

Faculty Senate Minutes of Meeting

Regularly scheduled meeting of the Faculty Senate of Rochester Institute of Technology

Thursday, October 17, 2024

12:15 - 1:50 PM

Zoom

Attendance: See Below

Agenda Item No. 1: Call to Order; A. Newman (12:15)

Agenda Item No. 2: Approval of Agenda; A. Newman (12:15)

Motion to approve: P. White.

Seconded: J. Lanzafame

Approved by acclamation

Agenda Item No. 3: Communications Officer's Report/Approval of Minutes; S. Aldersley (12:16)

Motion to approve the draft minutes of the 10/3 meeting approved by acclamation

[October 3, 2024 Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes](#)

Agenda Item No. 4: Executive Committee Report; A. Newman (12:17)

A. Newman: Please note that the next meeting of the Senate will not be until November 7th. This weekend is Brick City weekend and the Fall Board of Trustees meeting, which Sam and I will be attending. I'm expecting to hear a progress report on the presidential search and the strategic planning process. Susan Puglia will take the gavel from Jeff Harris as chair of the Board. Please let me remind you to participate in the DSO survey. The Executive Committee is continuing to schedule time to participate in all-college meetings, the purpose of which is to have conversations with faculty and learn about the matters that are most most prevalent in everyone's minds.

Agenda Item No. 5: Staff Council Update; R. Hisert (12:20)

Staff Council has finalized our four main committees and their plans of work. Our Communications Outreach Committee is moving in a little bit of a different direction this year, trying to engage presenters prior to their presentations to better tailor the discussions. A new thing we're going to experiment with

this year is that when there is a 5th Thursday in the month, we're planning to do some events on campus for staff as a whole. Later today we have presenters coming to the Council to talk about RIT foodshare, Tiger Cloud and benefits and open enrollment.

Agenda Item No. 6: Student Government Update; J.Anderson (12:25)

Joshua provided updates on the progress of various student government initiatives, including the closure of Pawprints on adding more swing sets on campus, starting a weekend farmers market and including all required textbooks in library databases. New Pawprint charges charged to Facilities, Parking and transportation include providing more parking options and getting rid of ticketing.

A. Newman: I'm very glad that SG is taking up the parking issue. It is something that we in Senate have spoken about for many years, to the point where it's almost embarrassing for us to bring it up again, but we will certainly do what we can to support you.

Agenda Item No. 7: 2025 Open Enrollment; S. Xenias (12:30)

As you see, there's quite a lot on this agenda. So I'm going to ask if you would keep your questions till the end, so that I can get through the material in the time allotted me. If I can't get to questions you may have, please funnel them through me after the presentation. First, I'd like to give an overview of the updates regarding medical plans and prescription drug coverage, talking about cost increases and sharing example scenarios, especially to give you an idea of how cost increases correlate with merit increments. We are going to see a more significant increase than we have seen in past years, and I will talk about why shortly.

We are not going to have any new enrollments into the POS B/no drug plan for 2025 but individuals who are currently in that plan can stay for one more year before we discontinue it in 2026. Again I'll talk about why in a couple of slides. With regard to prescription drug coverage, this is something we talk about every year. OptumRx updates the formulary on a semi annual basis. They reach out to the very small number of employees impacted by changes in the formulary impacts (3 in 2025). With regard to prescription drug coverage this is embedded in Medical. There's no change to the dental benefit, although there's a very small incremental increase to the rates. We're still going to offer healthcare and dependent care, and flexible spending accounts. We don't have any say in what the maximums are because the IRS dictates that, but unfortunately, they don't typically announce what they are until near the end of our open enrollment period. So right now we still have the 2024 maximums: \$3,200 for the healthcare FSA and dependent care is \$5,000 per household or \$2,500 if you're married and filing separately. If someone elects the existing maximum, and the 2025 maximums are higher when they are announced, we'll reach out directly to let you know and if you wish to change your amounts we will fix that manually in Oracle self service. Please note that if you have a flexible spending account in 2024, it does not roll over into 2025. You have to opt in annually. For life insurance, accidental death and dismemberment and long term disability there are no changes in the rates but if you've had a pay increase, or if you change age bands, you may have an increase. So you just want to pay attention to that. On the long term disability side, that is also based on your pay of January 1st, so you may see changes there. If you are currently enrolled in

