



FACULTY SENATE MEETING

Thursday, September 18, 2008 – 5:00 p.m.
Provost Conference Room, Library – HSC Campus
Schusterman Center Room 1A15 – Tulsa Campus

AGENDA*

Speakers

Danny Hilliard

*Director of Government Relations
University of Oklahoma*

Student Safety Awareness

Kate Stanton, *Executive Director, HSC Student Affairs*
Dr. Victoria Christofi, *Director, Student Counseling Services*

- I. Call to Order: Dr. Larry Regens, Chair**
- II. Approval of August 2008 Minutes**
- III. Report of Executive Committee**
- IV. Committee Reports**
 - A. Committee on Committees (Printed)
 - B. Employee Benefits Committee (Printed)
 - C. Annual Report – Employees Benefits Committee (dated 9/12/08)
- V. Unfinished Business**
- VI. New Business**
- VII. Announcements**
- VIII. Adjournment**

*Agenda subject to change**

**Volume 36
Number 1
August 21, 2008
Regular Meeting Minutes of the OUHSC Faculty Senate**

SENATORS, ALTERNATES, AND OFFICERS PRESENT

Stacy Anderson	Vesper Grantham	Abbey Onan
Kari Boyce	Kevin Haney	Larry Regens
Kim Coon (T)	Mary Hudson	Douglas Stewart
Vicki Coury	Peter Johnson	Julie Stoner
Elena Cuaderes	Satish Kumar	Steve Walston
Deborah Espen	Betty Kupperschmidt	
Colin Foster	Deborah Lockwood	

SENATORS, ALTERNATES, AND OFFICERS ABSENT

Deborah Booten-Hiser	David Lewis	Al Al-Assaf
Sheila Crow	Voncella McCleary-Jones	Pramod Chetty
Kevin Farmer	Laura McGuinn	Carol Dionne
Michael Gold	W. Mike McShan	Jean Goodman
Robert John	Lida Radfar	Donald Harrison
Frank Lawler	Patsy Smith	Julie Parke
Renee Leasure	Winter Smith	

EX-OFFICIOS AND GUESTS PRESENT

Sarah Jensen	Kathy Walker	Cheryl Williams
James Kessler	Ed Welch	

GUEST SPEAKERS: Dr. Larry Regens, Chair-Elect, introduced Ed Welch, OUHSC Police Chief. Chief Welch presented information about the organizational structure of the Police Department and announced that all of the officers have been trained in Emergency Response. He reviewed the exterior camera and communications equipment on campus and the capabilities of observing the activities on campus. He provided crime statistics for the campus and discussed the department's objectives for protecting the faculty, staff, students and visitors to campus.

Questions were raised about smoking that occurs in the medians on campus. Chief Welch explained that the medians actually belong to Oklahoma City and the OUHSC Campus Police do not have the authority to issue smoking citations or warnings to those who smoke while in the medians. However, his officers do monitor the medians and remind individuals that if they are sitting on the curbs, they must keep their feet out of the street for safety reasons. Warnings for smoking on campus are issued if someone is smoking while on campus property.

Dentistry will begin offering patient clinics on campus. Chief Welch requested that the police department be notified of any off-hour activities in buildings.

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Kathy Walker, Director of Administrative Support Services, presented information on composition and work of the Threat Assessment Review Committee. The committee was formed in April 2008. The purpose of this interdisciplinary group is preparedness and prevention of potential situations of harm on campus. Every member is required to attend a meeting when called or send a back-up (which each committee member has been assigned). Meetings are held routinely as well as on an as-needed basis. Anyone can report to this group via email any type of suspicious behavior or threatening activity. The email address is concern@ouhsc.edu.

When in doubt on whether to report a suspicious activity or concern, you should contact the Campus Police Department and they can determine how to handle the situation.

