

May 9, 2001

Meeting of OAA Council and about 15 interested OAA members to discuss results of recent [survey](#).

Meeting Chaired by Laura Blake Jones

1. **Introduction** of all attendees. **Council members in attendance:** Laura Blake Jones, Rachele Raia, Magid Shirzadegan, Fred Tepfer, Donna Winitzky
2. **Question from floor:** Shall we continue to encourage and post replies to the survey on the web? Answer: Yes. Just make a distinction between those that arrived before the meeting from those that arrive after.
3. **Discussion ensued** for the remainder of the meeting:
 - . **Q:** Can the Council really do anything about some of the hotter topics that were raised in the survey? If yes, let's continue to discuss, but if no, then why talk about those topics; move to some other ones. **A:** Through the years this group (Council) has had nothing to do with setting policy about some of these issues, but we did give input about some of them. We also give a lot of input to various other groups on campus: we have OA representation on the [University Senate](#), the [FAC](#), as examples. In part, we can have some influence, but no final say with issues such as pay. We've been trying more formally to link the OAA Council with the senate and FAC -- we want OAAC members in these bodies, as well. Been lucky recently that this has been the case.
 - a. **Comment:** As I read the survey, I saw that some people don't think we have lots of respect on campus -- I don't know what we can do about that, but perhaps there are things we can do to improve the way we feel about ourselves.
 - b. **Comment:** The Council has been successful in doing a number of things recently, but we haven't been telling the membership about them, I think. We should do a better job of explaining what we have been doing. **Q:** So, what exactly have you been doing? **A:** A lot of "behind the scenes" stuff. Clearing up questions about processes. Example: we heard lots of confusion about the way vacation accruals are reported, so we talked with Human Resources and now people get notification before they max out their vacation hours. Also: we helped get the recent [survey to all non-instructional faculty](#). When we heard that a survey was going out to [instructional faculty](#) we insisted that the OAs and ORs and Librarians also get surveyed. Now, we're not totally satisfied with the survey done for non-instructional faculty -- not much has come from it. I think we didn't get the best results from the written version, and lots of folks had problems with the phone version (they had no privacy, they weren't anonymous, etc.). So the survey

itself was flawed. We've also held meetings on topics of interest to some OAs.

- c. **Comment:** I'm a member of other professional organizations; they aren't unions, but they provide training and other professional development opportunities. OAA should be a professional organization, not a union. We are professionals, and if we behave as professionals the hope is that we will be treated as professionals. Since not everybody thinks of OAs as professionals, we have to have our organization do things that professional organizations do for their members: bring in outside speakers, as an example, or we could share our expertise among ourselves with training sessions.
- d. **Comment:** We could add more things about the professional accomplishments of OAs in [News and Views](#) under the section of "Our People".
- e. **Comment:** We've struggled with the professional development issue due to the variety of OAs on campus. Have talked about having subsets of OAA to deal with various interests.
- f. **Comment:** We can have OAA advocate for us as well as be our professional organization.
- g. **Comment:** I'm not dissatisfied with what OAAC is doing in terms of advocacy, appointments to university committees, etc.
- h. **Comment:** Registrar's Office would like some other dept on campus or maybe OAA to co-sponsor an informational meeting about [FERPA](#)
- i. **Comment:** Some of the stumbling blocks the Council has had: we recognize training opportunities as being really great projects, but the Council members also hold down (at least) full time jobs and are just too busy to make these happen. So we tried to cut back on the number of meetings, and to relay information electronically ([via our website](#) or via our [listservs](#)).
- j. **Comment:** Through the years the same people come to the brown bags, the meetings, and probably are the same ones who respond to surveys. Fewer than 50 people do most of the participation out of a group of over 700 OAs on campus. What does that mean to us?
- k. **Comment:** I'm new: who **are** the OAs on campus?
- l. **Comment:** Doing surveys via email is not so good: some OAs may not have ready access to computers and email or may simply prefer paper and pencil.
- m. **Comment:** Maybe we should look at the different groups of OAs on campus and find out what they want. (Discussion ensued about faculty vs. not-faculty)
- n. **Comment:** We seem to have a caste system on campus: classified, faculty, OAs, managers, tenured, etc.... We're all working together on campus, getting the goals of the organization accomplished.
- o. **Comment:** That's kind of polly-anna-ish, because that's just how it is in the real world.