Life Insurance, you can increase up to a maximum of three times your salary without evidence of insurability, which means that you do not need to provide any further health information to Prudential, to confirm that you can be underwritten for the policy. We're going to announce more information regarding Employee Assistance Plans, but I just want to mention that we are switching to a new vendor on January 1st. We're doing this because we want more services. We know mental health is important and we want to make sure that we're providing enhanced services and capabilities. The new vendor will be able to provide some additional services and capabilities. There's a new portal that they'll offer with self help guides and videos. We'll still have the same amount of consultations. We're not losing anything. It's just really more of an enhancement. But we will have more robust communication around this. There's no cost to employees for the legal services plan. There's no change to the benefit or the rates. They all stayed the same. Identity theft however will have a change. We are not going to be having any new enrollments for 2025. Current enrollees

will receive an email directly from Identity Force, and in order to continue coverage you will have to indicate that you want to continue coverage, in which case, you'll be billed directly instead of having a payroll deduction.

That's the overview of the changes. As I said I have a lot to talk about today, but I think the most important thing is the Medical which I'll get to now. The first thing I want to say is I would love to come here and tell you that nothing's changing. That would make my job really easy. Unfortunately, that's not the case. And I say that because all over the country everyone is facing the same issue. Healthcare costs are rising. Staffing shortages are happening across the country. As a result, UR, RGH and Unity are all depending on visiting nurses who cost three times the amount. In addition, there's the cost of advanced technology and higher utilization. So with all these factors, there's a substantial increase in medical plan cost. In our local community, we're seeing local universities facing 16, 18 and 20% increases.

We're self insured so we pay our own claims and when we saw the extremely large increase at the beginning of this year we started proactively looking at our costs and what we can do to help mitigate them. We do have a Benefits Advisory Group (BAG) comprised of six faculty and six staff. They are not decision-making individuals. They help us figure out what we should be doing and what from a community perspective makes sense based on what we're facing. We met with them in March, April and June and explained to them what we were seeing. We conducted a request for proposals which we hadn't done for many years to look at our third party administrators. Right now we have Excellus but we went out to MVP, Aetna and Excellus, because those are local and would have the network that we would need. As a result we determined that staying with Excellus was our best option so that we would not have disruption with providers that individuals are currently seeing and because they have the best negotiated rates. We managed to get an administrative fee reduction through the negotiation. We pay all the claims for expenses, but then we pay an administrative fee to Excellus to administer the plan for us. So that reduced what we were seeing for a projected increase. But it didn't reduce it enough so we started to look at making some changes to plan designs. We've been asked to explore enhancing fertility coverage so we looked at that as well. But because of these increasing costs we just weren't able to support enhancing that coverage. We have fertility, infertility drug coverage through OptumRx. It's just the medical side that we were looking at, and the decision was that because the small population that would need the coverage would impact everyone, it just didn't seem right at this time to add that coverage.

Now I'd like to walk you through this chart which shows the design of the various medical plans.

The co-pays and deductibles are not changing for POS-A. The decision was made that if someone wants to have a plan that just has copays and no deductibles, they will just pay the premium. However, if you

choose this plan you will have to pay an increased amount. In POS-B, we are increasing the current \$250/\$500 deductible on the medical side to \$500/\$1,000 and we're increasing the coinsurance from 10% to 20%. When I start talking about deductibles and coinsurance, there's a note on the bottom here clarifying that it only applies to certain services which I want to stress because I don't want individuals to think we're changing the whole plan design. The deductible and coinsurance only applies to inpatient hospital, outpatient surgical and advanced imaging services. MRIs and X-rays are not impacted. So if you only are having those specific services, you pay upfront for your deductible. Once you hit your deductible, then you pay the coinsurance or the percentage of the cost of that service. With regard to POS-B No Drug, that one has the same medical deductible as the POS-B plan.

Newman: Since we're running short on time, maybe we should move on to the other scenarios, so that people can hear the rest of your presentation..

S. Xenias: We do have the Powerpoint, so if you are able to stay for questions, then I'm sure somebody will bring you back to this. As I mentioned before, we are closing the POS B No Drug plan to new enrollment and discontinuing it in 2026. This is because it is a non-creditable plan so that individuals who are Medicare eligible, and who are in this plan could get penalized for the rest of their life once they retire.

This slide deals with prescription drug coverage. I already talked about the semi annual changes and that there are no other changes on the prescription drug side.

