Report on Domestic Partner Benefits at Armstrong Atlantic State University

Faculty Welfare Committee

Spring 2014
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Introduction

During the beginning of Fall 2013, the Faculty Senate delivered the following charge to the Faculty Welfare committee: “Develop a bill/resolution for plus one benefits—see UGA or GA Tech models.” At the time, the committee elected a Chair and has met a total of five times during Fall 2013, and three times during Spring 2014. Although other charges have been dealt with over the course of this year, the committee has dedicated good part of its efforts towards the domestic partners benefits charge (or also referred to as “plus one benefits”).

The committee considers that making health benefits available to domestic partners is directly related to the issue of salary/compensation that is of great concern currently to the Armstrong faculty and staff. At present, in USG universities and colleges, health insurance coverage is not offered to domestic partners because such coverage is partially funded with State dollars and the State of Georgia does not recognize domestic partners as dependents. Given the current laws, the Committee sought an alternative source of funding to make health coverage benefits available to domestic partners of full-time faculty and staff at Armstrong. One alternative is to work with the Office of Advancement to either use Armstrong Foundation funds to cover such benefits or to create a fund for this purpose.

Historically, compensation has been a charge delivered to the Faculty Welfare committee, and because during Fall 2013 a salary study was underway, we decided to focus on this particular charge as a part of compensation. In addition to faculty compensation issues, this charge is in line with the value and respect of diversity that is part of Armstrong’s mission. As supported by many members of the Armstrong community and by the literature reviewed, this charge is also directly related to recruitment and retention of both faculty and staff. While working on this charge and in our collaboration with Rebecca Carroll, Director of Human Resources, we learned that voluntary benefits would become extendable to domestic partners in all USG institutions as of January 1, 2014. The committee took this as a positive sign and as an indicator of things moving in the right direction for health benefits to become available now partners. We believe that this climate of change and collaboration can generate a positive change at Armstrong.

Since Fall 2013, along with other charges, the Faculty Welfare committee has:
• Researched the issue of benefits to domestic partners within the University System of Georgia (USG) and other universities in the United States; this has entailed consulting plans of other universities to extend benefits to domestic partners, and reviewing the pertinent peer-reviewed literature on this topic,
• Met with representative members of the Armstrong community about the importance of this issue and brainstormed about ideas on how to extend benefits to domestic partners at Armstrong,
• Presented one bill to the Faculty Senate (FSB2013102103),
• Addressed the points raised by President Bleicken about the bill,
• As part of addressing these points, the committee has created and administered a survey to address some of the points raised about this bill during Fall 2013.

Although the issue of domestic partner benefits had been dealt with by this committee in the past, this is the first time that a bill on this issue was presented to the Faculty Senate at Armstrong. To compile and show the work that the Faculty Welfare has dedicated to this charge, we have prepared this report.

This charge has involved the collaboration of the Office of Human Resources, Office of Advancement, Office of the Provost, Office of Institutional Research and also the support of Armstrong’s Gay Straight Alliance and Student Government Association. We also received guidance and support by Dr. Amy Heaston, Chief of Staff at Armstrong. We thank each of one of the individuals who have supported, collaborated, and provided advice in this process.

The Members of the Faculty Welfare (2013-2014) are:

Blackwell, Jane (Faculty Senate Liaison), Associate Professor, Graduate Faculty, Department of Nursing
Elcoro, Mirari (Chair), Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology
Grundstad-Hall, Emily, Assistant Professor of Music, Department of Art, Music & Theater
Hopkinson, Caroline (Secretary), Head of Archives & Special Collections, Lane Library
Logan, Brenda E., Associate Professor, Department of Adolescent & Adult Education
Roldan, Gracia, Assistant Professor of Spanish, Department of Languages, Literature, & Philosophy
Tuck, Linda, Assistant Professor, Department of Nursing
Wallace, Richard, Professor of Chemistry, Department of Chemistry & Physics
Domestic Partners Benefits Bill as presented to the Faculty Senate and as included in their Agenda for
the meeting of October 21, 2013 - link to the corresponding Agenda:
http://www.armstrong.edu/images/faculty_senate/documents_2013-
2014/FacultySenateAgendaforOctober212013.pdf

Domestic Partners Benefits Bill

Whereas Armstrong Atlantic State University embraces the values of inclusion and diversity: "we value
and respect an environment of mutual trust and collegiality that builds an inclusive as well as a diverse
community"¹, and

Whereas the administration of Armstrong recently highlighted the importance of the value of diversity
during the Convocation of Fall 2013, and

Whereas the University System of Georgia Faculty Council resolved on February 25th, 2012 that, "In the
interest of equity and in order to attract and retain all of the best qualified faculty and staff, the USGFC
recommends that university system benefits be extended to domestic partners,"² and

Whereas as of January 1, 2014 all colleges and universities of the University System of Georgia will
extend voluntary benefits such as vision, dental, and optional additional life insurance to domestic
partners of employees who are benefits eligible³ and recently (February 15, 2013) the University of
Georgia Council approved the Proposal for Implementation of Full Domestic Partner Benefits ⁴, ⁵, and

Whereas full medical benefits are still not extended to domestic partners of employees of colleges and
universities of the University System of Georgia because current State of Georgia law and policy prevent
the use of state funds for persons not recognized as dependents,

The Faculty Senate requests that Armstrong Atlantic State University petitions to the University System
of Georgia to allow institutional policy to include that corresponding employee portions be paid with
foundation funds.

¹Armstrong Atlantic State University Catalog 2013-2014. Retrieved from:
http://www.armstrong.edu/images/academic_affairs/current_undergraduate_catalog.pdf

²University System of Georgia Faculty Council Meeting, February 25, 2012. Retrieved from:

³University of Georgia, Proposal for Implementation of Full Domestic Partner Benefits August 2012, Retrieved
from: https://apps.reg.uga.edu/UniversityCouncil/publicCommitteeMeeting/showAgenda/105

⁴UGA Council Approves domestic partner benefits for employees, The Red and Black. Retrieved from:
http://m.redandblack.com/news/uga-council-approves-domestic-partner-benefits-for-
employees/article_726d9efa-08e5-11e2-b0b5-001a4bfcf6878.html?mode=jqm

⁵UGA committee approves domestic partner benefits. The GA Voice. Retrieved from:
vote-set-for-sept-27
Background on Bill and Chronological list of the steps taken to address the points raised by President Bleicken about Bill  FSB2013102103

Presentation/Introduction/Background/Rationale for Domestic Partners Benefits Bill to the Faculty Senate Meeting, October 21, 2013

The rationale is spelled out in the bill but it can be summarized in two points: (1) currently domestic partners are not considered as dependents following GA State law, as thus cannot receive full health benefits at Armstrong and at any of the USG colleges and universities, (2) we, at Armstrong, value inclusion and diversity and will work to fully attain these values despite any challenges.

