

## Memorandum

To: All GI Staff

From: Gary Newman, Representative for Unit 5 (Geophysical Institute)  
UAF Staff Council

Date: December 23, 2004

Re: Annual Report

As we close out the calendar year, I want to provide a report on what UAF Staff Council was able to accomplish this past year, adding new information (as communication is part of our mission), and a preview of what I believe is coming.

### Health Care Plan

We headed into the year with a UA Statewide commitment to fund 80% of our shared health care costs. Staff Council played a big part in the Health Care Review Committee. This is a significant change from the 3% escalator that was previously built in as health care costs have risen many times more. By converting from a calendar year to a fiscal year, we will be able to make future comparisons with other governmental bodies a bit easier. We also developed the revised UA Choice Plan, which allows employees a choice of three levels of health care support, as well as a long-desired "opt-out" provision. More info: [http://www.alaska.edu/hr/benefits/ua\\_choice/index\\_ua\\_choice.xml](http://www.alaska.edu/hr/benefits/ua_choice/index_ua_choice.xml) I have to thank Mike Humphrey of SW Compensation for his work and also SW VP for HR Jim Johnsen for being supportive on behalf of staff on this and the COLA issue on the next paragraph.

A smaller issue: with all the recalls of drugs like Vioxx by the manufacturers, I am working to get our health care plan reimbursed for the larger portion of the cost along with reimbursement to the employee. Since costs charged to our plan increase the take from our paycheck as well as to the University, it seems like ought to be done, but to date, Premera doesn't seem to know it or know how.

### Regular Cost of Living Increase

Staff Council participated in the Compensation Task Force, which has led initially to a commitment by UA Statewide and the Board of Regents to an automatic 2% cost of living increase (COLA) each year, or equal to the Anchorage COLA if less than 2%. A substantial amount of documentation on government and private sector compensation was developed in the course of the task force. Kurt Carlson of ARSC deserves special mention for his resources, which can be found at <http://people.arsc.edu/~kcarlson/UA/Compensation.html> and <http://people.arsc.edu/~kcarlson/UA/Rangelindex.html>.

### Workplace Ethics

Our own Jean Crews, UAF Staff Council Rep, is chairing this important Staff Council committee. They are working on issues such as having supervisor training, better methods of dealing with employee-supervisor problems than grievances. A short webpage is at: [www.uaf.edu/uafgov/staff/staffcom/ethics/](http://www.uaf.edu/uafgov/staff/staffcom/ethics/)

### Reclassification

UAF Staff Council has been constantly pushing to get the re-classification project completed, though I suspect SW HR would be just as happy to be done as we would be. Much of the administrative group was finally completed lately. There are some miscellaneous groups now to be completed.

## **GI Main Building Cooling**

Anyone here over the first half of last summer will know that it was untenably hot. With no air conditioning and inadequate ventilation, increasing hot summers (I believe in climate change) won't make this trend get easier. However with both UAF Staff Council Unit 5 (GI) reps AND the GI Staff Council prodding and documentation (Thanks to By Valentine and her merry band of data loggers), we've been able to have the support of our director, who got UAF support in loaning us the money to provide relief beginning next summer with a \$1.5 million cooling unit onto the roof. While not full blown air conditioning, it should reduce the heat load to at least 5° below the outside temperature instead of 10° above.

## **Parking** (everyone's favorite subject)

While we definitely lost parking on the West Ridge with the construction of the utilidor down Koyukuk Drive and the West Ridge Research Building, our needs are not being ignored in the long term. With completion of the Circulation and Parking Plan <http://www.uaf.edu/mastplan/circulation/plan/index.html> and approval by out-going Chancellor Lind in his final act last June, there is a documented method for recognizing the parking needs of West Ridge. Staff Council played an active role in development of this plan and I attended and commented upon the plan as a member of the university community, encouraged by GI Director Roger Smith and the GI Staff Council. We were able to squeak out additional electrified spots to the north side of WRRB, get 76 electrified spots in the Sheenjek lot behind the old greenhouse, and most recently got 16 spots electrified just to the west of the former west boundary of the AHRC west lot. Special thanks for the latter goes to Staff Council member Marcia Boyette. While the future improvements remain undefined, there is an effort to get a handle on West Ridge needs. The Circulation and Parking Subcommittee and the Master Plan Committee will be playing an important role.

Another update on parking is that, in June 2004, Parking Services was placed under Facilities Services Operations as an auxiliary, which means it must pay for itself. Challenges which were addressed in the Circulation and Parking Plan (CPP) note that the shuttle service is not appropriately and directly reimbursed for the approximate \$400,00 annual cost, as roughly half of the service is for the Lower Campus to West Ridge route. Parking Services also foresaw a deficit, which an auxiliary is not supposed to do. Chancellor Jones recently approved an increase in parking fees for faculty and staff of 20% (from \$184 to \$220/year, beginning next fiscal year. Gold permits will go up 20% as well. Student permits were left the same, however significantly, a student transportation fee (recommended in the CPP) will be implemented for \$13/semester. While this will not fully offset the cost of non-parking lot shuttle service, it is a step in that direction. There are additional issues relating to metered lots. I have placed a copy of the Parking Services budget and a presentation they provided on our website at [www.gi.alaska.edu/staffcouncil/](http://www.gi.alaska.edu/staffcouncil/)

## **Master Plan Committee**

As some of you know, I have been attending the Master Plan Committee ([www.uaf.edu/mpc](http://www.uaf.edu/mpc)) partly in conjunction with monitoring the parking situation up here on the West Ridge. Staff Council now has a seat on this important committee, which I fill. Bringing the benefit of having previously served on the two planning bodies of the Fairbanks North Star Borough Planning Board and Planning Commission, I hope this will lead to additional awareness of GI and West Ridge needs. This committee, while advisory to the Chancellor, is also the oversight for the Circulation and Parking Subcommittee, the North Campus Subcommittee, the Landscape and Outdoor Art Subcommittee, and more. Our own John Craven has been both chair and member of this committee for some time, but has indicated his intention to step off.

## **West Ridge Mall**

This area of favored parking was finally planted last fall and efforts to upgrade the landscaping are in discussion through the Landscape and Outdoor Art Subcommittee. They are looking at a number of ideas of planting, but also have our desire to reclaim the volleyball court on their radar. They do have a campus landscape plan that can be found at [http://www.uaf.edu/mastplan/landscape/2004\\_landscape\\_plan.html](http://www.uaf.edu/mastplan/landscape/2004_landscape_plan.html) If anyone is interested in giving input, please do check out their website at <http://www.uaf.edu/mastplan/landscape>

## **Staff Council Calendar**

This has been a favorite of many, from the input I have received. While UAF Staff Council was unable to print the 2004 calendar due to budget constraints, I am pleased to say we are going to pull it off for 2005. They should be available by the second week of January.

## **Thanks and New Reps**

Thanks go out to Julie Wegner and Steve Estes, retiring UAF Staff Council representative and alternate respectively. Particularly, Julie's expertise and perspective from HR was very helpful. I can also announce that the list of UAF Staff Council reps and alternates for this next calendar year are:

Mary Pat Boger, Info Office  
Jean Crews, ASF  
Melissa Kralman, Human Resources  
Gary Newman, Computer Resource Center

Marcia Boyette, ASF, alternate  
Joanna Meyers, Director's Office, alternate

I hope this update has been helpful to you.

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