- p. **Comment:** Maybe we could get separate groups to deal with their various needs.
- q. **Comment:** But the OAA is supposed to represent all OAs, so we want not to fragment the group, either.
- r. **Comment:** Maybe the small groups are good so that action can be taken by people who are passionate about those particular issues.
- s. **Comment:** When I came to this meeting I brought three issues:
 - o Comp Time
 - o Pay issues (COLAs or at least have some steps)
 - o Benefits
- t. **Comment:** I found that other people on campus who are doing exactly what I am doing and are classified employees are making 50% more than I am. So I became interested in OAA to see if there's anything this group can do.
- u. **Comment:** We should have mandatory evaluations, just as the classified staff do. Not just an email reminder that we're supposed to get one: it's a good thing to have in our folders.
- v. **Comment:** I have to write my own evaluation.
- w. **Comment:** Can we ask for a spreadsheet that says what people do and what they're paid?
- x. **Comment:** Salaries of faculty and staff are public information. There are paper copies of these on reserve at the Knight Library. See: [this web page for their call numbers](#).
- y. **Comment:** I'd like to see the [oanews listserv](#) used more frequently to tell people what's going on.
- z. **Comment:** Tell your [FAC reps](#) and your [senators](#) what's on your mind, too. Find out what is on their meeting agendas, and tell them your opinions about the topics. It's been very helpful to me to be able to say in a meeting "I've heard from several people about this topic, and they feel that".
- aa. **Comment:** There are times when the Council has been really busy, and times when it has not. Examples: when the various groups on campus were being combined into the current OA group, the Council was extremely busy and was always sending us information about transitions. Other times, there is not as much need for Council presence. I also feel that there are lots of training and development opportunities already available on campus. I don't feel that there's a real need to change anything.
- bb. **Comment:** Regarding salaries: the College of Education has a range hierarchy for OA salaries, so that two people doing roughly the same thing make the same money.
- cc. **Comment:** Faculty throughout campus have widely varying salary ranges. Music faculty make very different salaries than to those in Biology, for example.
- dd. **Comment:** The Council has talked about getting a meeting on PEBB soon.

- ee. **Comment:** There are lots of ranked OAs on campus, and as they leave, they are being replaced with not-ranked OAs. There's a push on campus to de-rank OAs.
- ff. **Comment:** How about more members on the Council? There'd be more people with energy to do more things.
- gg. **Comment:** It's hard to get people nominated now, though. We're all so busy.
- hh. **Comment:** As I read the survey results, I see two categories:
 - o Practical matters such as parking, benefits, pay
 - o Community issues such as ranking, communication

I read about lots of concerns and frustrations. Maybe the Council is not the place to resolve these issues, but can the Council relay this information to the right places?

- ii. **Comment:** I ask Council not to be frustrated because the Council has no power, really, to do anything.
 - jj. **Comment:** Here's the question: who will watch out for the OAs on campus? My college includes OAs in salary increases when the teaching faculty get them, but many departments don't do that. So who's watching out for the OAs?
 - kk. **Comment:** If you have a one year contract, the person who looks out for you is you.
 - ll. **Comment:** I interviewed in an academic department recently and I learned that OAs don't always get raises when others get them, so I won't go to any other department.
 - mm. **Comment:** Be careful when you ask for step increases: steps also mean caps.
 - nn. **Comment:** Brown Bags: maybe we need to get some more of these going. Sometimes to have a formal presentation, sometimes just to network, sometimes maybe with invited guests so we can just ask questions of the right people. Loraine and Dan, as examples, if we want to know how salaries work.
4. **Council debriefed** for a short time after the meeting adjourned. We talked about these issues:
- . Paper vs. Electronic communications: Maybe we should ask people to let us know if they prefer to receive communications via paper, and for those who do, send them paper. We think there will be just a few who prefer that mechanism, and it's far better to do that than send everybody paper and electrons.
 - a. Brown Bags: what if we just regularly scheduled a room in the EMU for brown bags, and if we have a topic and/or presenter, that's good, and if we invite appropriate people to answer questions about specific topics, that's good, or if we just have an empty room that OAs can chat in, that's good. We should send a year-end report

- to the president and each of the VPs (with a courtesy copy to Human Resources) about OAA/C accomplishments and activities.
- b. We should keep minutes of Council meetings on the public OAA web page.
 - c. We should have a meeting about the reorganization of the university.
 - d. We should have a meeting about the next salary increase.
 - e. We should make a web page that shows all the different kinds of OAs on campus. Yes, and we should maybe have a specific person of each type, a volunteer, who could write a little bit about what they do, etc.

The Council agreed to change its next regularly scheduled meeting from June 13 to [June 6](#) (because of the crush of year-end/Commencement activities). Donna will reserve a room, and the time and place will be sent to Council members. Agenda for the June 6 meeting will include further discussion and action on the issues raised during the debriefing from today's meeting.