The committee was charged with the issue of extending benefits to domestic partners early this Fall. This is not a new issue or charge though. The committee conducted research on this matter that first focused on initiatives within the USG, but that also extended beyond the State of GA. The committee also has worked in collaboration with Rebecca Carroll, Director of Human Resources at Armstrong in researching this issue and drafting this bill. The committee also started a conversation with the Office of Advancement about this matter. We are aware that this request doesn’t come without challenges. We know that there is more work ahead. The purpose of this bill, as we see it, is (1) to reinforce the importance of inclusion and diversity at Armstrong, (2) to update our community about recent changes such as the extension of voluntary benefits to domestic partners in all colleges and universities of the USG, and (3) to commence and strengthen the collaborative work between employees at Armstrong in this endeavor. We are not alone with this request given that institutions within the USG are facing the same challenges. They also, UGA, KSU, to name a few, have served as models in drafting this bill. To conclude, continued collaboration within Armstrong and between other institutions within the USG will be crucial to maintain our values of inclusion and diversity.

Prepared and Read by Mirari Elcoro, PhD. Assistant Professor of Psychology and Chair of the Faculty Welfare Committee at Armstrong on October 21, 2013.
Response to the Bill from Dr. Bleicken (extracted from Minutes from the Faculty Senate from November 18, 2013)- link to the corresponding Minutes:


2. Regarding FSB-2013-10-21-03: Domestic Partners Benefits Bill
   i. Believes strongly in the importance of partner benefits for all. However, cannot approve bill until consultation and approval of the Armstrong Foundation Board occurs. The University System of Georgia would then be petitioned to approve the bill.
   ii. Secondly, the cost to extend benefits to domestic partners needs to be determined.
   iii. Thirdly, foundation funds are often restricted for specific uses by donors (e.g. specific departments, scholarships, etc).
   iv. Finally, the University of Ga Foundation did not ultimately approve the domestic partners benefits proposal since it “did not fit their mission”.
3. We should continue to try to have conversations before bills are sent up to find common ground and improve the likelihood of bills being approved.

Follow-up to address the points presented above to redraft the bill

- Meeting with Bill Baird, President of Faculty Senate after the 11-18-2014 faculty Senate meeting – Early Spring
  - Guidance to address the points raised in 11-18-2014
  - Suggested people to contact to answer the question of cost and additional people to provide support to this charge and guidance as to how to answer the questions raised and how redraft the bill
- Meeting with Rebecca Carroll 1-23-2014
  - Provided individual cost and estimate based on number of people who enrolled for voluntary benefits for domestic partners in Spring 2014- information related to 2.ii, from Minutes of Faculty Senate meeting 11-18-2014
- Meeting with the Faculty Welfare Committee – 01-24-2014
  - Update and ideas, announced meetings to follow up on this charge to invite members to participate
- Phone conversation with Ella Howard 2/4/2014
  - GSA involvement/support
- Meeting with Bill Kelso and Rick Matthews (Office of Advancement) 2-5-2014
  - Update on the bill, checked point 2.iii and 2. iv.
  - The mission of the Foundation as presented on the Armstrong website is: “The foundation’s purpose is to acquire and administer funds and gifts for the support of the university and its programs”. Both Kelso and Matthews agreed that this mission, as
stated, is compatible with this charge (this is an issue of employee welfare, retention, and recruitment).

- Discussed possibilities of benefits being potentially covered by the Foundation (cost still needs to be determined) and also the possibility of creating a fund specifically for this.
- The Office of Advancement will explore potential grants/donors for this purpose.
- Rick Matthew sent an email communication to Lee Davies to:

  “(...) see if there are any issues or concerns from your perspective of the foundation being the financial conduit for these benefits. Although the foundation exist to help pay for things the state can't / won't pay for, are there any legal reasons why an institutionally related foundation wouldn't be allowed to be the conduit for domestic partner benefits? From reading the article it appears there may not be clear guidance from the state, but any and all assistance is appreciated.” (from email written by Rick Matthews to Lee Davies - 02-07-2014.

- Mirari will draft a survey to obtain an estimate number of people who would take advantage of domestic partners health benefits at Armstrong (to estimate the cost)
- Mirari will conduct research to gather literature that supports that domestic partner benefits are part of faculty and staff recruitment and retention

- Meeting with student representatives of Gay Straight Alliance (GSA) at AASU 2-10-2014
  - They will communicate to the Student Government Association about this
  - They support this initiative

- Drafted a survey to obtain an estimate of how many people would take advantage of extending health benefits to domestic partners. This survey is currently under review of Rebecca Carroll. I will share the survey with the people involved in this process to get their feedback.

- Meeting with Amy Heaston, 2-27-2014, Emily Grundstad-Hall attended this meeting
  - Review the background an work done thus far
  - Questions to Advancement: If use of unrestricted funds involves going to the BOR? If a fund is created, would it have to go to the BOR?
  - Announce availability of survey with Faculty Senate and Staff Council
  - Contact Laura Mills to review survey
  - Think about the message and email subject that captures everyone’s responses
  - To redraft bill: think about what we want to achieve? There may be multiple steps. We will share the bill with Amy and Dr. Bleicken before presenting it at the Senate meeting
  - Amy Heaston will update Dr. Bleicken on the process to review the bill

- Meeting with Faculty Welfare Committee 2-28-2014
  - Updates on meetings regarding the Domestic Partners charge
  - Feedback on survey for Domestic Partner Benefits
  - See minutes for this meeting
• Meeting with SGA and GSA, 02-28-2014, Tybee Room 11:30 a.m.
  o Described the charge, shared draft of survey and asked for their support
  o Discussed how this matters to students and how their involvement is important
  o Shared relevant documentation with both student associations

• Phone conversation with Rick Matthews 3-3-2014
  o Reply from Lee Davis – Not an official response from him (see email above) – We need to confirm with HR that this could be done with Blue Cross Blue Shield or try to find an alternative vendor
  o Wording of survey; to clarify the role of Advancement (collaborator, not heading the initiative)
  o Asked the two questions (from Amy Heaston’s meeting, see above, question to ask Advancement), the answer is NO.