If you suspect that someone is becoming a threat to self or others, you should report your suspicions or concerns. Types of concerns might include:

- Someone with a high level of interest in weapons or firearms
- A person showing an unusual amount interest in others
- The workplace is stressful due to a layoff, dispute, etc.
- A worker is exhibiting intense anger
- Workplace violence has been experienced
- A co-worker has personal problems that seem to be escalating
- Someone has a change in behavior that is of concern
- A worker is intimidating others
- Someone is exhibiting paranoia
- A sense of desperation is being shown
- Someone is fascinated with campus violence (may talk about it excessively)
- A person shows disregard for the safety of others.

Kathy encouraged everyone to be sure they have signed up for the Emergency Communication System which alerts you via email, cell phone, home phone, etc. about the pertinent and relevant criminal activity occurring on the campus. You can update your information at <http://www.ouhsc.edu/ecs/>

Tulsa campus is in the process of developing a similar response committee. Student incidents and internal systems are also being developed. Marcia Bennett is working with the student groups to develop specific guidelines, etc.

- I. CALL TO ORDER** - The meeting was called to order by Dr. Larry Regens, Chair-Elect, at 5:30 p.m. He announced that Dr. Michael Gold will be moving to Vanderbilt University and that he has resigned as Chair of the Faculty Senate. Dr. Regens will serve as Chair for the 2008-09 year and a new Chair-Elect will need to be elected.
- II. APPROVAL OF JUNE 2008 MINUTES** - A motion was made by Stacy Anderson to approve the June 2008 Minutes. Motion was seconded and motion passed.

III. CHAIR'S REPORT - Dr. Regens reported on the Executive Committee meeting held with Dr. Ferretti, Provost. The following items were discussed:

- 1) HSC Budget – The FY 2009 budget is a flat budget, but includes \$3.5 million in increased operations & maintenance costs for increased utilities, etc. Even with the tuition increase, the university is unable to make up the shortfall. Despite the hiring freeze imposed in August individuals who were promoted and/or received tenure will receive their raises. The Provost sees this as a tough year. Fortunately, a majority of HSC funding is received from sources other than state appropriations. He is guardedly optimistic since the Rainy Day Fund has an excess of revenue from increased oil and gas revenues, but there is no guarantee that Higher Education, including the HSC campus, will receive additional state appropriations with next year's legislative session.
- 2) Hiring Freeze – The Provost stressed during the meeting that if a position is open for hire using either State funds or soft money, if the money is available to fund the position, the request to hire can be processed. It is important to check with each college's department of personnel to complete the necessary paperwork to file with Vice President Rowe's office for approval.
- 3) Update on construction projects – The College of Allied Health building is not on track for completion by the middle of the fall semester. It is more likely that the building will be ready for occupancy in the Spring 2009 semester. Diabetes Center and Cancer Center are still under construction.
- 4) Endowed Chairs – HSC was on track to receive \$85 million to fund the back log of endowed chairs. However, the T. Boone Pickens donation to OSU and the Kaiser Foundation donation to the School of Community Medicine (Tulsa) changed the amount available. These two large donations increased the amount to be matched by the state and were not anticipated by the legislature. OU is now scheduled to receive \$47 million to fund the back log of endowed chairs. The senior administration is looking for creative options to deal with the shortfall and the Provost will keep the Faculty Senate updated.
- 5) Change in Health Insurance Provider – Effective January 1, 2009, Blue Cross and Blue Shield will be the provider for health insurance to our employees. The Provost was pleased that the resolution by the Faculty Senate requesting that providers on the HSC campus be included in any RFP for insurance providers was included in the BC/BS proposal.
- 6) If anyone has a concern or issue that should be brought to the Provost's attention, please let Dr. Regens know so the Executive Committee can raise the issue to the Provost's attention.
 - i. Discussion was held on the difficulties some individual faculty members encounter in getting approvals for outside contracts from the HSC legal department. Dr. Regens suggested that senators email a summary of concerns they and their colleagues have to Cheryl

Williams so she can assemble them for the Executive Committee. Then the Executive Committee can meet with Legal to discuss the issue. They will report back to the full senate after meeting with legal. At that time, the Faculty Senate can determine whether it is necessary to request that the head of the legal department meet with the full senate and/or have the Executive Committee discuss perceived concerns with the Provost.