The next slide talks about the increases in medical and prescription drug rates for 2025. These rates will be posted on our website on October 24th, and you'll be able to see that we still absorb about 3/4 of the increase. Your contribution will depend on these three factors: your choice of plan, your coverage level and your salary level.

S. Malachowsky: Are you saying going to go over the rate increases here?

S. Xenias: I'm going to go through a couple of scenarios to explain. I know there have been concerns regarding whether increases in the cost of the health plan will dilute merit increases. So here are the lowest cost increases versus the highest cost increases. But the actual rates won't be posted until October 24.th

S. Malachowsky: But you are aware of what the rates are, right?

S. Xenias: We're finalizing all of the rate sheets, making sure that everything we have to manually update is in place.

So if you're in salary level 2, and I'm just taking an example of \$95,000, you have a 2.75% increase or \$2,613. With the lowest plan cost for a POS D individual in this salary level, you'd be looking at a contribution increase of \$114 annually. If you are in the highest plan, POS-A family, you're looking at an increase of \$1,145. So again different plans have different costs. But you are seeing the contribution increase difference per year. Here is another example. Now I'm in salary level 3, \$125,000 with the same merit increase. Here the increase is \$3,438. The lowest plan increase would be \$145 for the POS D plan, and \$1,269 for the POS A family. What I'm trying to point out here is that increases in health care plans, are not the same as your merit increase which is based on your gross salary while the health plan increase

is based on the total premium of the health plan. The other piece is to make sure you're comparing the different plans. If you're in POS-A right now, maybe it's not the right choice based on how much you're contributing out of your paycheck. Maybe you have a better choice, and you can contribute less out of your paycheck or maybe you want to contribute more out of your paycheck, so that you're only paying co-pays. It depends all on your situation and on your family situation.

Let me turn now to Identity Theft Protection. There will be no new enrollments for 2025 and if you are currently enrolled you will get an email directly from Identity Force, so there won't be any more payroll deductions. You'll have a direct relationship with Identity Force. There will be two plan options offered, both including enhancements from the current plan, and the premiums are going to be lower.

I already talked about EAP so I won't go over that again. Please look at the slide for that. Otherwise, when you have questions, reach out to the RIT Service Center because if you're reaching out directly to us by email or phone, it gets lost amongst all of our emails and voicemails, and we can't cover all of those questions. If somebody puts in a ticket our whole benefits team has access to that so we can make sure we're efficiently answering questions.

One other thing: you should receive a postcard if you have not already, and email announcements will start next week. Our newsletter will be in your office mailbox next week. Last, make sure you go to the benefits fair on Tuesday, October 29 or Wednesday, October 30th from 9:0-3:00. We're also having seven webinars on-line, where we'll go through in more detail what I've gone through today. There'll be a Q&A box for questions. Open enrollment is October 28, through November 15th, and you can complete your enrollment through Employee Self-Service.

S. Malachowsky: In previous years the newsletter either didn't come or it came after the enrollment period was finished. Is there a different process this year for that? I specifically asked about this two years ago and I was told that they were having trouble with printing or distribution of some sort.

S. Xenias: We've already sent it over and the Hub has committed that it'll be delivered by either the 23rd or the 24th through inter-office mail.

S. Malachowsky: Does it include the rates?

S. Xenias: The rates will not be published there. They're only going to be on the website.

Puchades: It's disappointing that the rates are going up so much. I just don't think it's going to sit well with most of the faculty because the numbers we're seeing here show an almost 100% increase on the deductible and a 100% increase in the coinsurance. I ran some numbers, and it seems like the rates are going to go up by 10% based on the examples that you're showing. So 10% on the rates and that's just to buy in, to participate in this insurance, but if you actually use it, it's a 100% increase on what you're paying. And we're getting 2.75% merit increases. I'm not a numbers guy, but it's just very frustrating that we're actually losing money. We're working hard and we're poorer than we were a few years ago. My family is struggling because we make less money. We're talking about the state of the faculty here. That's something to keep in mind. I don't have a question. I just want to say I think our frustration is going to come across strongly this year in particular.