• Meeting with Staff Advisory Council 3-6-2014, 9:00 a.m.
  o Presented the initiative and announced that the survey will be coming soon; answered questions about this
  o Rick Matthews restated that the Office of Human Resources and the Office of Advancement have been collaborating in this initiative

• Meeting with John Kraft 3-6-2014 (Office of the Provost) 3:30 p.m.
  o Presented the initiative, shared the survey, and asked for support from the Office of the Provost
  o Received feedback for survey (shorten text, could all be on one page)
  o Suggested sending the survey separately to Faculty (Subject of email: Faculty Welfare Committee: Health Benefits) and Staff (Staff Advisory Council: Health Benefits-will check with Rick Matthews to make sure this is OK)
  o There is support and John Kraft will get in touch with Mirari on the formal support for collaborating in this initiative

• Meeting with Laura Mills 3-6-2014 (Institutional Research-Survey) 4:00 p.m.
  o Laura Mills has already loaded the survey on to survey monkey
  o Adjusted some parts of the survey to ensure that we will get data need to estimate the cost of benefits
  o The opening text was shortened (it will be included on the email not the survey itself), and items reworded for accuracy, the definition of domestic partners should include a statement on marriage to clarify who domestic partner is
  o Because the Administrative Appraisal survey will be released March 10, 2014, and Spring break is from May 17-21, the best day to release this survey seems to be March 24
• Meeting with Laura Mills (Institutional Research-Survey) to finalize survey – 03-12-2014 4:00 p.m.
  o Reviewed survey
  o Survey will be released March 24, 2014 for two weeks. Every week a reminder will be sent
• Meeting with faculty Welfare Committee, Friday April 4, 2014
  o Reviewed preliminary data of the survey (survey will be open until April 7, 2014 b/c responses are still coming in)
  o Shared ideas to redraft bill (Version VI)
  o Agreed to prepare a short report to share with Rebecca Carroll, rick Matthews, the committee, Office of the Provost and the President
• Monday April 7, 2014
  o Obtained final results from survey; calculate cost (verify that Blue Cross Blue Shield could do this, if not, explore other vendors)
  o Shared results with Rick Matthews
• Will be Meeting with President Bleicken, date April 10, 2014 2:30-3:30 p.m.
  o To communicate how the points raised in the meeting of 11-18-2014 have been addressed to see if we are in the right direction
  o Rebecca Carroll and Emily Grundstad-Hall will attend this meeting
• Present redrafted Bill and/or Resolution to the Faculty Senate, April 21, 2014.
Survey
The survey was made available March 24, 2014 until April 7, 2014 via Human Resources Surveymonkey account. Laura Mills (Office of Institutional Research) was in charge of loading the questions into Surveymonkey and preparing the numerical and graphic analysis presented below. The survey was sent via email to all full-time faculty and staff. The email contained the following text:

To: human.resources@armstrong.edu via surveymonkey.com <member@surveymonkey.com>

Subject: Health Benefits Interest Survey

Body: Dear Members of the Armstrong Community,

The Faculty Welfare Committee in collaboration with the Office of Human Resources, the Office of Advancement, the Office of the Provost, and with the support of Armstrong’s Student Association Gay Straight Alliance, and the Student Government Association has prepared the following survey to collect necessary data regarding interest in domestic partner benefits. The results will be used to re-draft a bill previously presented to the Faculty Senate on October 21, 2013.

The purpose of this bill is to propose an alternative source of funding to make health coverage benefits available to domestic partners of full-time faculty and staff at Armstrong. Currently at USG universities and colleges, health insurance coverage is not offered to domestic partners because such coverage is partially funded with State dollars and the State of Georgia does not recognize domestic partners as dependents.

The data obtained from this survey will allow the Faculty Welfare Committee to obtain an estimate cost of these health benefits at Armstrong. To do this, we ask that all full-time faculty and staff at Armstrong complete this short survey (3-6 items). This survey will be available until April 4, 2014. Thank you very much for your participation.

Here is a link to the survey:
https://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx

This link is uniquely tied to this survey and your email address. Please do not forward this message.

Thanks for your participation!

Please note: if you do not wish to receive further emails from Survey Monkey, please click the link below, and you will be automatically removed from all of their mailing lists.
https://www.surveymonkey.com/optout.aspx

The items presented below were preceded by the following information:

As you prepare to answer the questions below, it is necessary to understand the following terms:

- Domestic Partner – is one of the same or opposite sex who resides with, is financially interdependent upon and shares the common necessities of life with their partner. The State of Georgia does not recognize domestic partners as dependents. A domestic partner is not legally married in the State of Georgia.

- Domestic Partner Voluntary Benefits – Domestic partner coverage is available on 100% employee paid voluntary benefit plans (dental, vision, Supplemental Life and AD&D) through separate insurance policies, not through the University System of Georgia (USG) voluntary benefits plans.

- USG Health Insurance Coverage – is provided to Armstrong employees and their dependents with 80% of insurance premiums paid with state funds.

At USG colleges and universities, health insurance coverage is not offered to domestic partners. This is because employee health insurance premiums are partially funded with State dollars and the State of Georgia does not recognize domestic partners as dependents. Therefore, following other initiatives in Georgia, the Faculty Welfare Committee is investigating alternative funding sources and coverage for domestic partners. To accomplish this, we need to obtain an estimated number of Armstrong employees who would be interested in health insurance coverage for their domestic partner.
We thank you in advance for your time in completing this survey.

Q1 Were you aware that as of January 1, 2014 voluntary benefits (i.e., dental, vision, and life insurance) are available to domestic partners in all University System of Georgia (USG) colleges and universities, including Armstrong?

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<th>Responses</th>
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<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>21.51%</td>
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<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>78.49%</td>
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Q2 If a fund is established to supplement health insurance premiums for domestic partners of Armstrong employees, would you be willing to contribute to this fund?

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<td>No</td>
<td>62.15%</td>
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Q3 Do you currently have a domestic partner?

Answered: 251  Skipped: 0

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<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>86.06%</td>
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<td>Total</td>
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Q4 Do you expect to have a domestic partner while working at Armstrong?

Answered: 216  Skipped: 35

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<tr>
<td>Does Not Apply</td>
<td>29.93%</td>
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Summary

A total of 251 people out of 607 responded the survey, a 41.35% response rate. The first item (Q1) of the survey was intended to inform the Armstrong community about the current possibility of extending voluntary benefits to domestic partners. As expected most people were not aware of this possibility, more specifically 197 out 251 (78.49%) did not know about this,
only 54 knew about this benefit (21.51%). It should be noted that prior to conducting this survey the committee thought that the number of people enrolling domestic partners to voluntary benefits right after January 1, 2014 could provide a number to guide the estimated cost. Such number was provided by the Office of Human Resources, and it was so low (three) that we thought possibly the number so low because not everyone knew about this opportunity.

The second item (Q2) was a contribution from the Office of Advancement; they were interested in knowing whether people would contribute to a fund, 37.85% would be able to contribute to such fund. One of the options to provide health benefits if funds from the Foundation are not available is to create a fund to cover domestic partner benefits.

The third item (Q3) answers the main question that the Faculty, 35 out 251 people have a domestic partner at Armstrong. Twenty four would enroll them in voluntary benefits, and 27 in health benefits.

