

**Senate Benefits and Welfare Committee**  
**University of Pittsburgh**  
**Minutes of October 20, 2011 Meeting**  
**9:00-10:30am, VB 138 (Clinical Research Conference Room)**

**Attendees: Elected:** Colleen Culley, Sandra Founds, Irene Kane, Emilia Lombardi, Lara Putnam, Robert Robertson, Sachin Velankar; **Appointed:** John Baker, Elaine Devlin, Ronald Frisch, Nancy Gilkes, John Kozar, Belinda McQuaide, Alan Meisel  
*Not present: Elected; Judith Lave, Angelina Riccelli; Appointed: Taekia Blackwell, Elizabeth Richey, James Holland, Anna Roman, Harvey Wolfe, Andrew Blair, Michael Pinsky, Lori Molinaro*

TOPIC	DISCUSSION	ACTION TO BE TAKEN
Call to order	Irene Kane, Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:05 am.	
Committee business (I. Kane): Approval of September minutes	<p><i>Correction to minutes: Dr Blair has created not a formal external work group but an internal initiative to report on the issue of streamlining paperwork in order to avoid delays in the issuing of ID cards to new faculty or staff.</i></p> <p><i>J. Kozar noted that his September report should read: Express Scripts is trying to buy Medco, not Caremark.</i></p> <p><i>With edits as stated, the minutes were approved unanimously.</i></p> <p><i>It was suggested that the wording be changed to “active and retired faculty and staff,” to reflect the all inclusive impact of our committee.</i></p>	J. Kozar & I. Kane will revise mission statement to comprehensively reflect groups served.
Review/update of mission statement:		
Old business: Update on trans health insurance (Emilia Lombardi):	Emilia Lombardi distributed and reviewed a draft report from the Special Committee on the removal of the “Transsexual Exclusion” and inclusion of Transsexual Health Care Coverage within the University of Pittsburgh’s Health Care Benefits. This report has also been presented to the Senate’s Anti-discrimination Committee. Committee member were advised to review the draft and communicate to Emilia any questions or suggestions for revisions or inclusions. Emilia will then bring the revised report to the Benefits and Welfare Committee as an action agenda item, before then moving to present recommendations to the University Senate.	Committee review and recommendations with subsequent forward movement through Senate.
Communication: Survey (Elaine Devlin)	<p>Elaine Devlin of SAC followed through from previous committee meeting regarding improved communications with a query if it would be worthwhile to conduct a survey to determine which benefits are most highly valued, which are little known, which are functioning well, and which mechanisms of communication are most effective.</p> <p>John Kozar reported that when a similar survey was last conducted, in conjunction with the SAC, a good response rate yielded clear information that HR was able to use in targeted interventions and ongoing planning.</p>	J. Kozar will follow through on survey in conjunction with SAC and report f/u back to B & W Committee.

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Benefits Office Report (John Kozar)	<p>Question: How do you avoid problem of self-selection, such that only those already attuned to the Benefits Office are those responding to this survey? How do you reach the truly low-information potential respondents? Would it be more effective to attempt to communicate directly to a random sample?</p> <p>Answer: When the last survey was conducted, HR did check out the demographics of the respondents and found that at least those were relatively representative of the target population.</p> <p>John Kozar reported that HR is following up on the good suggestions that emerged in last month's meetings. He will make a more detailed report at next month's meeting.</p>	
Main Topic: Standing Firm (Patricia Cluss) and Life Solution Services (Sandra Caffo)	<p><i>Dr. Patricia Cluss is Associate Professor in the Department of Psychiatry at Pitt and Director of Standing Firm: The Business Case to End Partner Violence. This initiative aims to educate employers of the cost of partner violence (domestic violence) and the resources available to assist employers and employees in working proactively to address this issue. Dr. Cluss also works with Life Solutions and other entities at Pitt to ensure that Pitt employees have access to resources to address partner violence. Dr. Cluss noted that the request is for Pitt to join Standing Firm as have UPMC, Chatham, and other large area employers as a lead member in this initiative.</i></p> <p>Partner violence, 25% of workplace violence events, affects workplace safety and employee well-being, increases absences, decreases productivity, causes misuse of work resources, and thus incurs real business costs. The prevalence of the problem means employers cannot simply attempt to avoid it by not hiring victims or perpetrators. At any given time, 10-20% of women, the majority of victims, (depending on subgroup) find themselves in an abusive relationship.</p> <p>Standing Firm has an online website calculator that lets employers estimate their current costs accruing as a result of unaddressed partner violence (costs including health care costs, mental health care costs, lost productivity, etc.)</p> <p>Standing Firm helps employers establish procedures to: Recognize, Respond, and Refer in cases of partner violence. Steps include expanded awareness training, upgrading workplace safety plans, and better communication regarding resources available within the community. Faculty and Staff Assistance Program is one of prime resources for victims, perpetrators, worried co-workers and others seeking guidance about connecting those needing resources to the range of resources available.</p> <p><i>Sandra Caffo of Life Solutions works closely with HR at Pitt and with Standing Firm in order to make resources fully available to Pitt, as other institutions. Life Solutions is the</i></p>	