- IV. Annual Speaker Series at HSC** – Discussion was held on the showcase speakers that we have had on campus. Dr. Haney reviewed the process for scheduling and paying for the speaker. President Boren has been very supportive of this series and indicated his desire to continue assisting with getting speakers. The Senate agreed that OUHSC should continue the speaker series and focus on attracting a nationally recognized speaker who would be a major draw for our campus, attract attendees from the larger community, and generate good media coverage. The Executive Committee along with Dr. Blevins will identify an appropriate speaker and work with Provost Ferretti to ensure that this event receives support from the senior administration. Financial support will be sought from President Boren to cover expenses. Motion to form the committee and pursue finding a speaker for 2009 was made by Vesper Grantham and seconded by Deborah Lockwood. Motion passed unanimously.

V. COMMITTEE REPORTS

Committee on Committees Report

- 1) Dr. Regens explained the process that was followed this year to solicit nominations for vacancies. If multiple nominations were received for vacancies, not specifically required to be filled by a college, the COC met and narrowed their recommendation to a single recommendation. All of the recommendations to fill committee or council vacancies, with the exception of the Chair-Elect, were passed unanimously.
- 2) Faculty Senate Chair-Elect - Several senators requested more time to consider filling the vacancy and the senate deferred action on the COC recommendation for Chair-Elect until the September meeting. Nominations for Chair-Elect will be opened to all senators with the election of the Chair-Elect (2008-09) being conducted at the September meeting. Dr. Regens will inform all of the senators of the vacancy by email to solicit nominations of individuals who agree to serve if elected. Nominations will be due by email to Cheryl Williams on September 10th. COC will review nominations and make a recommendation to the Faculty senate for action at September 21 meeting.
- 3) The COC recommends that the HSC Service and Related Matters Committee be abolished since it has not met in several years. If an issue needs to be considered or studies, an ad hoc committee can be appointed for the purpose of handling the issue and bringing a solution to the Faculty Senate. Discussion was held and it was determined that this standing committee should be abolished since it no longer is meeting on a regular basis. Motion to approve the recommendation was made

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by Vesper Grantham. Motion was seconded and the motion was approved unanimously.

All other committee reports – please review the reports and bring any questions to the September 18th meeting.

VI. UNFINISHED BUSINESS – None

VII. NEW BUSINESS - None

VIII. ANNOUNCEMENTS

- 1) The Fall General Faculty Meeting will be held on Monday, October 13, 2008 at 5:15 p.m. in the BSEB East Lecture Hall.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 6:28 p.m. The next meeting will be held on Thursday, September 18, 2008. Rep. Danny Hilliard, Director of Government Relations, will be the guest speaker.

Respectfully submitted,

Colin Foster
Secretary-Elect, 2008-09

Handouts:

August 2008 Agenda

June 2008 Meeting Minutes (Draft)

Committee on Committees (printed)

2007-08 Annual Council Reports (printed)

Athletic Council Annual Reports

- i. Academic Integrity Policy Review Plan (printed)

- ii. Fiscal Integrity Subcommittee Report (printed)

Employee Benefits Committee Minutes and Annual Report (printed)

Committee on Committee Report
Faculty Senate
September 18, 2008

Resignations or Retirements:

Employee Benefits Committee (2007-2011) – Presidential Appointment
Stacy Anderson, College of Allied Health

Parking Advisory Committee
Stacy Anderson, College of Allied Health

Recommendations

Chair-Elect, Faculty Senate
2008-09, Al Al-Assaf, College of Public Health

Employee Benefits Committee (2007-2011)
Frank Lawler, College of Medicine

Parking Advisory Committee
Maribeth Moran, College of Nursing

MINUTES
EMPLOYEE BENEFITS COMMITTEE
August 21, 2008

Members Present

Darryl McCullough, Chair	Dick Bennett
Debbie Copp	Joann Dean
Brenda Freese	Karan Glickman
Steve Livesey	Sue-Anna Miller

Members Absent

Stacy Anderson	Debra Bemben
Alisa Dougless	Donald Harrison
Simin Pulat	Charla Rae
	Will Wayne

Ex Officio Members

Julius Hilburn
Nick Kelly

The meeting was called to order by the Chair at 1:34 pm.