S. Aldersley: I have two questions. I didn't hear anything about the contribution that RIT is making to the

increased cost, so I'd like to know about that, but more importantly, I think, for the long term, for 2-3 years now I've been asking that the BAG be chosen by and from the governance bodies. I have no idea how you select the faculty or staff to serve on it, but it seems to me that in the general atmosphere of faculty governance in the university, that's a committee that ought to be openly representative. So once again, and this is the third year in a row, I will ask that you rethink the nature and membership of that particular body.

S. Xenias: With regard to RIT's contribution, it's about 74 or 75% of the premium cost.

A. Newman: If you look at Ivan's numbers, he's right, it's a 100% increase. And then there's a 10% overall premium increase.

S. Xenias: Out of that 10% increase, we picked up 70%. So we're picking up millions and millions of dollars. We have to be budget conscious because we don't have the budget to be able to take on the whole increase. So that's why we were trying to figure out how to lower the increase. We did as much as we could, and we're looking at maybe an aggregate of 10% while other people are looking at 15-20% increases.

B. Thomas: I'm assuming you're going to reach out to all faculty and staff because as a representative of my college, I don't think I can explain all this to them.

S. Xenias: That's why we're sending out four different emails. We're going to have the newsletter, and we've sent postcards directly to people's homes. Then we'll have the webinars I mentioned that are posted on our website and the benefits fair. We're also using our HR business partners to go out to each department.

B. Thomas: So if you have a college faculty meeting, we can invite you to come and talk there?

S. Xenias: No, I'm saying there are business partners. They regularly meet with the department heads and supervisors and encourage them to pass this information along. For example, when I went to the Council of Chairs and the Provost's Council, I encouraged them to make sure they're pushing down the information.

S. Aldersley: Stephanie, we've talked about this before. And once again I have not received an answer to my question. This isn't like talking to Trump, who just doesn't have to answer questions. This is not politics. This is governance, and I really would appreciate after three years of trying to get an answer that makes sense, if you could tell me why we can't have the governance groups involved in selecting the Benefits Advisory Group.

S. Xenias: We did talk about this at our last meeting, and I mentioned that I'd have to bring Jo Ellen and senior leadership in to discuss that. So that's not at my level. So I did discuss that previously, and said that if you want to discuss it further, it would have to be at a senior leadership level.

A Newman: I believe Jo Ellen is here. Actually, maybe if we could allow her to answer that question.

J. Pinkham: For a number of years, we have had members of Senate who participate in BAG, but what you're really asking, though, is to have an appointed representative, which we certainly are open to. I will say though that we need to balance the opportunity for input with the idea of negotiation, because this would not be a working group. It cannot be a representative and decision making body, because we can't negotiate terms and conditions of employment. So that's the one caveat. But I'm certainly open to talking about formal representation from both Faculty Senate and Staff Council on the Benefits Advisory Group.

A Newman: I know some of the members of the BAG are senators, or have been senators. But the biggest concern is their inability to share what they hear with Senate as a whole.

J. Pinkham: I understand that. It's complicated because we review quite a bit of information. And there are several iterations. That shouldn't be an impediment but it is one consideration. Stephanie skimmed the surface when she talked about the fertility benefits but there's a lot that goes into something like that. I was fortunate enough to listen in and participate in one conversation but it was one of a series of such conversations. We couldn't possibly work with a group of 45 or 50 on every single piece of that information. I want to be very transparent in the fact that there is a level of information and input that I think could be shared with both of the governance groups, faculty and staff. But it would be something that we'd have to, you know, navigate through.

S. Aldersley: Thank you, Jo Ellen. I really hope we can make some progress on this as soon as possible. As I said, the question has been out there for a long time now. I know we have senators on the group, but the Senate is not aware of any of what is discussed. It's all secret. I just think, in the interest of good governance that we need to have real representation on a group like the BAG.

A Newman: I agree. I think there is a real need to have these discussions, particularly because we've been talking about the changes in benefits and the way decisions are made regarding benefits for years. I think it's important that there be some mechanism where faculty can see it coming, even if it's bad news. And lately it just seems to be only bad news. So if there is a way to address this in a way that promotes more information sharing, I think that's going to be really, really helpful.

H. Ghoneim: So what options do we have now other than accepting this?

S. Xenias: You can change your plan choice or you could go outside and find a different plan or if you have a spouse, or someone else whose plan you could join, you could choose that as well.

H. Ghoneim: Thank you. I understand that as an individual. But what is our option as a group? How can we change this?

A Newman: At the moment, I'm not sure what our steps are. There don't seem to be a lot of options for us to make changes and reverse anything. Which is one of the reasons why we want to be involved in the decision making, whether's that in the BAG or some other group.

