



**Faculty Council Personnel & Benefits Committee Meeting**

**1:00 to 3:00 PM, Friday, May 2, 2025**

**Zoom Video Conference (<https://cusystem.zoom.us/j/92047854533>)**

**MINUTES**

**Attending:** Jeffrey Schrader (Chair, UCD), Jeffrey Zax (Vice-Chair, UCB), Karen Sobel (UCD), Katie Sullivan (UCCS), Lindsay Yates (AMC), Melanie Joy (AMC), Michelle Martinez (SYS), Sherry McCormick (UCCS), Diana White (UCD), Sloan G Speck (UCB), Celine Dauverd (UCB), Michael Jay Stutzer (UCB)

**I. Call to order and review of minutes of Friday, March 7, 2025**

- A. Motion to approve minutes from March.
  - a. Motion to approve; seconded; vote (APPROVED)
- B. Minutes from Friday, April 4, 2025, will be considered at the meeting on Friday, September 5, 2025.

**II. Michelle Martinez, Director of Strategic Benefits Initiatives, Employee Services**

- A. Summary of Retirement Funds:
  - The committee overseeing retirement plans meets quarterly.
  - Consultants (fiduciaries) review fund performance, number of participants, and other key metrics. Poorly performing funds are placed on a watch list for five quarters. After that, further action may be recommended, such as removing the funds or continuing to monitor it.
  - Funds are evaluated on: organizational stability; philosophy, process, performance, and expenses; consistency and asset base.
- B. TIAA Real Estate Fund Update:
  - The fund was placed on the watch list due to management changes and the underperformance of the real estate program. It remained on the list for five quarters. After a detailed review and presentation by TIAA, the committee decided to retain the fund on the platform and continue monitoring it due to its unique nature.
  - Other funds on the watch list:

- Artisan Mid-Cap Growth Funds: On watch due to underperformance vs. benchmarks.
- JP Morgan and American Funds: Also underperforming; labeled as a “minor concern.”

C. Retirement Fee Structure:

- In 2021, the plan moved to a tiered fee structure, replacing the asset-based approach.
- Aimed to balance fee burdens between employees with high asset balances and those with smaller accounts (e.g., students, new employees).
- Michelle offered to provide past meeting minutes on this topic upon request.

E. Secure 2.0- Catch Up Contributions:

- Effective January 2026, employees aged 50+ with prior-year FICA wages  $\geq$  \$145,000 must make catch-up contributions on a Roth (after-tax) basis.
- This affects 403(b), 401(k), and 457 plans.
- System changes are challenging (Oracle, PeopleSoft) and may require manual tracking.
- The team will implement a comprehensive communication strategy to educate employees.

F. Open Enrollment Communications:

- CU Health Plan-Extended is being phased out. Members must take action to enroll in a new plan or risk losing coverage. Pathway Plan is not a direct replacement for the extended plan.
- Passive enrollment applies to other plans.
- Targeted communications have been sent.
- Open enrollment ends next Friday, May 9<sup>th</sup>.

G. Flexible Spending Accounts (FSA):

- Employees must re-enroll each year for health care or dependent care.
- Health Saving Accounts (HSA) tied to high-deductible health plans do not require annual re-enrollment.

H. Committee Feedback and Concerns:

- Member shared a provider access issue- some urgent care practices do not accept the high-deductible plan despite being listed in the Anthem network.

Anthem acknowledged contract non renewals with some providers. Michelle requested that any known provider/practice examples be forwarded for review.

- Children’s Hospital- rumors incorrectly suggested CU plans no longer covered services at Children’s Hospital. Michelle clarified this only applies to the Pathway Plan and reaffirmed that other plans still provide access.

### **III. Prospects for CU to monitor employment status of employees who use benefits related to leave**

#### **A. Tracking Terminations Related to Leave:**

- A question was raised about whether CU can track employees who separate from the university after taking leave (e.g., due to exhaustion of leave).
- Michelle explained that while termination reasons are entered into the system, they are inconsistently recorded across departments. For example, some departments mark terminations as “retirement.”
- Due to inconsistent and incomplete data entry, the system currently cannot produce reliable reports specific to terminations related to leave exhaustion.
- Michelle noted that campus HR departments may have better insight into individual cases, but this information is not centralized.
- CU’s legal team confirmed that terminations due to exhaustion of leave are rare and generally avoided. They expressed surprise at the concern but acknowledged its legitimacy. HR must work closely with legal in such cases, making it an uncommon and deliberate action.

#### **B. Faculty Facing Border Detainment or Immigration Issues:**

- Chair relayed a concern from a faculty member of international origin regarding the university’s ability to assist faculty who may face detainment or complications when re-entering the U.S. from abroad, particularly after university-sponsored travel.
- While CU does not typically assume responsibility for such issues in the case of students, the question was raised about whether faculty could receive institutional support.
- Michelle had not encountered this issue in her office but agreed to take the question back to explore whether any guidance or support exists.