I. Introduction of New Members (Darryl McCullough)

Darryl welcomed the new EBC members and thanked them for their willingness to serve on the committee. He explained to new members the official charge of the EBC is to advise the President and the Director of Human Resources on the University's employment benefits programs and to make recommendations for programs and changes in the existing programs. He stated the monthly meetings provide an opportunity for committee members to become educated and updated on benefits issues, as well as to interact with Human Resources administrators and give them feedback from all three campuses. Also, the committee occasionally does make recommendations for programs or changes to existing programs.

Darryl also explained the August meeting is the time for the EBC Chair to announce to the committee a willingness or unwillingness to continue as Chair for the coming year. He stated his willingness to continue as Chair. In addition, Will Wayne is willing to continue as Vice Chair. If there are other members who wish to serve as Chair or Vice Chair, nominations can be made at the September meeting. If other candidates are nominated, a secret ballot will be conducted at the next meeting.

II. Approval of Minutes

Minutes of the June 19th meeting were approved without discussion.

III. Update on BlueCross BlueShield and Delta Dental Implementation (Nick Kelly)

After an RFP process that extended over approximately 6 months, the Board of Regents approved in June contracts effective January 1, 2009, with BCBS for health insurance and Delta Dental for dental insurance, as well as a BCBS partner company, PayFlex, for our flexible spending account (FSA) administration.

One significant item is the University will go to debit card technology with the FSA.

Another important change is Delta Dental will offer a \$1,500 lifetime orthodontia benefit on both dental plans. Also, the cost of a routine cleaning and exam will not apply toward the maximum annual benefit as was done in the past.

Annual enrollment will be held November 1st through 17th. Everyone will be asked to re-enroll in a health and dental plan since we are changing providers. We will encourage online enrollment again this year. BCBS will conduct informational meetings on all three campuses before the enrollment period, and we will hold Benefits Fairs as we have done in the past.

Julius stated a subsequent request for proposal was issued in July for an HMO in the Tulsa area. Bids were received from Aetna and Community Care. Community Care presented a bid that includes St. John's and St. Francis hospitals in Tulsa, which are not part of BCBS' network. They also proposed a rate we believe is workable. The leadership at OU – Tulsa is comfortable with adding the Community Care option for Tulsa-based employees and retirees. The rate that was proposed by Community Care is higher than what BCBS proposed, but the rate is still lower than the PPO rate from which the University establishes reimbursement for employees. The Tulsa-based employees will be offered the BCBS PPO and HMO, as well as the Community Care HMO.

Julius also explained health rates had not yet been communicated because we have been involved in an analysis of what else, if anything, the University will be able to contribute to reducing dependent rates further. A year ago the University introduced employee contributions on certain salary tiers, and put in an approximate \$2 million to help reduce the dependent rates. The goal this second year was to re-examine the contribution strategy to see if OU could get closer to the benchmarks. The hope is that through saving money through the RFP process, University resources might be freed up to help buy down the dependent rates. While rates were flat the University is struggling from a budget standpoint. At this point, it does not look like there will be any additional resources to assist with dependent contributions. The good news is the rates from BCBS are such that almost none of our employees will face any type of increase in rates for 2009. There are some marginal differences, a dollar or two here and there. The biggest increase in any category was about \$11 per month, and this is only in a few categories. Also, as was provided last year, employees who make under \$100,000 will have at least one option they can elect that will be at no cost to them.

Julius noted there will be dollars available for the University-sponsored wellness programs. Our wellness committee has been discussing the need to have central management and coordination and to have University-wide promotion of wellness, which requires funding. There has been positive feedback from all three campuses regarding finding additional dollars for wellness programs. There will be a noticeable commitment next year to getting our wellness program off the ground. Another area where there will be additional commitment in funding is for our Employee Assistance Program (EAP). Right now, EAP options at HSC and the Norman campus are not well funded and provide a limited number of services for employees and their dependents if they have issues, problems or concerns where they might need counseling or referrals to mental health providers. We are in discussions with current EAP resources and BCBS to determine how to improve and expand EAP services beginning in 2009.