The current cost for Blue Cross Blue Shields single HMO coverage is $483 a month ($341 covered by Armstrong, $142 by employee). If we take the number of 27 (from Q6) and multiply it by $341, we obtain $9,207. This is merely based on the results obtained; further estimates need to be calculated. It seems though that the amount needed is minimal. This is consistent with sources consulted that have shown that the amount needed to recruit, retain, and compensate employees with domestic partners would not represent a big expense to the university. It has been shown that losing and employee would tend to cost universities at least five times more than retaining them (Solomon, 2006).
References


University of Georgia, Proposal for Implementation of Full Domestic Partner Benefits August 2012, Retrieved from: [https://apps.reg.uga.edu/UniversityCouncil/publicCommitteeMeeting/showAgenda/105](https://apps.reg.uga.edu/UniversityCouncil/publicCommitteeMeeting/showAgenda/105)


Appendix 1: Minutes of Meetings of Faculty Welfare Committee

Minutes

Link to Faculty Senate
http://www.armstrong.edu/Departments/faculty_senate/senate_minutes

Fall 2013

First

Faculty Welfare Committee

Minutes of Meeting on Wednesday August 7 2013, 2pm to 3pm in Gamble 118

Present: Emily Grundstad-Hall, Richard Wallace, Mirari Elcoro, Brenda Logan, Linda Tuck, Gracia Roldan, Caroline Hopkinson, Jane Blackwell.

1. Beth Howells, VP of the Faculty Senate, stopped in to review the several charges given to the committee by the Senate (attachment to minutes). The charges arose from concerns raised by faculty, Beth reviewed each charge and answered questions for the group and left us to it.
2. Gracia Roldan, a committee member for 2 years previously, reported on the previous activities and processes of the Committee and the group discussed most of the charges in a general way.
3. The Committee agreed that this year Mirari Elcoro will chair the committee and Caroline Hopkinson will be secretary.
4. We discussed four of the charges (faculty workload statement, Plus One benefits, APAR revisions, and salary issues) in more depth and narrowed our focus to Plus One benefits and salary issues.
5. We also discussed evaluation of faculty, both Eface and the idea of using peer review as an evaluation of teaching. The group decided the Eface issues had been addressed by this Committee and the peer review of teaching was being implemented in the Colleges.
6. So, by consensus, our next steps are to gather data on the Plus One benefits issue and the salary issue with an aim to create a bill or resolution on these topics. Mirari Elcoro will gather some information sources on Plus One benefits, including what is happening at UGA and Georgia State. Jane Blackwell, as the Committee’s Senate liaison, will ask the Senate for any data or information available on faculty salaries. Committee members may want to informally gather colleagues’ views and experiences with these issues.
7. The plan is to share data gathered with Committee and meet in one month to discuss what we’ve learned and decide on next steps in course of action. Mirari Elcoro will send a Doodle poll to establish a day time and if any committee members are not able to make the meeting she will follow up with them.

Attachment: Faculty Welfare Charges, members and bylaws received 8/7/2013
Faculty Welfare - Gamble 118

Faculty Welfare

Charges for 2013-2014:

1. Elect a chair.
2. Review bylaws and consider revisions or any potential combinations with other committees to streamline Senate Committee structure.
4. Develop a bill/resolution or recommendation for faculty workload statement
5. Develop a bill/resolution for plus one benefits—see UGA or GA Tech models.
6. Develop a bill/resolution for APARs or APAR revisions.
7. Consider strategies for arguing for raises or incentives in the absence of salary increases. Is an examination of administrative salaries or bloat in order?
8. In her Budget presentation, Dr. Bleicken discussed “retention of high-performing faculty” as a priority? How will that be operationalized?

The committee shall be composed of nine faculty members, with two from the College of Liberal Arts, two from the College of Science and Technology, two from the College of Education, two from the College of Health Professions, and one from the Library. At least one member must hold graduate faculty status.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FACULTY</th>
<th>Yrs served (including 13-14)</th>
<th>College</th>
<th>DEPT</th>
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<td>Grundstad-Hall, Emily</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>CLA</td>
<td>AMT</td>
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<td>Wallace, Richard</td>
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<td>CST</td>
<td>CHEM</td>
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<td>Elcoro, Mirari</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>CST</td>
<td>PSYC</td>
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<td>Logan, Brenda</td>
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<td>NURS</td>
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<td>Blackwell, Jane</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>CHP</td>
<td>NURS (Senate liaison)</td>
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Mission
The Faculty Welfare Committee will protect the welfare of the faculty and promote a sense of faculty community.

Duties
The committee shall consider issues and proposals related to faculty welfare including all matters relevant to faculty conditions of employment. The committee shall be involved in issues of policy and shall not consider individual cases. The committee shall make recommendations to the Senate for either information purposes or for action. The committee will make recommendations to the Senate concerning faculty evaluation policies and procedures after receiving reports from its Evaluation Subcommittee. The committee may promote various intellectual, educational and social activities that foster a sense of the faculty community.

Meetings
The committee shall meet three times per academic year or more as needed. The committee will determine meeting dates and times to be posted on the senate website.

Reports
Upon approval, the minutes of each Faculty Welfare Committee meeting will be submitted to the Secretary of the Faculty Senate. Furthermore, an annual summary report shall be submitted at the end of each academic year by the chair of the committee.

Membership
The committee shall be composed of nine faculty members, with two from the College of Liberal Arts, two from the College of Science and Technology, two from the College of Education, two from the College of Health Professions, and one from the Library. At least one member must hold graduate faculty status.

Approved December 2008

Submitted by Caroline Hopkinson, 8/8/2013.

Second:

Faculty Welfare Committee

Minutes of Meeting on Friday August 16th noon to 1pp in Science Center 204

Present: Emily Grundstad-Hall, Mirari Elcoro (Chair), Brenda Logan, Linda Tuck, Gracia Roldan, Caroline Hopkinson. John Kraft (guest)

1. Dr. Kraft provided background on academic leave and reviewed a handout which compared wording of current policy and proposed changes. Changes were needed because the language of the existing
policy was vague. They were also needed quickly because Academic Affairs is now able to grant academic leave and can begin soliciting requests with this clear and up-to-date process.

2. One major change is that the activity for academic leave is professional development in a broader sense; a move away from a focus on research only, and requirements/expectations for publication based on the research. The committee generally approved of this shift, although some mentioned a need to make sure that the results of the research leave were substantial, more than an oral report, even if publication was not specified. This need for rigor/substance will be addressed in a rubric created to evaluate requests for leave.

3. Another change is that academic leave will be limited to tenured professors. The librarian in the group pointed out that this excludes the small group of employees who hold faculty status (e.g., librarians, advisors) and who are not on tenure-track. Some have been at Armstrong for a long time (even more than six years) and deserve consideration for academic leave; the certainly could take advantage of this opportunity for professional development. After some discussion and trying to think of a way to modify the policy to include these exceptions, we concluded that the policy needs a mechanism for exceptions or an appeals process for exceptions. Such exceptions might be worked into other parts of the faculty handbook, so as to avoid confusion.