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	<p>University's Faculty and Staff Assistance Program (FSAP) and it is generally known as an Employee Assistance Program (EAP). The challenges of thinking about workplace safety are extensive and particular when working with large, multi-sited employers like Pitt.</p> <p>Ms. Caffo pointed out that partner violence is not about anger management or specific conflicts that spiral out of control, but rather about control. The perpetrator seeks to assert control over the victim through multiple means, often including phone calls to workplace or other disruptions there. The anxiety (and accurately perceived risk) comes to impact not only the victim but those who work with and around her. How should managers respond? If they continue to think of it as a "personal" issue, they will fail to recognize the system and workplace impact. Life Solutions has in place a multi-level response, so that managers need only place one call to them in order to activate and be given guidance regarding the multiple strands of response that are indicated. Victims rarely identify abuse or partner violence as a primary reason for seeking support or help – far more often they present a different and more immediate/logistical problem, which impacts work performance. Thus the Faculty and Staff Assistance Program partners with both victims and supervisors to work through the reality of complexities and the often lengthy route to long-term resolutions of individual cases.</p> <p>Finally, the Faculty and Staff Assistance Program also works with managers/employers of perpetrators to recognize the ways in which perpetrators' workplace behaviors use workplace resources and require intervention. A management referral may be made to the Employee Assistance Program for f/u which may include limited community resources, such as Standing firm, who provide quality and effective interventions.</p> <p>EAPs and FASPs are sometimes not consulted because of concerns that they are not confidential. Thus it is important that separate community programs such as Standing Firm are available for assistance.</p> <p><b>Questions:</b>  Question: Are concerns over same-gender partner violence also addressed by Standing Firm and Life Solutions?  Answer: Yes, specific resources are available and we make sure to attend to the incidence and particularities of partner violence among same-gender couples, including the added risk of stigmatization or trivialization.</p> <p>Question: Do you also attend elder abuse and child abuse?  Answer: Yes. In some cases reporting is mandatory, and in those cases we try to work</p>	

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	<p>with those who have come to us so that they make the report of the abuse rather than us stepping in to do so.</p> <p>Question: What can one do if a colleague or client presents clear physical signs of abuse but does not acknowledge it?  Answer: You can hand that person a card with contact information for Life Solutions, Standing Firm, or other resources, offering it in a non-intrusive and non-judgmental way.</p> <p>Question: Is it illegal for employers to discriminate against employees on the basis of their involvement in partner violence?  Answer: In Pennsylvania employers are not obliged to provide assistance (nor are they permitted to discriminate in hiring based on considerations of gender, etc). But HR people across the board are very aware of how much it costs them to lose employees due to ongoing problems of this kind, and employers once educated are eager to be proactive in reaching out and guiding employees to the right resources.</p> <p>Question: How is Standing Firm funded, if membership for employers is free?  Answer: We are currently foundation funded.</p> <p>Summary/ Irene Kane: Our committee needs to make a recommendation to the Senate regarding the advisability of formally joining Standing Firm as a member. We will discuss/finalize at next month's meeting. R. Frisch will also review University information on this issue and report to the Committee.</p> <p>Ron Frisch comments that Standing Firm has evolved over time and developed a very good model for how to partner with employers, offering resources and building awareness and working closely with FSAPs and EAPs. In terms of the possibility of Pitt's formal membership, of course it's also the case that there are scores of organizations that are seeking Pitt's membership/partnership, and so one always needs to think carefully about which issues are central and which, although significant, are ultimately tangential to Pitt's core mission. Given the broad scope of Standing Firm's focus on partner violence and other kinds of family abuse/violence.</p>	<p>Committee will review all information prior to next meeting. Following final discussion at this meeting, recommendation will be submitted.</p>
Closing remarks (I. Kane)	Diane Holder of UPMC will be speaking at our next meeting. Irene queried the group regarding a closed meeting and several respondents agreed that a closed meeting will give greater scope to a frank and respectful discussion.	
Adjournment	I. Kane adjourned the meeting at 10:31 am.                      Next meeting: November 16, 2011	