Potpourri

Here it is late November (already). We all need to take a minute or two to wish each other a healthy and rewarding holiday season, and to make sure to take the time to enjoy ourselves and our loved ones.

OK. Down to business.

With little fanfare, a RIC/AFT-initiated new retirement benefit has gone into effect: the 547B Annuity Fund. While you received a notice about it from Maggie Sullivan, RIC’s Associate Director of Human Resources, little additional attention has been given to this optional program. The upcoming Departmental Representatives meeting (Wed., Nov. 26, 12:30-2 in C-L 201) will focus exclusively on the new program. Maggie Sullivan and Jason Blank will lead the discussion, which is open to everyone - refreshments will be served. We are proud that the RIC/AFT initiated the process that resulted in this new retirement benefit being available to BoG employees.

Last month we reported on the upcoming negotiations process for the Contract that expired on June 30. The first meetings in the process will be on December 1 and December 12, involving RIC/AFT, RIFT, the College and the BoG. Progress will be reported as it occurs.

A Nominating Committee for this year’s Union Executive Committee elections has been appointed. Carol Shelton (Nursing) will chair the committee, which includes Randy DeSimone (Management and Technology) and Dena Janson (Library). The committee is seeking nominations for one year terms on the Executive Committee. Please call any member of the committee to nominate yourself or others. Phone numbers are: Carol Shelton (9641), Randy DeSimone (9533) and Dena Janson (9605). Nominations will close on Dec. 12; a membership meeting will be held on Monday, Dec. 15 for additional nominations; the elections will be held by written ballots, immediately thereafter. The new Executive Committee will take office on Jan. 1.
The previous two announcements require more Union participation. While we are talking about a one-year Contract for 2003-2004, the next negotiation process will begin almost immediately and will require a full Negotiations Committee. All indications lead to the expectation that this will be among the most difficult negotiations in our history— as well as one of the most important. So, call the office and volunteer for either or both committees— Negotiations and Executive Committee (9842).

Congratulations to Daniel Scott and Dan Weisman, who were named Freedom Scholars as part of the R.I. Council for the Humanities series on the Meaning of Freedom.

We are delighted that Ben Quattrucci has been appointed office manager of the RIC/AFT. Ben is a retired manager from Fleet Bank. He brings technological expertise, a passion for organization, extensive people skills and a healthy sense of humor to our Union. Ben will be in the office every day, 9 AM - 1 PM. His impact was visible the first day as Jason’s mess disappeared. Come to C-L 229 and witness the improvement while you introduce yourself. Welcome, Ben.

We note with consternation that there was no “Take a Professor to Lunch Week” this semester.

We expect that in the very near future we will be able to announce a Memorandum of Understanding regarding faculty load credit. As it stands now, the load credit formula only applies to 2003-2004. We will attempt to include 2004-2005 so that the load credit will be computed on the basis of four consecutive semesters and 48 load credit hours.

The RIC/AFT clocks, commemorating the Union’s 35th anniversary of service, have not all reached their intended beneficiaries. If that’s you, please call the office before the batteries expire. Clocks will also be available at the Holiday Party.

Agency Fee faculty soon will be receiving a letter from the Union asking them to join. Non-members cannot vote in Union elections, participate or vote on contractual issues, attend Union meetings or run for RIC/AFT office. Often, non-members have viewpoints that are underrepresented in Union discussions, and can make important contributions to decision-making. The total difference in annual dues is $54.34.

The Union has collected a wealth of resource materials related to higher education issues, benefits, leadership, conflict-resolution, technology, shared-governance and collaboratives (e.g., Working R.I.). These materials are for our members, so come by and take a look at what’s here.

Jason L. Blank, President

The RIC/AFT and PSA at RIC Annual Holiday Party will be Monday, December 8, 4 PM until ? at the Faculty Center. All are invited. As always, the food, drink, music and company will be outstanding.