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Alternative Service Committee

Alternative Service Committee

Academic year 2013-2014

Town Hall Meeting of the Alternative Service Committee December 5, 2013

ASC Town Hall Meeting Q & A
December 5, 2013
Hubbard Hall room 218

Q – If we don't approve the move to the USS and the legislature would disband the civil service what would happen to us at that time?

A – We would become unclassified state employee and there would be no option for a vote.

Q – So if we vote on what is going to be in the handbook and KBOR changes things or send it back to have items changed will we vote again?

A – They would only change terminally to make sure that it is legal, they wouldn't change or take away from anything that we put it in. But there would be no second vote, along as we have our terminology correct there would be no reason for them not to approve it. I have already spoken to the General Council up there and she said that as long as the terminology is legal there would be no reason for them to deny it.

Q – They can make changes and we do not vote again?

A – That is right, but the only change that they would make is if there is something that is not legal. They can send it back and ask us to make the changes they will not make the changes it would be up to us. But if we have sent everything up there and it is all legal there is not a reason for it not to be approved.

Q – Do we have access to other state agencies handbooks?

A – As we have moved along we have been visiting the website of the other regent universities, if you visit our website Wichita.edu/ASC I know that there are at least two handbooks linked on our website if you would like to view those. Those agencies that have a handbook in place are listed on our website and I would encourage you to go to those websites and take a look at those.

Q – Say we go to the USS send off the policies and get them approved what is to say that the administration wouldn't come in and change them 6 months down the road?

A – That is not something that they typically do, I have been here 28 years and it isn't a typical practice for administration to come in and change policies. They might change the terminology but not the actual policy. If there are changes in legal issues that impact that policy there yes it would have to be change to reflect the legality. There might be a change from necessity but not arbitrary changes. We are already talked to some of the other presidents from some of the other universities and just because there is a president change doesn't mean that they have to agree to all the policies. I have been here through 4 presidents and none of the presidents have renegotiated any policies as them came in they all have stayed intact.

Q – Don't they mostly stay intact because we are in the classified system within the state?

A – They are university policies they are not state policies. They don't have any power to change state policy, if you go on the website and look at the policy within HR most of those deal with university policy not state policy. Some of them can be change.

A - There was a policy change that was changed on comp time for classified to equal unclassified comp time. It used to be where classified employees could only have 60 hours of comp time and the university looked at that and changed it to read the same as unclassified. So for clarity it is usually to improve upon what the difference is between classified and unclassified.

A – Frankie – Policy is usually updated not necessarily changed but updated when there is a change in federal or state regulations. For example: I am sure you have heard of the Affordable Care Act any changes that were made it is because there was a change from federal or state regulations. That is when we would change a policy.

Q – You have mentioned HR several times has HR been involved in this process?

A – Frankie – I am here, we are in charge of the evaluations and layoffs. We are on board for this change to happen. There are several members from HR that is a part of this committee.

Q – For the Holidays the governor has to approve the days off before and after who will be approving these holidays?

A – The governor will still approve these days, whatever the state approves as holidays it is still what we would get we are still state employees.

Q – If we go to USS do we have to assign a year to year contract?

A – No, the agreement that is signed with the unclassified employees receives a notice of appointment that they sign. They either receive a Notice of Appointment letter or a Notice of Non Appointment letter. USS would not be receiving those appointment notices; we would still be permanent employees.

Q – Those who are on the committees especially those who have been here for so long what do you like about making this change?

A – This is my opinion – I served as President for the Classified Senate 10 years ago and I served as a member on that for 4 years before that and for those of you have been involved with the Senate, every year they have what is called Legislative Days for the regent schools. What happens with that is all six of the regents schools get together and come up with a position paper and what that paper does is express the regent schools desire. Then a group of people from that go to Topeka to the Legislative Days, I have been up there 4 or 5 times to try and present this paper, if we have an appointment to go to their office for us to meet with them they say to us after they might glance at it and then they say: "Who are you, how do you work for the State, you want a raise, we do not have money for a raise and you should be lucky you have a job". Let's take that and look at it from a university side – raises and some of the compensations that we are suggesting would come from the university and not the state. If 650 employees go to President Bardo's office and we say we would really like a raise we have not had one in 5 years what can you do for us? You turned that around and take a handful of Classified employees to Topeka what are they going to do? They are going to tell you

that we are lucky we have a job. Dr. Bardo knows who we are and what we do here to keep the university running to keep his heating and air or his power to get it back up and running. People in Topeka do not see or care about who we are or what we do. We would have more control if this move was to be made. I trust the Administration of this university a whole lot more that I trust the people in Topeka. I live in Derby the representative there has voted against the classified employees for raises every year he has been in. I have voted against him every time he has been up for a vote, but does my one vote count? How many classified employees live in Derby? I think that would back a difference, I trust the local administration a lot more that I trust Topeka.