Questions/Comments from Committee (Answers in bold)

- Darryl stated it is fortunate that rates will not increase for 2009, but they will most likely increase in the next two years.

Julius responded that the rates for 2009 give us a one-year hiatus. However, the next year there will probably be around a 10% increase in premiums. The 10% is the guaranteed maximum rate increase for the following two years. We expect the rate increase in 2010 will mostly likely be the full 10% percent based on our pattern of utilization.

- Steve asked how the medical plans will work for the Tulsa area employees.

Julius answered in Tulsa, the BCBS HMO will not include St. John's and St. Francis, but it is less expensive, and it does include Hillcrest hospital. If an employee is willing to acknowledge they would not be able to use St. John's and St. Francis, they could choose to enroll in the BCBS HMO. However, if those two hospitals are ones the employee wishes to utilize, they might consider choosing the Community Care HMO. It was noted St. John's and St. Francis are the hospitals with which the OU physicians are affiliated. Also, an employee could choose to take the PPO and be able to go to a large number of providers in the BCBS network. However, a significant number of OU employees prefer the HMO option because of the predictability of the out-of-pocket costs; that is why we worked to get an HMO option for the Tulsa area employees.

- Debbie mentioned anytime we change vendors, there are always things that were covered on the previous plan that will not be covered on the future plan. She asked when we will have information to the employees so a comparison can be made.

Nick said information should be available well in advance of the annual enrollment, at least by early October. He noted, with the medical insurance, there should not be a lot of change. BCBS duplicated Aetna's plans with few differences.

- Brenda asked about the difference between BCBS' and Aetna's physical therapy philosophy. She also asked if BCBS will only allow for 60 days of physical therapy, as Aetna does.

Nick responded it is a network contracting difference. Aetna has narrowed its physical therapy network to those facilities associated with hospitals. BCBS' network includes a broader network with several free-standing facilities.

On the physical therapy limitation, Nick answered he would have to check with BCBS.

- Steve asked if Aetna is going to push claims off on BCBS now that we are switching to BCBS in January.

Nick stated we hope Aetna will finish off their contract in the right way and have every reason to believe they will. Julius said if a pattern develops, the Office of Human Resources will want to know, and we will take these issues to the appropriate level at Aetna to get them resolved. Julius reiterated he does not expect Aetna will do anything to cause a negative reference from OU.

IV. Retiree Medical Update (Julius Hilburn)

The retiree medical review is being conducted by the same committee which started meeting more than a year ago to look at contribution strategies for our active employees. A notice was sent out by this committee a couple of weeks ago saying that no final decisions have been made, but that the Committee expected to engage the campus in discussions about retiree medical options in the fall.

The evaluation committee will meet August 29, 2008, with a goal to come to a consensus around some set of preliminary recommendations. Before a final report is presented to President Boren, preliminary recommendations will be reviewed with the campus community. After receiving campus feedback, the Committee will be able to examine the preliminary findings and recommendations and consider modifying them based on the feedback received. We would like to be able to say, when these recommendations are presented to the President, that we presented the recommendations to the campus community, here are some areas of concern from campus, and here is how we modified our initial recommendations based on the feedback we received.

Probably by mid to late September, a series of meetings will be held regarding these preliminary recommendations, starting with the EBC. These discussions will then be cascaded to other governance groups, and then a series of informational meetings for employees will be scheduled.

Darryl requested a printed version of the Committee's preliminary recommendations be distributed to EBC members prior to the EBC meeting in which these recommendations will be discussed. Julius responded as soon as the Committee agrees to the preliminary recommendations, a report and presentations will be prepared and approved by the Committee. This can be most likely be done prior to the EBC's meeting in September. Julius said the committee may decide to send the recommendations out in writing to all groups at the same time. EBC members concurred it would be a good idea for the recommendations to go out to everyone at the same time prior to discussions beginning. Julius stated his recommendation to the retiree medical committee would be to issue a report of the preliminary findings to all groups and then follow up with a series of campus presentations.