S. Xenias: I just want to reiterate that we did a lot of work. And I think if you look out there from a

healthcare perspective, costs are increasing. It's not just us. I don't want you to take this like we just decided to give you plan increases and new plan designs. I don't want to change plan designs. I don't want to give people increases. We tried our best to avoid that, but this is all we were able to do.

S. Malachowsky: You mentioned that RIT pays the plan itself. So that means, every time I make a claim, RIT is paying the hospital, or whatever the provider is. What is the balance at the end of the year on that? Is it zero? If it's a cost center, then it can be a profit center too, correct? Because that would be another variable here.

J. Pinkham: It is not a profit center. We pay the claims. And as Stephanie said, there's a percentage overhead fee for the 3rd party administration. There's reinsurance that the University pays, as well as additional plan costs. There is a reconciliation at the end of the year, and I can tell you that since I've been here that reconciliation has ended in a cost of the university. So there's no claw back from plan participants. So the actuarial valuation of the anticipated claims given the utilization and the plan choices that typically happens, or how rates are projected for next year. Knowing that there's going to be some vacancy savings, some in and out, we always scale that back a little bit, so that we can come as close to where we anticipate as possible. But there is no return of monies to employees or to the university. It's been an overage every year at least for the past four years. I didn't go back past that because I joined the University right after those decisions were made.

S. Malachowsky: So is that factored into the 75% that RIT is paying? Or is it separate?

J. Pinkham: So the several million dollars is. Stephanie mentioned the projected increase for next year. The practice since I've been here, and you know it varies a little bit by plan design, is for the university to pay a little bit more according to salary level. So people who earn less are paying less into the plan, but as for the overall increase, the university splits it three quarters to one quarter. I will tell you that this year it was hard. There was a series of discussions, because the projected cost differed from the placeholder in the 2025 budget. We don't get a budget hearing. We don't get a chance to come in and say 'we need these monies'. But when it started to take shape and we were projecting all of this, there was some question as to whether the University was going to shift the ratio from from three to one. Fortunately, we were successful in maintaining that level.

A Newman: Thank you Stephanie and Jo Ellen. I know you get a lot of questions from the Senate, and I hope you know we will continue to communicate further and figure out how we can work together.

[Open Enrollment Presentation](#)

Agenda Item No. 8: Policy B02.0; A. Newman (1:12)

A Newman: We're a little behind schedule but I think it will be good for us to take some time to talk about B2 and catch everyone back up to where we were at the end of last spring semester, as well as to give you an idea of what we are hoping to approve before the end of this calendar year at which point we can put out a vote to the full university faculty. As you will recall, our central goal in this effort is to reduce the number of faculty that must work on Senate standing committees. We've realized over the

years and particularly since the pandemic, that faculty are tired and exhausted, and it's too much to ask them to be working on very big committees, especially where the workload is inconsistent. So we want to streamline things and reduce how much conversation happens at cross purposes and how multiple committees work on the same issues and policies. We also want to make sure to align the language of the charter to match our practice by making things more consistent, such as including senior and principal lectures appropriately in policy language,

So last year we had a set of motions that were voted and approved by the Senate. The first one, to remove voting rights from deans and provost delegates from each of our standing committees, was passed pretty quickly. There was no vote regarding changing student voting rights. This is something the previous Senate seemed to not want to change in the belief that it is important for students to have a voice in any concerns they may have.

With regard to the Nominations Committee, when I first brought this up, a lot of people didn't know it existed. So we suggested replacing it with a nominations officer who will be elected annually in the fall, with the previous chair working ex officio with that person.

Including research in our preamble is very important and it's been a long time coming. We are now an R2 university, apparently on the brink of becoming an R1, and we think that faculty should be responsible for writing policy that relates to research and scholarly activity where this was not previously under our purview.

Motion #4 sought to amend the number of senators at-large to reduce them to one Senator per standing committee. Just as a reminder here, any standing committee has the option to request more at-large members, if needed.

There were three sets of motions regarding RABC. The first was to fold the Long Range Planning & Environment committee into the RABC. Because obviously, if you're thinking about budgets, you should be thinking about it from a long-range perspective as well. Second was to include the Faculty Senate treasurer as a member of RABC. This is to ensure a closer tie between the committee and the Executive Committee. Third, we also voted to adjust the membership of RABC to remove the term 'tenured,' again, to recognize senior and principal lecturers, who also serve on the Senate and have as much right to participate in our standing committees as anyone else.

