices seem largely controlled by their choices. We have some system (NSHE) representation but little control. Many, many comments pointed out that Benefits Planners and HPN are horrible choices and have delivered terrible plans. Previous providers have been much better in terms of options, benefits and efficiency in dealing with claims and service providers. Faculty suggested Aetna, Sigma, AFLAC, Blue Cross, ... as other options and cited what they perceived to be vastly superior plans in other states. Our options clearly need to be explored both individually as a college and collectively as a higher ed system. Can we separate from the State Plan and use our dollars to explore other options? Can we have some influence over providing the options we need within the State Plan? Can we improve the plans and service available under the current providers?

The elements of our plan singled out as 'horrible' and 'woefully inadequate' by more than 30 faculty were the vision and dental benefits. Prescription drug plans came in just behind these. Concern about the loss of Sunrise hospital and the growing number of doctors and other providers opting out of our plan also came in for significant comment. Requests for options for Long Term Care and Catastrophic Illness policies were raised and we will address what choices we currently have and whether we need new ones.

It was very sad to see comments from about 20 faculty members who said that they either did not use our plan themselves or did not use it for their children because their spouse had a much better plan. If this is the case, then we should certainly be able to do better with the amount of money being spent by us together with the state. There was great frustration by some faculty that it did not seem that they had the ability to opt out of this system and use those resources in other more productive ways. Can we do anything about that? Four or five mentioned looking at a cafeteria plan for benefits, an approach successfully implemented in other places cited by these faculty.

In the data received, it was clear that the 125 faculty with the low-deductible PPO were much more satisfied with their plan than the 97 faculty with HPN or the 39 faculty with the high-deductible PPO. However, many faculty feel they cannot afford it since it is more expensive. It seemed the results on the section of the survey regarding Health Plan for Dependents were very similar to those found in the section regarding Health Plan for Self. We got little new information from this. However, one significant comments that came up at least 7 or 8 times was the need to cover domestic partners.

Salary Placement & Advancement Comments: (Placement–87 responses; Advancement–85 responses)

Academic Faculty on the Salary Schedule seemed to have a substantially higher level of satisfaction (~ 50% satisfied) about their Salary Placement than either Market Value Academic Faculty (not on the schedule) or Administrative Faculty (~ 30% satisfied). A similar distinction showed up when asked about Salary Advancement. These differences lead us to focus on two preliminary recommendations.

First. The Senate needs a Task Force to deal with issues of Market Value Hires. There is a strong feeling reflected in many comments that there are inequities between faculty on the salary schedule and those not on it. There are also perceived inequities between salaries of faculty hired as market value hires in different areas and at different times. With growing numbers of faculty being hired 'off the salary schedule' and growing concern about salary advancement and salary equity among these faculty, there is a need to address this growing segment of our faculty. This extends to issues not addressed in this study.

Second. The Senate needs to urge the administration to move forward with the Administrative Faculty Job Study that was initiated 4 years ago. These survey results reflect strong concern among these administrative faculty that changes in their jobs and job descriptions are too often arbitrary. It is our understanding that the Study is more than 90% done. We will be inviting appropriate administrators and representatives from AFA to our Committee to see where this stands. We are hoping to find out what the results are and what the plan is to move forward implementing necessary changes in positions and process depending on those results.

About 10 comments turned up in the Salary Placement section regarding the credit given for a wide range of previous experience upon hiring. These, of course, are personnel decisions and should be taken up with Human Resources. However another 12 - 15 centered on suggestions for things like double masters, special certifications, vocational seminars, licensure, etc. which faculty thought should serve as criteria for placement or advancement on the salary schedule. We will forward those for Salary Advancement to the Professional Advancement Committee and we will review those for Salary Placement within our committee. All faculty should be reminded that any changes in the salary schedules or the rules governing advancement on that schedule must be approved by the Board of Regents and that the same rules and same salary schedule are shared by ALL community colleges in the system. We found a widespread misconception that somehow our rules and pay scales were different than the other colleges, and this is not the case. Discrepancies are largely reflective of differences in seniority of faculty and how many faculty are market value at higher salaries.

A huge surprise to the committee were the approximately 30 comments fundamentally suggesting that we needed more merit-based advancement options on the salary schedule if we were to attract and retain the best faculty. Our committee is taking this very seriously and considering advancing a proposal that adds additional options for post-tenure salary bumps similar to the one we receive when we are tenured. Since such an approach would cost more money there are many issues tied to this, not the least of which is the fact that we work under the same schedule and rules as the other community colleges. However, it would roughly parallel the opportunities for rank advancement that exist for meritorious faculty at the Universities.

#### Grant-In-Aid: (67 responses)

It was nice to see an overwhelmingly positive response to this question. Everyone who had used the Grant-in-Aid was delighted to have that benefit. There were many testimonials to the difference it had made to faculty and their families. There were some suggestions which we will forward to the appropriate parties.

#### Followup:

We received far too many comments and suggestions to mention any more than the ones that appeared to constitute obvious patterns and trends in this REPORT. Our committee has divided up the Comment Sections by subcommittee. Each group will go through one set of comments and follow up. We are trying to handle them as follows:

- (1) Workshops to address misconceptions and requests for more information.
- (2) Routing Suggestions to other appropriate Committees for review or consideration.
- (3) No action - Issues it appears we can do nothing about at this time.
- (4) Research. Suggestions and Questions we need to get answers to.
- (5) Action Item for Salary & Benefits Committee. Issues we would start or continue work on.