V. 403(b) Plan Compliance (Nick Kelly)

Nick explained as has been discussed in prior meetings, there are some new federal regulations regarding our voluntary 403(b) plan. Those regulations may cause us to have to change some of the investment options for our 403(b). There are some minimum standards vendors will now have to meet; some of our vendors may not be able to meet these standards, and therefore, changes would have to be made. As we coordinate the 403(b) plan with our other plans, the 457(b) and the 401(a), it may lead to changes in some investment options on these plans, as well.

The OU plans are typical for higher education institutions, but not for any other sector or industry. OU offers so many choices not only in the 403(b) plan, but also in the number of funds people can invest in with the 401(a), that it is counterproductive. Many new employees simply get paralyzed and default, not making an active choice. This 403(b) plan compliance issued by the federal government has caused OU, and other universities as well, to step back and look at ways of doing things differently and better in terms of the investment choices and the investment education offered to employees.

Definitely as of January 1, 2009, there will be some changes in some of the investment options and perhaps changes in some vendors, depending on which vendors are able to comply. We hope to be able to provide more details in the next couple of months.

Julius added a request for proposal has been issued to different investment companies asking that they identify their capacity and ability to administer a consolidated defined contribution plan, consolidated from the standpoint of being able to give our employees a single statement which would track all of their assets, as well as the ability to conduct their business in an environment where they can make investment elections and transfers electronically and not have to push paper from vendor to vendor. In the RFP, vendors have been asked how they can help in moving from this scattered approach to one that is

much more administratively efficient. This will benefit participants significantly. We think trying to move to a more consolidated model is in everyone's best interest.

Julius reminded EBC members that President Boren has appointed a retirement management committee which will look at what options are available in our defined contribution plans. Chris Kuwitzky, Chief Financial Officer and Associate Vice President on the Norman campus, is chairing the committee. The other committee members are people with backgrounds and experience in finance or investments. They include Terry Henson, Chief Financial Officer and Associate Vice-President at the Health Sciences Center; Dean Kenneth Evans from the College of Business; Julius Hilburn, Associate Vice-President and Chief Human Resources Officer, and Guy Patton, Chief Executive Officer of the OU Foundation. This committee is being assisted by RVKuhns, an outside investment management consulting firm. As we start looking at the result of the proposals and get a better feel of what is really available to us as option for change, we will come back to the EBC and give an update to let the committee know what we want to recommend as far as changes.

Questions/Comments from Committee (Answers in bold)

- Joann asked if what employees are currently participating in as far as retirement plans will change as of January 1, 2009, or if can employees stay in their current retirement options.

Nick responded the January 1st date applies to the 403(b) options, and at this time we are not sure what will happen. Already at least two 403(b) companies say as of January 1st, they will no longer be in the 403(b) business because they do not want to deal with the new regulations. Other companies have expressed their desire to continue and have begun the process of making sure they will be in compliance. The larger companies like TIAA-CREF, Fidelity, Vanguard and ING will still be in the 403(b) field.

- Joann also inquired if the Office of Human Resources will be more proactive in educating employees about the new options. She expressed her concern that there seems to be a hands-off approach regarding the retirement options.

Julius responded that we try to keep the EBC up to date and take feedback from this group for guidance on what we need to address with employees and how we can be more responsive to their needs and concerns. We never take for granted we are doing as much as we might or as much as some might expect in the way of communications. That continues to be a challenge.

- Steve expressed concern regarding how OU employees are informed and educated about the retirement options available to them.

Julius stated that is clearly part of what we are looking at in this review of how the defined contribution plans are organized and administered. It is clear that when we have so many options from which to choose, we cannot effectively educate employees. We have to do a better job of giving our employees the tools to use to plan for their retirement.

VI. Presentation of Annual Report (Darryl McCullough)

Darryl noted the annual report was presented during the June meeting, and it was discovered the report mentioned BCBS but did not name Delta Dental under the RFP evaluation committee's recommendations. A revised version of the annual report was presented to the committee.

Debbie suggested the word "faculty" in the first paragraph be changed to "employees." She also said, on the bylaws update, we might want to explain the reason we checked with the Tulsa Staff Senate and Health Sciences Faculty Senate was to talk to them about the representation from the Tulsa campus, not that these were the only two groups with which the EBC chose to check.