Let me turn now to the upcoming adjustments we'd like to make. Motion #8 is in regard to our curriculum committees. We're suggesting removing the language referring to the formation and functions of the ICC subcommittees from B2 and migrating it to Policy D1. With this change, the election of subcommittee representatives will continue to be managed by ICC unless the committee is formed by appointees as the honors curriculum committee already is. Should ICC choose to change its subcommittees in the future, or how they are formed, they will be able to do so without making it a charter adjustment.

Next, we're proposing to combine the Academic Affairs Committee and the Academic Support and Student Affairs Committee, since they obviously cover similar areas. Considering how much work the ASSA has done with the DSO, I would imagine the combined committee might want to form a subcommittee dedicated to working with such offices.

Then we are suggesting folding the RSC into the FAC, with the VP for research as a non-voting member. This is aimed at consolidating the primary interests of the faculty within one group. We know research is playing a larger role in faculty work and as such obviously impacts employment policies in matters like tenure and promotion.

There is one final procedural change, that was not generated by the Executive Committee but was

suggested by several committee chairs, and that is to request each standing committee to elect their chair for the upcoming academic year at the end of the spring semester. This will mean that committees can hit the ground running when they reconvene in the fall. It will also mean that chairs can interact with the Executive Committee over the summer to discuss charges, etc.

J. Lanzafame: Currently voting faculty are defined as tenure track and senior and principal lecturers. This may be premature, but it's very likely we'll soon be getting a new set of clinical ranks that are full time employees. Will they have voting rights at some point? There will likely be three ranks corresponding to lecturer ranks. Have we given any thought to that? If we're making charter changes, we might as well make that one also.

A Newman: That's a really good question. According to B2 voting faculty are defined as 'both tenured and pre-tenured members of the University and senior and principal lecturers who serve full time in their appointments and devote at least half time to teaching research, academic administration, or other academically related duties.'

J. Lanzafame: There's also now professors of practice. I don't know how common that title is, but they don't have voting rights. That might be okay and by design, but with an increasing number of non tenure track titles, we should at least consider what status they should have.

A Newman: Again, a very good point. If you have a suggestion for how to edit the definition I think it would be worthwhile to bring it to the Senate floor in a future meeting, or perhaps you could first forward it to the ExComm.

To summarize, the point for today was primarily to bring these topics back to the forefront so that Senators can get a sense of how your constituents feel on these matters. You can see the clean document and the red-line document in the drive although the change regarding the election of the chairs hasn't been updated. If Joe's language comes through, then we will add that to the red line document.

[Policy B02.0 Presentation](#)

Agenda Item No. 9: Sense of the Senate; A. Newman (1:25)

A. Newman: Today's Sense of the Senate topic is compensation. We've just heard a presentation on benefits and I know Ivan has expressed some concerns about the number of charges that have come in regarding salary. We'd like to know what you've been hearing from your constituents, not only complaints, but also ideas for how things could be improved at RIT with regard to compensation. I know the RABC is taking up a charge about benchmarking overall, particularly the idea of how to create equity across campus, but besides that, what have you been hearing about salaries and benchmarking overall?

M. Ruhling: Thanks for bringing this up. I've had several people come to me in my college and complain about how far they've dropped and how the benchmarks have dropped. It's certainly true in my department as well as in the college as a whole. I asked the Provost at the last meeting why some faculty saw such a substantial drop, 12, 15, 20% in some cases, to the benchmark. And he didn't really answer the question about why a particular benchmark amount dropped so far. So if we could get some clarification

on that at some point I would appreciate it, and I know the College of Liberal Arts faculty would also appreciate it.

I. Puchades: I've been hearing a lot of frustration from faculty, especially with all the new buildings going up. It seems like the money is there, it's just not being allocated to where people would like it to be. Whenever Jim Watters comes and gives us a presentation on the state of the budget, it's always difficult to really see where the money is going to or coming from. It seems like he's got a pretty good handle on it. But we don't see it. We see the day to day, and we see the 2% merit increase every year, at the same time as the students are getting a 5% tuition increase. And inflation is going up by 5 to 6% annually right? That's what we see. One thing my Dean said this year that I liked was that RIT is going to stop growing and start to look inside a little bit more, try to fix what we already have. So if there's a change in attitude of that kind, I welcome that.

