



Salary and Benefits Sub-Committee Meeting

October 20th, 2021 from 2:30-3:30pm

Zoom: <https://gvsu-edu.zoom.us/j/99276795949?pwd=dGhrMmFESXdwa2NJTXgrcmNQdEFRdz09>

2020/2021 Committee Members: Mitch Eastlick (Vice-chair, Group 1 - 2024), Meagan Treadway (Group 2 – 2023), Chelsea Ridge (Group 3 - 2024), Jacklyn Rander (Group 4 - 2022), Katie Branch (Chair, Group 5 - 2022), Sarah Tibbe (Secretary, Group 6 – 2023), Tara Bivens (HR Benefits Liaison), John Offerman (AP CMTE Representative/Liaison), Nick Ekstrom (Incoming HR Benefits Liaison)

Guest: Becky Berrevoets (Human Resources)

Agenda

Brief Introductions

Review of Minutes

Minutes approved 10.20.2021

Updates

- AP Committee update from John Offerman
AP Executive Committee seeking alternative and strategic means for AP employees to know which AP group they belong to. They also reviewed the survey results.
- Committee members updates/comments/questions
Nick Ekstrom Update: Open Enrollment is currently underway and continues through November 3rd. All medical plans are the same, except there is a slight decrease to the PPO employee premium. Priority Health will be issuing a new insurance ID cards by the end of the year. HAS maximum contribution, single: \$3650 and Family: \$7,300. Priority Health and Health Equity are integrating accounts which will simplify personal record keeping and bill payment options for employees starting in January. No changes in Dental coverage options. There is a decrease in the family dental premium. Flexible spending increased to \$2,750. Currently, the number of GVSU employees that have completed the open enrollment process is slightly ahead of scheduled compared to this time last year. Employees can continue to make changes to their enrollment throughout the open enrollment period.

Katie Branch Update: The dedication for the DeVos Center for Interprofessional Health is November 3rd from 6-9pm.

Tara Bivens: Out of all the public higher education institutions in Michigan, GVSU was the only institution where the benefit rates went down (less insurance claims). There is a group in HR working on Parental Leave recommendation. The group's work is almost complete.



Unfinished Business

- Discussion on plans, goals, and charges for the upcoming year:
 - Review survey results to discern potential charges. (AP Survey F21 from Marla on 8/30/21)
 - Rectify [inconsistencies with FWA](#), access to benefits, etc. particularly between campuses (ALL vs. GR)
 - Paternal leave benefits update, invite Women's Commission.
 - Review documentation related to AP policies (compare with PSS). Establish AP policies if not currently existing. Make it more accessible on the web.
 - How to share resources with AP staff, e.g. website handbook.

Letters/Emails to the AP committee:

#1: The compensation structure and process for obtaining salary adjustments for AP staff at GVSU is flawed and inequitable. Below we've outlined the systemic issues we've uncovered through our experiences navigating the current process. As our representatives on the AP committee, we ask that you investigate the issues that affects us and many other AP staff members at the institution.

Main Concerns:

1. *Market range salary adjustments are not being addressed and the current system places onerous responsibility on the individual employee to continually follow-up regarding concerns.*
2. *Lack of transparency in how salary ranges are applied to individual employees in regards to title, years of experience and job responsibilities.*
3. *Salaries of experienced employees do not meet minimum requirements of a living wage in Ottawa and Kent county.*
4. *Systemic salary inequities in higher education for roles traditionally filled by women.*
5. *Subjective merit increase system*

Salary adjustments

- *Employees are flagged for a market adjustment but no action is taken to make that adjustment. HR shares the information with the appointing officer and the appointing officer then decides who will receive a market adjustment. In practice, our experience is that additional funding is not allotted by the institution to make market-range adjustments. This effectively means that employees can be flagged year after year with no adjustment being made and no avenue for the employee to address the issue.*
- *There is no formal process for an employee to appeal to have their concerns heard. When the appointing officer does not adjust salary, even if the employee was flagged by HR, the employee is left to speak with their appointing officer and told no change can be made OR to elevate to their executive officer. This is a subjective process that allows ample room for inequity.*

Lack of Transparency



- *It is unclear how years of experience are calculated to determine salary. It is unclear if years of experience brought from previous institutions or professional roles are considered.*
- *Employees with the same title have widely differing salary ranges and it is unclear where the numbers are coming from. There are several AP staff with the title “coordinator” across campus and the salary ranges vary widely. For example:*
 - *Across campus there is a disparity of \$52,720 from lowest minimum to highest maximum in coordinator salary ranges:*
 - *Salary ranges by title (EAP Market Ranges): <https://www.gvsu.edu/hro/compensation-1079.htm>)*

Living-Wage Deficits

- *Many experienced staff at GVSU are still making an entry-level salary that is not a living wage for Kent and Ottawa counties. This can be referenced on the living-wage calculator produced by MIT <https://livingwage.mit.edu/counties/26139>*
- *It is inappropriate for employees with several years of experience and graduate-level education to be making a salary that is not sufficient to cover basic costs of life.*

