

To Kelly Hall

Chairperson – Support Staff Council

April 28, 2008

As a follow up to our previous conversations regarding Support Staff Proposals for a “Voluntary Sick Leave Transfer Policy” and for a “Retirement Incentive Payment” for Support Staff employees, I offer the following comment. When these proposals were initially forwarded to my attention I sought the feedback of the President’s Cabinet concerning ideas, suggestions, and concerns. After consideration of all presented perspectives, it was decided that the implementation of these proposals were not feasible or appropriate at this time. The primary reasons were as follows:

**Voluntary Sick Leave Transfer Policy Proposal** – At present, there is not consistency concerning the policies governing the accrual, usage, and “cash out” of accumulated sick time. For example, the Support Staff employees are compensated for ½ of accumulated sick time, up to 90 days (45 days of equivalent payment) at the time of retirement. EAP and faculty receive no payment for these accumulations, and the methods of accrual differ between these two groups. Because of the lack of uniformity, and the differing individual values associated with each employee, particularly at the time of retirement, the University would anticipate the donation of large quantities of presently “uncompensated” sick time accruals, which would be applied to long-term illnesses. We are not unsympathetic to the unfortunate illnesses that occur, but the impact would be to leave a department without the ability to fund replacement help for those absent for extended periods, leaving the added workload to be borne by remaining employees, or to be left undone. For the University to “fund” each accrued sick day, significant resources

would be required, and compensation remains a top priority at this time. Wil Downs and Chip Rogers have been assigned to prepare a revenue neutral proposal for consideration by the cabinet and the campus. As this is completed, I will be discussing it with the Council leadership. This plan is to also address some of the inconsistencies of the current programs.

**Retirement Incentive Payment Proposal** – As your proposal suggests, there is a significant financial cost associated with this proposal. As funding permits, compensation for staff remains a top priority. As you know, the University confronts a substantial challenge regarding the funding needs of our present health insurance program, including the post retirement component. I would suggest that the Council resubmit this for consideration sometime after this challenge is addressed.

As I mentioned, this was presented and discussed by the cabinet upon receipt of the proposals. I also discussed this with cabinet last Wednesday to confirm the position before sending you this. I do have some optimism with the work that Wil and Chip are doing, and there may be some other issues that we will be bringing for discussion. I have challenged Wil to look into several areas, and I think that the Campus will be pleased with some of the thinking underway. At any rate, this represents the status as of this time.  
Thanks.