Q – I see that raises are driving this and I also see the universities making bond agreements and I don't see that raise would be available and that it will not be possible.

A – Here is something just food for thought, classified staff in the state of Kansas has not had an approved raised in the last 5 years. You may have had raises due to the market study that was defunded after the first 3 years. That was a 5 year plan that the legislature removed the funding after 3 years, so there were 2 steps that were not taken care and people did get raises that had been promised raises by the legislature. That money has gone away, 5 years and no raises; the state budget has been approved by the legislature for the next 2 years. The next 2 years do not include increases for the classified staff. Over the last 5 years where we have had no raises as classified staff the unclassified on this campus has received 2 raises. The most recent one was this last fiscal year. We did not see one, they did. That is the opportunity that presents itself if this move was to be made. If there is money the raises would come across the board not only to the unclassified but to those of us who would be in the University Support Staff as well. Now like Paul was saying there has to be money, but if there is money for the unclassified to get raises then there is money for us to get raises and that is a commitment that we would get from President Bardo and the Administration. Fort Hayes State did that, it has become part of their policy or handbook and they got their President to commit to that.

Q – Two fold here I have to go along with Paul and it is based on if funds are available my bonds and we are building a new resident hall and several other things with bonds, so the likely hood for there to be money in the near future?

A – That actually is not true, the money for the dorms comes from bond money and bond money can't be used for our raises, tuition money can be used for our raises. So if there is access tuition money that can be used to give us raises. The bond issue that is going on with the new dorm being built has nothing to do with our raises.

Q – Our dept. on grant funded how does that affect us?

A – Your salaries are still covered under this. When I first came to work here I was in a position that was 50% covered by a grant, fortunately I was out of that position by the time that grant went away. Unfortunately with the TRIO programs if that money goes away so does the TRIO program along with the jobs. As long as the TRIO funding is there the jobs are safe. If there were raises you would still get it, if there is not money for raises then no one will get it.

Q – So you said the 2 years previous they received raises how much did the unclassified get and with KPERS going up is that going to impacted?

A – Last year they did and the year before that they received a raise. The first year they received 2% and the 2nd year 2-4% it was merit based in FY13.

Q – If we are all about students then we would have to increase tuition again in order to have extra tuition fees?

A – That is already in the making WSU will be asking for a double digit increase in tuition this next year, but that isn't just to cover raises there are a lot of things going on at WSU that this funding will be applied too.

Q – Have you done any kind of financial analysis on this for the future?

A – Other than working with Mary Herrin's office we have not done anything like that. All that we have gotten is a little bit of information from Mary's office. We cannot guarantee anything, even if Mary was to say that 6 months from now there would be funding for raises that could change in 6 months. What I am looking at is that we will not lose anything if we make the move, but the potential for change is very good at this point and we can make some changes to our future employment so that we have some say in what happens. Topeka does not allow us to do that

Q – President Bardo has made it very clear to raise faculty salaries and it sounds like that would be the priority for years to come?

A – The problem with faculty is that faculty is a totally different bargaining unit so we cannot compare ourselves to them. That could be an issue, when we talk about merit raises for us we are not talking about a full merit raise. What we are looking at is 2/3rds is across the board and 1/3rd would be for merit. So if we got a 3% raise 2% would be across the board and 1% would be for merit to anyone who had a satisfactory evaluation or better.

Q – Who would be making that recommendation?

A – We are making the recommendation, the committee is making the recommendation that 2/3rds would be across the board and 1/3 would be merit.

Q – The recommendation is made by the committee as to where the raises go?

A – That would come from the university as far as the amount or the percentage.

Q – I just want to know how it is decided and how does the merit raise is decided?

A – It comes from your evaluation, if you get a satisfactory then you would get the merit raise.

Q – I just didn't hire into a merit based system I hired into a classified system that is why I am asking where does the decision come from on our merit raise? Who decides what percentage we would get?

A – The university if they are doing 2% and 1% is done by the merit the merit part comes from your direct chair or dept. supervisor. That funding is for the merit raises is passed to your college and your Dean or your Dept. Supervisor decides how much of that merit raise you would get per your evaluation.

Q – I have one question changing from the goal base to the merit based would there criteria that is the same across the class or position for your performance criteria?