4. The group discussed whether this and other policies from the Faculty Handbook needed approval. This policy was submitted for review, buy-in and input rather than for approval.

Meeting concluded at 1p.m

Submitted by Caroline Hopkinson

Third:

Faculty Welfare Committee

Minutes of Meeting on Wednesday September 11th 2013, 2pm to 3pm in Science Center 207

Present: Emily Grundstad-Hall, Mirari Elcoro (Chair), Brenda Logan, Gracia Roldan, Caroline Hopkinson (Sec.), Jane Blackwell (Senate Rep).

1. Chair reviewed the agenda, three charges: Faculty salaries, Domestic Partner benefits and committee consolidation.

2. Discussed the New Administrative Positions Freeze Bill proposed by the Language Literature and Philosophy Dept. We decided that since the faculty salary study issue is being brought forward by others who are doing a very good job at it, we would use this bill as a model to address our other charge.

3. Discussed bill to call for “Plus one” or domestic partner benefits at Armstrong. Reviewed the excellent proposal made by UGA’s University Council and the USG Faculty Counsel’s resolution. Decided
to ask for full benefits (rather than “soft benefits”) since the retention of faculty is at stake. The chair of the committee offered to draft a bill, speak to Rebecca Carroll, director of HR to start a conversation about matter, get HR’s input, hopefully support, and communicate with Parliamentarian Clifford Padgett about writing a good bill. At the next meeting of the Committee we’ll review a draft of the Bill with a view to presenting it to Senate leadership in October.

4. We discussed ways to examine overlap/alignment of committees, in line with the charge on consolidation of committees. It would seem from the names that there is some overlap between “Faculty Welfare” and “Faculty Development” but would need to investigate to determine overlap. Reviewing minutes to find out if we are distributing our efforts effectively as committees was one alternative discussed. Before assigning tasks to a subcommittee or members of the faculty welfare committee, the chair of this committee will find out if another group (the Committee on Committees?) already has this charge. Also, Faculty Welfare received a number of charges this year, so a busy committee, meeting often and makes imagining consolidation more difficult. It might be better to look at committees with lesser number of charges for consolidation.

Meeting ended at 3pm.

Next meeting : Monday October 14, 2013 at 1:30 p.m. in Science Center 207

Submitted by Caroline Hopkinson

Fourth:

Faculty Welfare Committee

Minutes of Meeting on Monday October 14, 1:30 p.m. -2:40 p.m. in Science Center 207

Members Present: Emily Grundstad-Hall, Mirari Elcoro (Chair), Brenda Logan, Linda Tuck, Gracia Roldan, Caroline Hopkinson (Sec).

Absent: Richard Wallace, Jane Blackwell.

Guests: John Kraft, David Wheeler

The agenda for this meeting included three items: (1) discussion of AFE addendum, (2) finalizing the Domestic Partners Benefits Bill (draft 4) to be presented at the next Senate meeting (Oct., 21, 2013) and (3) discussion on the proposal for committee consolidation.

1. **AFE Addendum:**

   a. Dr. Kraft provided a background on the proposal for amending the Annual Faculty Evaluation (AFE) form. Basically the idea is to include a checklist in this form (Appendix 1, shows the proposed form, pp. 3-4) as the one below:

   b. 
IF ON TENURE TRACK please indicate progress below. For categories other than “Satisfactory,” please address areas where improvement is needed, including a plan for correction on a separate sheet.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Satisfactory</th>
<th>Satisfactory w/Recommendations</th>
<th>Improvement Needed</th>
<th>Unsatisfactory</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

“The motivation for prompting these categorical responses was to better inform faculty on tenure-track through clear communication from the dept head and dean. In most cases, administrator narratives are sufficient to properly inform faculty, but every once in a while we run into cases where administrators claim that proper notice was given in AFEs, but the faculty didn’t see it that way. In cases that lead to separation from the university everyone is unhappy -- especially the faculty member. In part, I think the discrepancies are due to administrators trying to be supportive and encouraging of those who are not performing well enough and faculty see those comments as evidence of satisfactory progress.

The categorical responses are an attempt to communicate progress more clearly” (Dr. Kraft’s email communication, Sept. 24, 2013)

c. This was presented at the Academic Affairs Council and now it has been charged from the Faculty Senate to Faculty Welfare

d. Dr. Wheeler expressed his position on this addendum and highlighted that the proposed change is more along a change in policy. He raised the following concerns such as the fact that progress toward tenure is a cumulative process, thus it cannot be placed in the AFE, which contains an annual evaluation. Also, the progress toward tenure is not solely evaluated by the Chair (who would be required to fill this checklist), but by a group of people. Alternatives to the checklist could be to make the narrative that accompanies the AFE clear and include a reflection about progress toward tenure. Also, to improve the clarity of this narrative, training in this particular aspect of the narrative could be offered to department heads

e. Other members of the committee brought up concerns and questions from their departments. An additional concern was that the checklist could be used as a “shortcut” that may compromise the evaluation process. Also, some raised the issue that the categories may not be quite clear (e.g., what is the difference between categories? In the discussion it felt like sometimes the categories were not mutually exclusive). Dr. Kraft replied that the categories are meant to be a continuum. The possibility of revising the categories was brought up.

f. The committee agrees with the motivation for improving clarity and protecting faculty members and the university as a whole, and also to improve communication between faculty and administrators, but maybe the checklist may not be a solution for this due to the concerns (cons) listed above. There are pros and cons for making this change.

g. Dr. Kraft encouraged the committee/the Senate to suggest other modifications that would more effectively accomplish the goal, which is to make faculty members as clear as possible about their progress toward tenure.

h. Dr. Kraft, Dr. Wheeler, and Dr. Roldan left the meeting after the discussion of this first item was concluded.
2. **Domestic Partners Bill**  
   a. The fourth draft of the bill was shared with the committee. The Chair updated the committee on the meeting with the Director of Human Resources (HR), Rebecca Carroll on October 3, 2013 at 11:30 a.m. about the current situation of Domestic Partners Benefits in the USG. In this meeting the Chair learned that as of January 1, 2014 all universities and colleges of the USG will extend voluntary benefits to domestic partners. The bill was adjusted to include this. Also, HR supports the bill and is seeking collaborations in this and other matters with Faculty Welfare Committee. The committee will continue to communicate and collaborate with HR and will seek contact with the Office of Advancement and the Staff Advisory Council to further discuss the possibility of extending health benefits to domestic partners. The idea is to pursue extending health benefits to domestic partners without the use of State funds.

   b. The bill was slightly edited (Appendix 2, Draft V, p. 5) and the committee agreed to present it during the next Faculty Senate meeting (Oct. 21, 2014)

3. **Committee Consolidation Proposal**  
   a. The time to discuss this item was considerably shorter than what was dedicated to the previous two items, so it will continue to be discussed during our next meeting

   b. In general, the committee agrees with the proposal, but still would like to have more clarity about the responsibilities of each committee, in particular the Faculty Welfare Committee

   c. Prior to this meeting there were a few electronic communications between the Cahir of this committee and the President of the Senate with specific questions about this proposal. The answers to these questions were discussed in the meeting (see Appendix 3 for email communications and questions from the committee, p. 6)

We discussed meeting again in early November at a date to be determined and adjourned at about 2:30 p.m.

