Table Talk

Faculty Contract Negotiations

September 28, 2012
8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Members Present: Jillian Daly, Cecelia Hudelson-Putnam, Rose LaMont, Emily Malsam, Tom Nomof, Michael Sundquist, Diane Wirth, Gene Womble

Recollections: Tom Nomof

Negotiations for contingency concessions for 2013-2014 if Proposition 30 fails continued. The meeting involved a long analysis of data gathered as homework assignments as a way of analyzing and narrowing down options.

1. The first issue both teams discussed was a report from Payroll that said a pre-taxed payroll deduction (in lieu of salary cut), called a P.O.P., would be legal and would have the advantage of 1) reducing taxable income, and 2) preserving salaries for STRS, especially for those thinking of retiring. This option would involve a monthly pre-taxed contribution to the cost of health benefits, which would then create savings in the general fund, for one year only. We talked a bit as to whether this option would involve a percent of salary deduction or a flat rate deduction.

2. We also discussed how to address possible concessions to the PTOL if we used the P.O.P. option as our part-timers do not have health benefits.

3. We had a conversation about raising the overload cap to 167% to allow faculty to increase their earnings.

4. We then looked at data gathered on the cost of sabbaticals. The formula to determine actual cost to district for sabbaticals assumes all sabbaticals are used by 8.5 FTEF, and subtracts the full-time salary savings for those faculty from the total replacement cost (assuming Column IV, Step ten of the PTOL). Total savings to district for all sabbaticals in one year came to about $54,000. Our conclusion was that eliminating sabbaticals would do little to address the budget shortfall, but there were still lingering questions regarding the formula used.

5. We next reviewed data that showed the savings to the district by eliminating steps 11-13 for the summer hourly rate on the PTOL would be about $60,000. We did not have any data yet on non-instructional savings, but we looked at non-instructional hourly rate salary schedules based on the contractual formula and saw that step ten on the PTOL equated with step 18 on the non-instructional salary schedule. This suggested to us that if we capped the PTOL at step ten, in order to created parity for non-instructional faculty, we might look at capping their hourly rate at step 18.

6. The next report was that District was very interested in exploring a SERP (Supplemental Employee Retirement Plan) agreement, but that this would not be a short-term option as it would take time to hire a consultant and do the appropriate research. We were told, though,
that the Golden Handshake in 2003-2004 did create savings for the district when rumors had always said the district lost money.

7. The next topic for discussion was banked leave and the idea that faculty be able in one way or another to use their banked leave money to offset payroll deductions to the P.O.P option. Cashing out banked leave would also reduce district liability. We agreed we still needed more information regarding the legalities and tax implications to cashing out banked leaves.

8. Three final topics were discussed based on data gathered and presented at the table: 1) data gathered from the State Chancellor’s website shows that structural deficits in community college budgets over the past eight years is quite common; 2) there is a discrepancy between the district’s reported FON (Faculty Obligation Number) of 281 and the actual amount of full-time faculty, which is 252; and 3) that there are differences in our parity percent goal between the PTOL and non-instructional hourly rate. For this last item, our district’s state reported parity goal is 70%—that means that a part-time faculty teaching at a 100% load would make 70% of the full-timer’s salary in the same comparable salary cell (Step and Column). Currently, our PTOL salary schedule is at 66% parity and our non-instructional hourly rate at the 6-hour contractual formula (counselors and librarians) is at 85% parity.

9. The meeting ended by delegating more homework assignments to team members so both teams can narrow options down during our last two final negotiations meetings.

Submitted by Jillian Daly