#### **IV. Dental benefits-follow up to discussion of Friday, February 7, 2025.**

- A. Insufficient Coverage Limits: the current annual cap on dental benefits is too low to cover major or multiple procedures, leading to significant out-of-pocket expenses for some employees.
- B. Limited Provider Participation: Many dental providers are dropping out of the plan due to low reimbursement rates, reducing access to care for employees.
- C. Lack of Comprehensive Data: Existing reporting only covers a narrow timeframe and geographic area, providing an incomplete picture of usage trends and access challenges.
- D. Structural Limitations of Current Model: The plan operates more like a capped reimbursement program than true insurance, failing to effectively spread risk for high-cost dental needs.
- E. Proposed Way Forward:
  - Request for Expanded Data: Broader and longer-term data will be requested, including provider participation trends, utilization patterns across regions, and plan performance over time.
  - Explore Alternative Models: Suggestions include developing a dental plan with better risk-sharing (e.g., high-cost coverage with out-of-pocket caps) or a self-funded model offering more flexibility and transparency.
  - Continue Dialogue with Benefits Team: Concerns and recommendations will be forwarded to the benefits administrators for consideration, with a goal of revisiting the issue in the fall. Charges are billed to the home campus (for dependents).

#### **V. Housing benefits for Instructional, Research, and Clinical (IRC) faculty, Initiatives Employee Services**

- A. Issue: The housing assistance benefit is currently limited in its scope and is not extended to full-time Instructional, Research, and Clinical (IRC) faculty. Previous communications suggested that legal restrictions prevent extending the benefit. However, a review of the relevant state statute indicates it allows housing assistance for full-time faculty without specifying tenure-track status.
- B. Concerns:
  - A lack of follow-up clarification from university leadership has created confusion around the legal and policy rationale.

- There may be financial, not legal, reasons limiting benefit expansion, but these have not been clearly communicated.
- Transparency and accuracy in interpreting legal guidelines are critical for informed decision-making.

C. Way Ahead:

- Continue efforts to obtain clear guidance and rationale from university administration.
- Re-examine the legal interpretation of eligibility for the benefit and assess financial feasibility.
- Prioritize open communication and data sharing to support an equitable approach to housing support for all full-time faculty.

**VI. Follow-up on Equal Pay for Equal Work Act resolution submitted for vote of April 24, 2025.**

A. Background and Discussion:

- A resolution supporting the Equal Pay for Equal Work Act (EPEWA) was recently passed by a strong majority of the Faculty Council.
- Some stakeholders expressed concern over the timing and visibility of the resolution. The vote was not mentioned in official communications, raising concerns about transparency and support from campus leadership.
- One campus leader reportedly objected to language in the resolution that criticized existing policies and practices, while others claimed their campus had already addressed EPEWA-related issues.

B. Concerns:

- Some faculty reported persistent salary disparities despite efforts to seek evaluation, especially among women and mid-career faculty.
- Faculty from certain campuses felt their concerns had not been acknowledged or addressed by local leadership or faculty assemblies.
- Fear of retribution and lack of alternative reporting paths were noted as barriers to addressing pay inequity.

C. Barrier Identified:

- Inconsistent campus engagement on EPEWA, with one major campus

notably unrepresented in follow-up discussions.

- Lack of transparency regarding how salary adjustments or reviews are handled and how many faculty have been affected.
- Faculty are unsure how to escalate concerns beyond department chairs when initial efforts stall.

**D. Next Steps:**

- Continue to engage leadership and faculty assemblies across all campuses to clarify EPEWA implementation status.
- Encourage documentation and public sharing of any progress or policy improvements to address salary equity.
- Support faculty in identifying alternative pathways for salary review and advocating for protection against retaliation.
- Participate in ongoing inter-campus working group discussions to coordinate a system-wide response and policy alignment.

**VII. Follow-up on salary benchmarks from our meeting of Friday, November 4, 2022.**

A. There is concern over lack of accessible, high quality salary benchmark data across campuses. The current data provided by HR is limited and inconsistent, with some campuses restricting access. Faculty also often lack clear guidance on how to obtain or interpret salary benchmarks.

**B. Suggested Actions Include:**

- Launch a faculty-led education effort on how to access and use benchmark data effectively.
- Engage campus-level personnel and benefits representatives to improve transparency and availability.
- Consider a broader push through shared governance to advocate for standardized benchmark practices across the system.

**VIII. Election of Personnel and Benefits Committee leadership of 2025–2026.**

A. The committee held elections for new Chair position. The vote was approved by a majority. Sherry McCormick will serve as PBC Chair from 2025-2028. Jeff Zax will continue as Vice Chair. Jeffrey Schrader will become Immediate Past Chair.

**Adjourned: 3pm**

**Next meeting: Friday, September 5th, 2025**