Appendix 1. Proposed AFE form.

**Armstrong Atlantic State University**  
**Annual Faculty Evaluation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Faculty Member's Name:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Faculty Member's Rank:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation Period from:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IF ON TENURE TRACK:</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
To the Dean:

This area is for your comments. Attach additional sheet(s), if necessary.

IF ON TENURE TRACK please indicate progress below. For categories other than “Satisfactory,” please address areas where improvement is needed, including a plan for correction on a separate sheet.

Satisfactory Satisfactory Improvement Unsatisfactory
_____ _____ _____ _____
_____ Date copy provided to faculty member.

Dean's Signature: ____________________________________________ Title: __________________________

To the Faculty Member:

This evaluation will be filed in your official personnel record and you will be given a copy. You may provide a written response to this evaluation.

IF ON TENURE TRACK please indicate progress below. For categories other than “Satisfactory,” please address areas where improvement is needed, including a plan for correction on a separate sheet.

Satisfactory Satisfactory Improvement Unsatisfactory
_____ _____ _____ _____
_____ Date copy provided to faculty member.

Faculty Signature: ____________________________ Date: ____________________________

To the Department Head:

This evaluation will be filed in your official personnel record and you will be given a copy. You may provide a written response to this evaluation.

IF ON TENURE TRACK please indicate progress below. For categories other than “Satisfactory,” please address areas where improvement is needed, including a plan for correction on a separate sheet.

Satisfactory Satisfactory Improvement Unsatisfactory
_____ _____ _____ _____
_____ Date copy provided to faculty member.

Dept. Head’s Signature: ____________________________________________ Title: __________________________

NOTE: An updated copy of your CV must be attached to this document each year.

To the Department Head:

This evaluation will be filed in your official personnel record and you will be given a copy. You may provide a written response to this evaluation. You have access to your official records upon request.

NOTE: An updated copy of your CV must be attached to this document each year.

I acknowledge that I am aware of the contents of this evaluation.

Faculty Signature: ____________________________ Date: ____________________________

IF ON TENURE TRACK please indicate progress below. For categories other than “Satisfactory,” please address areas where improvement is needed, including a plan for correction on a separate sheet.

Satisfactory Satisfactory Improvement Unsatisfactory
_____ _____ _____ _____
_____ Date copy provided to faculty member.

In evaluating teaching performance, the department head should address whatever categories of teaching performance are appropriate to the professor’s discipline.

IF ON TENURE TRACK please indicate progress below. For categories other than “Satisfactory,” please address areas where improvement is needed, including a plan for correction on a separate sheet.

Satisfactory Satisfactory Improvement Unsatisfactory
_____ _____ _____ _____
_____ Date copy provided to faculty member.

Dean’s Signature: ____________________________________________ Title: __________________________
Appendix 2. Draft V October 15, 2013 by Faculty Welfare Committee

Domestic Partners Benefits Bill

Whereas Armstrong Atlantic State University embraces the values of inclusion and diversity: “we value and respect an environment of mutual trust and collegiality that builds an inclusive as well as a diverse community”, and

Whereas the administration of Armstrong recently highlighted the importance of the value of diversity during the Convocation of Fall 2013, and

Whereas the University System of Georgia Faculty Council resolved on February 25th, 2012 that, “In the interest of equity and in order to attract and retain all of the best qualified faculty and staff, the USGFC recommends that university system benefits be extended to domestic partners,” and

Whereas as of January 1, 2014 all colleges and universities of the University System of Georgia will extend voluntary benefits such as vision, dental, and optional additional life insurance to domestic partners of employees who are benefits eligible and recently (February 15, 2013) the University of Georgia Council approved the Proposal for Implementation of Full Domestic Partner Benefits, and

Whereas full medical benefits are still not extended to domestic partners of employees of colleges and universities of the University System of Georgia because current State of Georgia law and policy prevent the use of state funds for persons not recognized as dependents,

The Faculty Senate requests that Armstrong Atlantic State University petitions to the University System of Georgia to allow institutional policy to include that corresponding employee portions be paid with foundation funds.


Appendix 3. Email Communications from October 3, 2013.

Bill,

I have reviewed the document that outlines the committee changes and I have also shared that document with the members of the Faculty Welfare Committee. Below are some compiled comments and questions from the committee.

Overall there seems to be an agreement with the need for consolidation. There are though some concerns about adding responsibilities to the Faculty Welfare Committee. There are a few related questions below:

1. What duties of Research and Scholarship, exactly, will be added to Faculty Welfare?

2. To clarify: two members of Faculty Welfare will also serve on Faculty Development's committee? Is the rationale is to improve communications between the committees? Any other reasons?

3. Will Faculty Welfare have more committee members in this new arrangement? Should it have more members, if there is some increase in workload?

4. Who will choose members of Committees that are moved outside the Senate?

Thank you,

Mirari

Hi Mirari,

All of your questions are up for debate, really. For #4, I believe the director of the relevant program would choose the faculty members on the committee (i.e., Johnathan Roberts for Honors, Deborah Reese for Writing, etc.). I think the exception to that would be the two faculty welfare members that would be sent to the faculty development committee which would otherwise be chosen by Teresa Winterhalter. I think that would be for both improved communication and to maintain faculty involvement in that committee.

Of the ones we've discussed moving, Faculty Development is probably the one that I'd have some reservations about, just because the others don't necessarily impact the entire faculty but FD does.

I think a smaller number of larger committees would help get the work done; obviously, we wouldn't want to have the same total number of people as we do now, since part of this is to reduce the body count.

I'm not sure about your first question, so I'm copying Leigh on this to see if she has any additional insight. As I said, though, it's all negotiable at this point, and it's not an all-or-nothing choice.

Thanks,

Bill

Fifth:
Faculty Welfare Committee   Wed 11/13, noon to 1pm Science Center

THERE WAS NO QUORUM

Present: Mirari Elcoro (Chair), Richard Wallace, Gracia Roldan and Caroline Hopkinson.

1. Discussed the request by the Senate to update and rewrite as a bill the 2011 resolution concerning part time faculty salaries. Decided to update the background information, especially statistics as possible and determine if the ad-hoc part time faculty salary study committee recommended in the resolution was formed/what they found. Caroline agreed to work on this task and share information found with other committee members. The Committee will meet to work on wording of bill in the new year.