Salary Inequities

- *The results of the pay equity study that GVSU shared were concerning, particularly that it was stated, “... we are pleased the findings show GVSU is using the proper criteria to determine salary, and we are moving quickly to adjust the small percentage of faculty and AP staff identified as outliers in the study.” How can an organization properly conduct a pay equity study for AP staff when historically and traditionally these are roles held by women who are historically underpaid? It is not surprising that staff salaries appear to be equitable because we are dealing with a nationwide systemic issue of university staff being underpaid. Salaries that were adjusted as a result of this study were changed due to finding that a white, male counterpart was making a higher salary. What if there is a lack of white, male counterparts to compare salaries with?*

Subjective Merit Increase System

- *Interpretation of annual review is subjective. The outcome of an individual’s review goes through several phases of evaluation by supervisors before reaching the Appointing Officer who then makes another personally informed decision affecting merit increase.*

Recommendations

GVSU is currently undergoing significant changes and has an opportunity to be a leader in the field by championing this cause for well-deserving employees. Below are recommendations for the AP committee to consider:

- *Dedicated budget for salary increases to address market adjustments, separate from the merit increases.*



- *Advancement process for employees that acknowledges years of service and prior relevant experience.*
- *Educating supervisors & employees on salary adjustment process*
- *Increased transparency on compensation process and considered factors (ie. years of experience, level of responsibility, etc)*
- *Direct Supervisor making merit recommendations, not Appointing officer*
- *Checks and balances on compensation*

#2: I am just asking the AP Committee to consider working with HR to come up with some information, directions toward resources, and assistance for departments to work with their employees dealing with childcare issues. There is precedent set from prior AP Committees to make recommendations to administration and HR to put some work into setting up resources and benefits. When I was on AP Committee back in late 90's early 2000's, the committee put together some recommendations for adoption benefits and resources that the university could provide. (<https://www.qvsu.edu/hro/benefitswellness/birth-adoption-or-placement-for-adoption-122.htm>)

New Business

- HR Updates & Review of Internal Pay Equity Study conducted by Segal – Mychal Coleman
Becky Berrevoets from HR filled in for Mychal Coleman who was unable to attend the meeting. Becky reported: She has limited access to the results of the Pay Equity Study conducted by Segal but did share that GVSU employee's salaries are market based and that each employee's compensation package includes a very rich benefits package. eBenefits shows the full benefits packages in dollars. HR uses several tools to determine salaries including; salary.com, position comparisons by job title, comparisons of positions within other organizations with positions that match 70% of job duties, mid and max salary ranges in higher education, in Grand Rapids, and down to the zip code.

GVSU is currently working on a 4-year project to review and revise all AP job descriptions and create a repository of job descriptions online. Becky is aware of current challenges. During this process if HR finds there are discrepancies between job descriptions and pay, HR may recommend specific changes to salaries, but pay increases are dependent on funds available within each department. The next equity study will take place in four years which informs the project deadline.

HR is currently going through a restructuring. One of the goals of the restructure is to create career paths where needed within the University for AP employees. Another goal is to evaluate titles given to specific AP positions. One of the challenges HR faces with titles evolves around grant funded positions where the titles are dictated by the grant.



Becky reminded the committee that it is okay to hire individuals who may have relevant work experience and not necessarily a degree.

When asked about how this committee may help HR in regards to AP compensation, benefits and advancement, Tara mentioned spreading awareness and education as benefits for GVSU employees are all the same, however, how each department handles the benefits may slightly differ. The example shared was with how departments are handling flexible work arrangements.

Tara Bivens highlighted as GVSU ensures all salary benefits are in order, they will expand to financial benefits such as college savings and childcare.

Nick Ekstrom reminded the committee that employees can put up to \$5000 into a FSA tax free to pay for child care. He is also having a preliminary meeting with a childcare placement agency to see if that would be a benefit to the GVSU community.

- **Narrow scope of 21-22 Committee Goals**
Discussion was had around narrowing the scope of this committee's work for this year. Based on the survey results and information shared by Becky Berrevoets it was determined that the work currently being conducted out of HR addresses most of the concerns from the first email (See email #1 above) received by AP staff members regarding compensation and advancement. The committee agreed efforts may be best spent researching and drafting a recommendation to senior leadership regarding childcare options (email #2 above) on campus. Tara Bivens agreed to survey the other public universities in Michigan regarding the childcare benefits they offer. That information will be shared at the next S&B Committee Meeting in November. From there the committee may break into focus groups to work on developing various aspects of the Committee's recommendation for childcare options on campus.
- Create list of potential invited speakers for future meetings: **Not discussed**
- Is there anything we would like to include in the next AP Newsletter? **Nothing noted**

Upcoming Dates

Next Meeting S&B Committee Meetings:

11.17.21 from 2:30-3:30pm

12.15.21 from 2:30-3:30pm

1.19.22 from 2:30-3:30pm

2.16.22 from 2:30-3:30pm

3.16.22 from 2:30-3:30pm



4.20.22 from 2:30-3:30pm

5.18.22 from 2:30-3:30pm

6.15.22 from 2:30-3:30pm