A – The forms have been shorten and go from 5 pages to 3 pages but we would like to enhance the form so that each department can tailor your job specifications on that form to put some components on there that are based on your job that is different from my job. So there will be some criteria in there so that you can tailor it to your dept. and or your position. The form right now comes from Topeka and if we change over to the USS that form could be revised to fit our needs.

Q – How does a market analysis affect salary increases?

A – Well just like with the Hay Group Study, what they need was they came in an looked at the job description and then they looked at the private industry and compared the salaries to the private sector. Then they said this is what the market says these jobs should be earning. That is when the 5 year plan was put together because the study found that we were making below market value salaries. So the state funded a 5 year structure but then they did 3 and took 2 years away.

Q – Is it a possibility to use that market study?

A – You would want to use that market study because it is out of date, you would want it to be updated so that it reflects the current wages.

If this change would be to happen and it would be an affirmative vote it could take 2-4 years and part of that is because we would do a new market study.

Q – The university would have to pay for that new market study?

A – Yes, then salary adjustments could be made based on that study.

Q – You said earlier that we would not lose anything, so would the state allocate the same amount of money to the university?

A – You would still be getting your base salary; Mary Herrin has told us that the state allocated about 75% of the funding for the university currently it is under 50% so every year we see a decrease in the funding from the state. For those of us who get longevity pay that is paid by the university not by the state even though the state says you have to pay it. The state gives the university no funding to meet those allocations, so if the money keeps decreasing which it probably will the state can still say that no matter what happens this is what your employees have to make and oh by the way we are going to give they a 5% raise and you have to make up that difference. So the university is paying a bigger and bigger part of the universities salaries. There is no guarantee that the money coming from Topeka will stay the same in fact it probably won't.

Q – Where would the funding come from for a salary increase?

A – Salary funding part of it would come from the state, if we move away from the state that part would still come from the state but if there are any increases that would come from the university.

Q – Is there going to be a draft of the policy out before we vote?

A – Yes, the white pages that we presented today are working documents and they are constantly changes. Any input we are getting from these meetings, the website, and the committee meetings all of that is considered for the final draft of the white pages. At that point you will have an opportunity to view those white pages and we will have another set of Town Hall meetings to present that information to you before you vote. Then the vote will occur.

Q – You talked about the voting members of your committee earlier; do those members take a vote after we vote to make the decision?

A – No

Q –Then what are your votes?

A – When we say voting members we are looking at voting on adding people to the committee. We viewed who was on the committee and decided that we needed more representation from other areas so we voted on whom to invite to join the committee. Most of our votes are on when we want to have our meetings and where to meet.

Q -

Q – HR does have training classes for supervisor. Should upper management be evaluated by supervisors also or maybe HR staff evaluates management fairness of merit raises?

A – That is part of what our recommendation was

Q – If we do move away and go to the USS and the state gives a raise to the civil service would we still be part of that raise or would it have to be completely through the university?

A – That was part of what our recommendation was. If the civil service stays intact, if there are still classified people, if we move to USS whatever the state gives to the classified staff they will give to us in turn, we don't lose anything.

Q – If the civil service remains intact and they were to get a step increase we would get that increase?

A – Yes, that is what we are asking for; it will be up to the university. We are asking that if the classified staff gets a raise then the university in turn would also allow us to have that same raise.

Q – We can't hold them to it?

A – That is right, but let me ask you this: What do you think the chances are of the state giving us a step increase?

The legislature would have to change the law again, then was a law in place that said we were to have step increase funding every year. In order to take those a way which they have done for the last 5 years they had to change that law. Legislature physically changed the law to say that we cannot get

raises anymore. So they would have to go back and change that law again to say that we are allowed to have step increases.

Q – That is true, but now you want us to go the university president to ask for that and he could say I can't afford that.

A – That is right he can, absolutely I don't deny that.

Q – You could end up in a situation that civil service gets a raise and the university says that they will not give us the same raise because of the universities financial situation?

A – You are absolutely correct, what I think the chances of that are is in my opinion that is slim.

Q – Is that is something that we could put in the white papers?

A – Wanda is asking for that. That is what our recommendations are. What we are asking for and I am not pushing for or against I am trying to relate to you the facts. We are asking WSU if we move to USS if Kansas does this for the civil service we are you to do the same for us. We want to be in on that, we do not want to lose anything because we want to be WSU USS not Topeka's step children. I don't have a hidden agenda, all this is in facts. We are recommending that WSU promise us, guarantees us that if the state of Kansas does this for them then WSU would do the same for us. We are still state employees.

Q – But we just had the conversation that we cannot hold them to that.

A – We can't hold Topeka to anything either!