2. Discussed recommendation to pass along to John Kraft and the faculty senate about AFE forms. The group recommended that the following measures to departments, in order to address the problem of faculty who are blindsided by results of their tenure review.

   A. Department Heads enhance the attention paid to tenure progress by in the narrative portion of the AFE.

   B. Department holds annual review by a committee of all tenured and tenure-track faculty that results in a joint statement of the committee regarding the faculty member’s progress towards tenure during that year. The Statement includes some specifics, give the breakdown of the committee vote and can include “minority opinions” in the case of major disagreements. Although time-consuming, the group felt this would give substantial, appropriate, useful feedback to faculty members.

3. The group reviewed the committee consolidation proposal and generally accepts it contingent on resolving which research and scholarship duties will fall under Faculty Welfare and adjusting the membership of the committee to align with duties.

4. Discussed quorum and need to replace Ellen Whitford, who resigned from the committee early in the academic year with another rep from College of Education. Prof. Roldan will be on maternity leave next semester but can arrange to attend meetings.

Meeting ended at 1pm. Chair will communicate via e-mail about further developments.
**Spring 2014**

Sixth:

Faculty Welfare Committee  Friday, January 24, 2014, noon to 1pm, Science Center  Room 207

Present: Mirari Elcoro (Chair), Brenda Logan, Linda Tuck and Caroline Hopkinson (Secr). Absent: Emily Grundstad-Hall, Richard Wallace, Gracia Roldan and Jane Blackwell.

1. Mirari reviewed current status and plans for the Domestic Partners Bill which was passed by the Senate but not signed by the President. Mirari reported President Bleicken’s reasons for not signing the Bill: she needed the approval of the Armstrong Foundation and the costs need to be determined. We discussed UGA’s foundation’s decision and found reason to hope Armstrong would proved to be the leader in this issue.

Going forward, Mirari plans to:

- Meet with Human Resources, Rebecca Carroll is very supportive of the Bill and can help work out costs and is willing to join committee chair’s meeting with the President on this issue.
- Develop a survey of faculty; not just about what they think of the issue, but how this benefit would impact them, whether they would take advantage of it if offered. The survey would also serve to inform faculty about the possibility of domestic partner benefits.
- Mirari (and any from committee who can) will meet with Rick Mathews from Office of Advancement on Wed 1/29 at 3:30 in Science Center Room 207.
- Reach out to Gay Straight Alliance on campus, and Office of Multicultural Affairs for their input.
- Arrange to meet with the President, to present information gathered and discuss the issue before further senate action.
- Meet with Senate President about the Bill, further action.

2. Caroline presented her “homework” to update the data used in the 2011 Senate resolution concerning part time faculty. Phyllis Fulton of Academic Affairs easily produced the information we needed (and more!) about Armstrong salaries. We found that part time faculty salaries have not changed since the 2011 bill. The bill also quotes part time salaries at Georgia Southern for comparison; we could probably contact someone at Georgia Southern for that information.

But the purpose of the resolution is to form an ad hoc committee to do just that, compare part time salaries at Armstrong with other, local institutions to determine if Armstrong is competitive/fair. Also, address other issues/questions raised in the resolution: Are experience part time faculty compensated fairly? Are part time faculty who teach larger classes? If not, how these issues could best be addressed. Recently other issues have been raised recently by part time faculty that an ad hoc committee could gather information and address.

So, assuming no such ad hoc committee was formed after this resolution in 2011, the group concluded that the next step is to reintroduce the resolution as bill. Caroline agreed to draft a rewrite of the resolution by next meeting.
3. Mirari reported on the Hardship Fund and the committee convened to make decisions about disbursement of the fund. A member of the Faculty Welfare committee will represent the faculty on this Hardship Fund committee. The Armstrong Foundation and Human Resources operate the fund, which is funded by donations.

The meeting ended at 1pm. Chair will communicate via e-mail about further developments.

The next meeting is tentatively scheduled for Friday February 29th at noon in Science Center 207.

Respectfully submitted,

Caroline Hopkinson, Secretary

Seventh:

Faculty Welfare Committee  Friday 2/28/2014, noon to 1pm Science Center

Present: Mirari Elcoro (Chair), Jane Blackwell, Linda Tuck and Caroline Hopkinson.

Emily Grundstad-Hall, Brenda Logan , and Richard Wallace sent regrets of conflicts.

Gracia Roldan is on maternity leave.

1. Elcoro distributed minutes of the January 24, 2014 meeting for review. It was decided that the Hardship fund could be a model for the Domestic Partner’s fund. The minutes had already been approved via e-mail and sent to the Senate. One missed correction: the date of next meeting should have been 2/28/2014. All minutes of the Committee are now posted on the Faculty Senate website: http://www.armstrong.edu/Departments/faculty_senate/senate_minutes

2. Elcoro updated the committee on her work addressing the feedback received on the domestic partners benefits bill. All her work is outlined in Supporting Materials for Domestic Partners Benefits, done for the meeting on 2/27/2014. The highlights are as follows:

Elcoro met with representatives from Office of Advancement. Bill Kelso and Rick Matthews confirmed that the actions of the domestic partner’s bill are consistent with the mission of the Armstrong Foundation. This was good news. We still must ask Rick Mathews to review the bill. Matthews is having the bill reviewed to make sure the language meets legal requirements of the Advancement office, and how much funding would be required.

To get information on funding needed, Elcoro has a draft of a survey to be e-mailed (using survey monkey and from Human Resources) to all Armstrong employees. The survey will both inform us about domestic partnership benefits and get feedback on demand for domestic partner benefits at Armstrong.

Drafts of the survey were sent via e-mail to all Faculty Welfare committee members, Human Resources , the Advancement Office (Rick Matthews), John Kraft (Office of the Provost), Amy Heaston of the President’s office, and the Student Government Association for review and feedback.
The committee discussed the survey and the importance of a good response rate. The committee approved reordering the questions, list first the two questions that apply on whether or not the employee has a domestic partner. The last two questions would apply only to those employees who currently had a domestic partner. We might also put keywords on salary/compensation in the subject line and mention that this survey is part of an innovative approach to seeking pay equity for Armstrong’s faculty and staff.

The committee discussed a timeline for release of the survey and how that would fit with announcements in the Faculty Senate and Staff council. We need to send out the survey as soon as possible, with a view to getting a revised domestic partner’s benefit bill to Faculty Senate before the end of the academic year.

2. Hopkinson presented a draft of the Faculty Senate Bill to create a taskforce on Part Time Faculty Compensation. A slightly revised version based on input from the committee’s discussion, is attached. Please review this draft and provide edits, questions, and any other feedback via e-mail. Based on Committee’s discussion/recommendation Caroline Hopkinson submitted the draft attached to the Provost’s office via John Kraft to get their feedback.