Darryl stated he would rewrite the annual report to include the revisions discussed. The corrected annual report will be presented at the September meeting.

VII. Other Business

Brenda Freese expressed concern over not receiving the meeting minutes in a timely manner. Julius responded if the committee would like, the minutes will be sent to committee members within 7 to 10 days following the meeting. He asked that the minutes not be posted by governance groups until they are approved by the EBC.

The next meeting will be held at 1:30 p.m. Thursday, September 18, 2008.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:49 p.m.

Report of the
University of Oklahoma Employee Benefits Committee
Academic Year 2007-08

Again this year, employee health insurance benefits dominated the agendas of the EBC. The principal matters of concern were the following:

Contribution strategy: In a September 2006 letter to President Boren, the EBC requested a comprehensive review of health insurance benefits. This was motivated in large part by the rapidly escalating cost of health insurance, which had placed an increasing burden for the University's overall budget. Moreover, it had pushed coverage for dependents out of reach for many lower-salaried employees, and put the University at a competitive disadvantage in recruiting and retaining young faculty and staff.

In response, President Boren established the Contribution Strategy and Health Insurance Options Committee, which includes several members of the EBC. It released its first report in August 2007. The most controversial of its many recommendations was that OU employees begin to contribute a portion of their health insurance premiums, at levels determined by a salary-based tier system. Enhanced by a significant increase in the University contribution, these would lower the cost of spouse and family coverage to a level near national averages.

The EBC reviewed the report at its September meeting, which was attended by several OU employees who gave their views on elements of the report. After extensive discussion, the EBC supported implementation of the report's recommendations by January 1, 2008. The vote was eight in favor, one opposed, and two abstentions. The University has implemented most of the recommendations. In particular, the increased support for dependent coverage is now in effect, with some changes in timing and contribution tier levels.

Retiree healthcare benefits: Some of the most complex healthcare benefits issues involve the retiree insurance benefit. The Contribution Strategy and Health Insurance Options Committee recommended that the University end its commitment to pay toward retiree health insurance premiums for employees hired after January 1, 2008, while continuing to provide employees access to the group insurance plan after retirement, at their own expense. This policy was adopted by the Regents. The Committee is now conducting

a full review of retiree medical matters, with its second report expected later in 2008.

Wellness initiative: Employee wellness was another major topic of recommendations by the Contribution Strategy and Health Insurance Options Committee. Smoking cessation, walking and other exercise, healthcare compliance, and healthier diets are among the lifestyle choices that could over time substantially reduce healthcare costs, and thereby health insurance benefits costs to employees. A Wellness Committee has been examining ways to encourage these choices. The EBC supports these efforts and looks forward to examining the forthcoming recommendations.

Health insurance RFP: The Contribution Strategy and Health Insurance Options Committee recommended that the University conduct a health insurance RFP at three- or four-year intervals. An RFP was conducted during 2007-08, overseen by a task force that included several EBC members. The EBC followed the evaluation process very closely. After examining several competitive bids, the REP committee recommended that the University pursue negotiations with Blue Cross/Blue Shield for medical insurance and Delta Dental for dental. The EBC supported this recommendation unanimously. The University was ultimately successful in its negotiations, and BCBS and Delta will begin covering most OU employees on January 1, 2009. Because of an unavoidable gap in the BCBS network, however, the University is conducting RFP to obtain an HMO provider for employees in the Tulsa area.

Other matters: In addition to healthcare benefits, some other matters received attention during the past year. These included the following:

1. **Bylaws update:** The bylaws of the EBC had become out of date, so a new set was drafted. The language describing the membership from the Tulsa campus was particularly out of date, so although there were no material changes, the updated wording was cleared with the Tulsa Staff Senate and Health Sciences Faculty Senate before final approval by the EBC.
2. **Website:** The new bylaws call for an EBC website, which will be maintained by the Office of Human Resources. The EBC hopes to have the website up and running in the near future.

Darryl McCullough, EBC Chair
Department of Mathematics

September 12, 2008