UNIVERSITY BENEFITS COMMITTEE

November 21, 2013

Members Present: Therese Arado, Terry Borg, Cliff Bottigliero, Deborah Haliczer, Brian May, Sue Mini, Pamela Rosenberg, Gina Shannon, George Slotsve, Sherilynn Spear

Guests: Steve Cunningham

The meeting was called to order at 12:17 pm. The agenda was approved (Bottigliero motion, Mini second) without changes, and the minutes from the October 24, 2013 meeting were approved (Bottigliero motion, Spear second) without changes.

Steve Cunningham discussed the Pension Forum that was previously held at NIU. He stressed the importance of constituent influence on the State representatives as they will, most likely, meet on December 3 for a vote on the State Pension situation. Mr. Cunningham also outlined a few of the current ‘packages’ that are being considered by the State representatives. A discussion was held concerning the ethical procedures for informing the other NIU employees that the UBC represents. Guidelines will be sent out from Steve Cunningham to help the committee members communicate with other NIU employees as well as how to communicate with the State representatives concerning the Pension Reform issues.

Old Business:

- The Pension Forum was held on November 20 and was well attended. The Forum was recorded but it was decided that it could not be put on the NIU web site considering the intensity and perceived disrespect shown for the public officials. Senator Dave Syverson - R, Rep. Bob Pritchard - R, Rep. Tom Demmer - R, Rep. Mike Fortner - R, Steve Cunningham VP of Administration and Jim Lockard - NIUAA President were on the panel for the discussions.

- The revised “Unintended Consequences” letter was passed around for the committee members to sign the letter. Two edits were suggested and it will be sent next week to President Baker, Steve Cunningham, Kathy Buettner and Jim Lockard, showing the concern from the UBC.

- The Annuitants Assoc. Retiree Health insurance meetings were very well attended. Many people were in attendance for information and advice at both Naperville campus and the DeKalb campus, causing parking problems at both campuses. All of the attendees were very glad for the event and the help from NIU but still many questions were left unanswered. Discussion concerning the people that were not informed of this event or the people that are still confused about the process who may be un-insured.

- In January all of the employees at NIU, that have medical insurance, will be asked to complete the Dependent Care Audit paperwork. There will need to be a document from the IRS that the subscriber will need to attach to the paperwork and return.
The Parking letter will be sent out after the holidays, at the beginning of the new year.

The SPS “Odd Contracts” are being reviewed individually to see if the position is old and has just not been upgraded/reviewed or if the position is unique and needs to remain.

Low morale is still an issue on campus. There is an increase in faculty leaving in mid-career as well as staff leaving due to low pay levels, faculty retention and staff retention is an issue. President Baker is copied on UBC minutes and he does contact Deborah Haliczer with questions and asking for suggestions. Discussion was held concerning possible suggestions: i.e. staff joining unions, higher wages, merit increment, etc. Also discussed was the “reclassification” of Civic Service positions and the SPS employee positions becoming Civil Service positions.

New Business:
• No new information concerning the Dual Career issue.
• The Affordable Care Act will affect NIU employees who are GAP employees i.e. Extra-Help, Graduate Assistants and Student Employees. D. Haliczer shared copies of the Power Point presentation that Steve Cunningham had recently presented. Review this material and it will be discussed at the next UBC meeting.

The next meeting of the University Benefit Committee will be January 30, 2014 at noon. The meeting place will be decided at a later date.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Gina Shannon, Co-Secretary