3. Elcoro let us know that APAR’s are changing and this may mean a potential charge from the Provost’s Office and Faculty Senate. Stay tuned!

4. The meeting concluded shortly after 1p.m. Elcoro will be in touch about our next meeting.

Submitted by

Caroline Hopkinson, 2/28/2104

Eighth meeting (without appendices)

Faculty Welfare Committee  Friday, April 4, 2014, noon to 1pm, Science Center, Room 207

Present: Mirari Elcoro (Chair), Brenda Logan, Emily Grundstad-Hall and Caroline Hopkinson (Secr). Absent: Linda Tuck, Richard Wallace, Gracia Roldan and Jane Blackwell.

1. Elcoro announced that Faculty Senate Bill to create a taskforce on Part Time Faculty Compensation, 2014 passed the Faculty Senate, awaiting signature by President Bleicken. Bill as sent from Committee to Senate added as appendix 1, fyi.

2. Elcoro announced that Jane Blackwell, our liaison to the Senate, said that she could not meet on Fridays and was going to ask the Senate to send our committee a different Senate liaison next year.

3. Committee reviewed progress with Domestic Partners Benefits Bill:
Elcoro and Grundstad-Hall met with Amy Heaston at the end of February to formulate a plan to address Dr. Bleicken’s concerns about the bill. They will be placed in appendix 2.

Enthusiastic support was received from Human Resources. Advancement was positive but more measured in their response/support, needed an estimate of need/cost for the benefits.

Survey of faculty & staff regarding awareness, willingness to contribute financially and most importantly, estimate of potential demand for/cost of domestic partner benefits. Laura Mills helped construct the survey, which was distributed via e-mail by Human Resources on March 24th, 2014. Preliminary results are that 37.5% of faculty/staff responded to the survey, 80% of respondents indicate they were NOT aware of the benefits currently available to domestic partners. On the question of how many would take advantage of the domestic partner health insurance benefits if available, the number of potential users (NOT percentage) was about 25-35.

The Office of the Provost and Student Government Association will endorse the Bill.

The next steps would be as follows: Elcoro will share survey information with Office of Advancement, a meeting with President Bleicken is scheduled for April 10th. Elcoro, Grundstad-Hall and Rebecca Carroll from Human Relations are planning to attend, all committee members are invited. We must send the bill to the Senate before April 21st meeting.

4. Committee discussed latest draft of bill, based on this draft:

The Bill (as presented to the Faculty Senate and as included in their Agenda for the meeting of October 21, 2013)- link to the corresponding Agenda:

Domestic Partners Benefits Bill

Whereas Armstrong Atlantic State University embraces the values of inclusion and diversity: "we value and respect an environment of mutual trust and collegiality that builds an inclusive as well as a diverse community”, and

Whereas the administration of Armstrong recently highlighted the importance of the value of diversity during the Convocation of Fall 2013, and

Whereas the University System of Georgia Faculty Council resolved on February 25th, 2012 that, “In the interest of equity and in order to attract and retain all of the best qualified faculty and staff, the USGFC recommends that university system benefits be extended to domestic partners,” and
Whereas as of January 1, 2014 all colleges and universities of the University System of Georgia will extend voluntary benefits such as vision, dental, and optional additional life insurance to domestic partners of employees who are benefits eligible\(^3\) and recently (February 15, 2013) the University of Georgia Council approved the Proposal for Implementation of Full Domestic Partner Benefits \(^4,5\), and

Whereas full medical benefits are still not extended to domestic partners of employees of colleges and universities of the University System of Georgia because current State of Georgia law and policy prevent the use of state funds for persons not recognized as dependents,

The Faculty Senate requests that Armstrong Atlantic State University petitions to the University System of Georgia to allow institutional policy to include that corresponding employee portions be paid with foundation funds.


\(^3\)University of Georgia, Proposal for Implementation of Full Domestic Partner Benefits August 2012, Retrieved from: https://apps.reg.uga.edu/UniversityCouncil/publicCommitteeMeeting/showAgenda/105


The Committee decided to keep the first part of the Bill essentially the same and modify the last paragraph to reflect, hopefully, Advancement’s funding and also Human Resources support. Elcoro will share a final draft of the bill with the Committee.
Committee discussed final format, how to present the Bill. Agreed to simple statement of the final version of the bill, but add background, such as endorsements, other supporting material, and gathered in a notebook.

5. Committee agreed to also put forward a resolution stating our support for extending health benefits to domestic partners, so the Senate has that option as well as the bill.

Meeting ended at 1pm.

Submitted by Caroline Hopkinson

Secretary for Faculty Welfare Committee
Appendix 2: Earlier drafts (II-IV) of the Bill

Bills

Draft II September 19, 2013 by Faculty Welfare Committee

Domestic Partners Benefits Bill

Whereas Armstrong Atlantic State University embraces the values of inclusion and diversity: "we value and respect an environment of mutual trust and collegiality that builds an inclusive as well as a diverse community"¹, and

Whereas the administration of Armstrong recently highlighted the importance of the value of diversity during the Convocation of Fall 2013, and

Whereas the University System of Georgia Faculty Council resolved on February 25th, 2012 that, “In the interest of equity and in order to attract and retain all of the best qualified faculty and staff, the USGFC recommends that university system benefits be extended to domestic partners,”² and

Whereas five out 35 colleges and universities of the University System of Georgia have extended voluntary health benefits such as vision, dental, and optional additional life insurance to domestic partners of employees who are benefits eligible³ and recently (February 15, 2013) the University of Georgia Council approved the Proposal for Implementation of Full Domestic Partner Benefits ⁴,⁵,

The Faculty Senate advises and strongly recommends that university system benefits be extended to domestic partners at Armstrong Atlantic State University.


Domestic Partners Benefits Bill

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Whereas the University System of Georgia Faculty Council resolved on February 25th, 2012 that, “In the interest of equity and in order to attract and retain all of the best qualified faculty and staff, the USGFC recommends that university system benefits be extended to domestic partners,”² and

Whereas five out 35 colleges and universities of the University System of Georgia have extended voluntary health benefits such as vision, dental, and optional additional life insurance to domestic partners of employees who are benefits eligible³ and recently (February 15, 2013) the University of Georgia Council approved the Proposal for Implementation of Full Domestic Partner Benefits ⁴,⁵,

The Faculty Senate advises and strongly recommends that university system benefits be extended to domestic partners at Armstrong Atlantic State University.


Domestic Partners Benefits Bill

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3 University of Georgia, Proposal for Implementation of Full Domestic Partner Benefits August 2012, Retrieved from: [https://apps.reg.uga.edu/UniversityCouncil/publicCommitteeMeeting/showAgenda/105](https://apps.reg.uga.edu/UniversityCouncil/publicCommitteeMeeting/showAgenda/105)