A. Newman: You're right. There has been a lot of energy invested in putting up buildings, and not so much investing in human resources.

S. Aldersley: When Al Simone first came in the early nineties, he was horrified at the level of faculty salary and he set up a Compensation Advisory Committee, which was chaired by SCB Dean Walt McCanna. It was mostly made up of faculty from the Faculty Council, as the Faculty Senate then was, and we had staff support from F&A who gave us all the data we asked for. The result was significant increases in compensation across the board. The CAC really did make a positive difference to faculty salaries at that point in time and Al deserves a lot of credit for making that possible. One function of the committee was to set up a compensation benchmark that RIT faculty could compare themselves to, and the essence of that benchmark was that it was aspirational. I think it's clear that the current benchmark is anything but. It was a small group, and it included a lot of institutions like MIT, maybe we even had Caltech on there, plus a good number of R1 universities in NY. It was in that context that we arrived at the idea of shooting for the 50th percentile. Until a few years ago there was very little tinkering with membership of the group. But now we're shooting for the 50th percentile of a group of institutions that nobody's ever heard of. It's gone in the absolute opposite direction. I imagine that Al Simone would be horrified by what's happened over the last few years. We really do need to reverse the trend dramatically and as soon as possible.

J. Capps: One of the things that stood out for me in Provost David's presentation a few weeks ago was that he said the working group is going to come up with a list of a hundred benchmark institutions. I'm not sure why the list has to be that large. It seems like this goes back to what Stephen was saying. If you look at a hundred it's going to have a dampening effect on who we're comparing ourselves with, especially if we are the 91st best university in America. So I hope that when that group gets formed, they won't limit themselves to coming up with a 100 for benchmarking purposes, but a smaller subset instead.

R. Olson: I asked this question when the provost was here before. I'd very much like some insight into whether or not the benchmarks include summer salary or other forms of add pay. The general advice for a lot of folks, at least in Golisano, is that you really should spend some time trying to figure out what your summer pay is going to look like. Otherwise, I think some really positive nuance could be added to this discussion if it was presented at the college level as well as the university level. This is entirely anecdotal,

but I don't know a single person in Golisano who's above the college benchmarks, and when we're hiring for new folks we're hiring below the benchmarks.

A. Newman: I completely agree. And of course, the issue nowadays with hiring, and I think Dr. David has mentioned this as well, is that if we hire according to what current market expectations are, then we risk creating significant compression for the faculty who are already here. That's one of the reasons why the RABC put out the compensation survey at the end of last year.

I think it's remarkable just how much we as a faculty tend to accept whatever we're told. A lot of faculty either don't know enough or feel like they don't know enough about benchmarking or about how their salaries are determined overall, or even where they are relative to the 50th percentile of the benchmark for their program and rank. So in addition to asking our administrators to really take a long, hard look at how RIT's salary structure is built, our goal in Senate at this point should be to start these conversations with our constituents and see if we can answer questions, particularly about how benchmarks are determined, for example, what the 50th percentile means and whether it's a median or an average. As we know, HR considers that if a faculty member's compa-ratio is within at least 85% of the benchmark, it's acceptable. That's 85% of 50% of a benchmark that includes scores of institutions that are far below RIT in terms of ranking. I know that discussing salaries is a difficult thing, but it is important from a Senate perspective to know that when we present concerns and suggestions to Dr. David and the upper administration, we are reporting what we have heard from you and your constituents.

S. Aldersley: I would like to second what you just said, Atia. I think it's really important that faculty start to spend some time thinking about these questions. The administration has no interest at all in faculty even thinking about this sort of thing. It is complicated, but it isn't that complicated, and the more that individual faculty apprise themselves of how the system works, the more influence I think Senate can have. So I think it behooves us to keep talking about this so that it doesn't get brushed under the rug.

A. Newman: I agree. This is very much like One Payroll. The idea of having money taken out of our pockets is unpalatable at the very least. We need to be very proactive and make sure we resist efforts to take money from our pockets, be it through benefits increases, be it through not keeping up with inflation, whatever it is. I think it's very, very important for this conversation to continue. If you need to, or if you're interested, please feel free to reach out to the ExComm on this. We have a collection of spreadsheets on benchmarks. We collected the previous ten years of numbers and they make a very interesting read, how they have or haven't changed in the past decade, especially in light of inflation. This is not something that should be relegated to the occasional Senate meeting and the occasional administrative meeting or individual meetings with your deans, where you're asking for a pay raise. This needs to be something that is collectively discussed and collectively pushed for.

Agenda Item No. 10: New Business; A. Newman (N/A)

There was none.

Agenda Item No. 11: Adjournment; A. Newman (1:40)

Attendance 10/17/2024

Name	Relationship to Senate	Attended	Name	Relationship to Senate	Attended
Adrion, Amy	ALT CAD Senator		Lanzafame, Joseph	COS Senator	X
Aldersley, Stephen	Communications Officer/ SOIS Senator	X	Lapizco-Encinas, Blanca	KGCOE Senator	X
Anselm, Martin	CET Senator	X	Laver, Michael	CLA Senator	X
Barone, Keri	Treasurer/CLA Senator	X	Lee, James	ALT CET Senator	
Beck, Makini	ALT SOIS Senator		Malachowsky, Samuel	Vice Chair/ GCCIS Senator	X
Boedo, Stephen	ALT KGCOE Senator	X	McCalley, Carmody	ALT COS Senator	
Brady, Kathleen	ALT NTID Senator		McLaren, Amy	CAD Senator	X
Brown, Tamaira	Senate Coordinator	X	Newman, Atia	Chair/CAD Senator	X
Capps, John	CLA Senator	X	Newman, Christian	GCCIS Senator	
Chiavaroli, Julius	ALT GIS Senator		Olles, Deana	COS Senator	X
Chung, Sorim	SCB Senator	X	Olson, Rob	ALT GCCIS Senator	X
Cody, Jeremy	COS Senator	X	O'Neil, Jennifer	ALT CET Senator	
Coppenbarger, Matthew	COS Senator	X	Osgood, Robert	ALT CHST Senator	
Crawford, Denton	CAD Senator		Padmanabhan, Poornima	KGCOE Senator	
Cromer, Michael	ALT COS Senator	X	Puchades, Ivan	KGCOE Senator	X
Cui, Feng	ALT COS Senator		Ray, Amit	CLA Senator	X
David, Prabu	Provost	Excused	Reinicke, Bryan	ALT SCB Senator	
Davis, Stacey	NTID Senator	X	Ross, Annemarie	NTID Senator	X
Deese, Franklin	CAD Senator	X	Ruhling, Michael	CLA Senator	X
Dell, Betsy	CET Senator	X	Sanders, Cynthia	ALT NTID Senator	
DiRisio, Keli	CAD Senator	X	Shaaban, Muhammad	ALT KGCOE Senator	

Eddingsaas, Nathan	COS Senator	X	Song, Qian	SCB Senator	X
Fillip, Carol	ALT CAD Senator		Staff Council Rep	Georgeanne Hogan & Ross Hisert	X
Ghazle, Hamad	Operations Officer/CHST Senator		Student Government Rep	Joshua Anderson	X
Ghoneim, Hany	ALT KGCOE Senator	X	Sweeney, Kevin	ALT SCB Senator	X
Hardin, Jessica	ALT CLA Senator	X	Thomas, Bolaji	CHST Senator	X
Hartpence, Bruce	ALT GCCIS Senator		Tobin, Karen	NTID Senator	X
Hazelwood, David	NTID Senator	X	Tsouri, Gill	KGCOE Senator	X
Jadamba, Basca	COS Senator	X	Van Aardt, Jan	ALT COS Senator	
Johnson, Dan	CET Senator	X	Warp, Melissa	ALT CAD Senator	
Johnson, Scott	GCCIS Senator		White, Phil	ALT GCCIS Senator	X
Kavin, Denise	ALT NTID Senator		Williams, Eric	GIS Senator	X
Kray, Christine	CLA Senator	X	Worrell, Tracy	ALT CLA Senator	X
Krutz, Daniel	ALT GCCIS Senator		Zanibbi, Richard	GCCIS Senator	Excused
Kuhl, Michael	KGCOE Senator	X	Zlochower, Yosef	COS Senator	

Interpreters: Jennaca Saeva and Holly Jentsch

Student Assistant: Nilay Vaidya

Presenters: Stephanie Xenias