



News

OCTOBER 1997

From the Chair

I have served as chair of the Professional Staff Organization for some three months now, having taken over the job from Bruce Bennett, who did such a good job last year in managing our organization. It is a real privilege to be working in this role, and I want to thank the PSO Board for the opportunity. They are a great group to work with. I have been at the University for 21 years and I never cease to be impressed by the talent, energy and enthusiasm of the UW professional staff. It is a remarkable collection of people, with an enormous range of skills and abilities that keep the University running under challenging conditions.

I have been hard at work with the PSO board over the summer to determine the directions of the organization for 1997-98. There is a great deal that still remains to be done, but I am very pleased with the plans that are taking shape and the opportunities that will present themselves for the year.

One important factor shaping our efforts was the completion, last spring, of the Employee Relations Assessment Report by consultants R.L. Anderson and Associates. This report discussed the staff situation at UW and made a number of recommendations for positive change which are now being considered by the administration. The PSO Board reviewed this report in depth and spent a good part of our annual summer retreat analyzing its recommendations and preparing a prioritized list from the PSO perspective, which was then sent to Executive Vice President Weldon Ihrig and Director of Personnel, Margot Ray. A copy of our recommendation letter can be seen on the PSO web page. The Anderson Report itself can be seen on the University web

page, under Admin Guide/Personnel Services/Employee Relations Assessment Report or at www.washington.edu/admin/emprel/ra.html.

There were two priorities among Anderson's recommendations that we felt were particularly important: improving staff training and developing a better understanding of the dispute resolution processes for professional staff. To begin movement toward the first goal, the Board recently approved a new scholarship program designed by our Professional Development Committee which begins this year for professional staff. It is described elsewhere in this issue. For the second, our Research Committee is devoting much of its time to investigating how the University handles staff disputes. The first in a series of articles on the topic appears in this issue of the newsletter, and we have tentative plans to develop a PSO seminar on the topic later this year.

After much discussion, we have decided not to hold a PSO Awards & Recognition ceremony this year. As most of you know, we have sponsored the annual awards ceremonies since the earliest days of the PSO. However, this year, with the University intending to hold two staff awards for excellence ceremonies, we felt that PSO energy and funds could better be used elsewhere. Consequently, we are taking a year off from awards activities and will revisit the subject again next year.

One avenue the Board does intend to emphasize is the Internet. We have several excellent computer and network staff, Jim Mock, Fred Nick, and Renata Smith, on the board this year and have asked them them, and other volunteer professional staff like Psychology's Katie Swanson, to help us improve the PSO email and web resources. We are empha

sizing use of the PROSTAFF mailing list this year, and intend to use it more often to distribute announcements and information in a more timely manner than is possible with the quarterly newsletter. Let me encourage each of you to sign up for the PROSTAFF list. It is very easy to do. Instructions are included elsewhere in this newsletter. For those of you, like me, who receive too much email, let me assure you that traffic levels on this list are not high and we will make every effort to restrict our communications to necessary and timely information.

Between the items I have mentioned and various other issues which surface every month, it is going to be a busy year for the Board. Look to the PROSTAFF email list, the web page, and this newsletter for further announcements as the year progresses. I wish you all a productive and rewarding year.

Steve Graham, PSO Chair

You are invited

PSO Annual Meeting

Guest Speaker:

Provost Lee
Huntsman

Thursday, October 16

12:00-1:00pm

Walker-Ames Room,
Kane Hall

PSO At Your Fingertips: You can...

*read about the Professional Staff Organization at "<http://weber.u.washington.edu/~psoweb>".

*contact the PSO Board members by sending electronic mail to "psoboard@u.washington.edu".

*receive current PSO information by subscribing to the PROSTAFF email list. To subscribe, send the e-mail message, "subscribe prostaff <your name>" to "listproc@u.washington.edu". To remove yourself from the list, send the message "unsubscribe prostaff."

All the Better To Hear You With

PSO has always believed that communications is the backbone of any organization and, to expand on that theme, another way for you to

Five new Board members were elected for two-year terms. Now representing the University's Continuing Education Specialists is Renata Smith (Director of Computing and Communications, UW Educational Outreach); representing Principal Assistants to Executive Heads is Anita

the offices, each provides a different type of service.

Employee Relations, part of the Personnel Office, provides assistance through Human Resources Representatives who serve as a confidential sounding-board and adviser to

send information to the PSO Board has been created. Sending an electronic mail message to "psoboard@u.washington.edu" will cause the message to be sent to all the members of the board. Of course you can still send messages to any individual member if you wish. All input is appreciated.

You can read about the PSO on the World Wide Web at "http://webber.u.washington.edu/~psoweb". Copies of current and past newsletters are posted there along with many other items of interest.

All professional staff receive copies of the newsletter and special notices through campus mail. People who wish to receive the special notices via electronic mail, as well as time sensitive items of information which do not allow for mailings, can subscribe to the "prostaff" mailing list. To add yourself to the list, send an email message to "listproc@u.washington.edu" with nothing in the subject and "subscribe prostaff Bob Smith" in the body of the message, where "Bob Smith" is replaced with your name and the quotes are not included. To remove yourself from the list, follow the same procedure but send the message "unsubscribe prostaff".

Whitney (Administrator, School of Oceanography); and, representing Advisers and Counselors, Jody Burns (Director of Counseling Services, Department of Psychology, Charles Simenstad (Senior Biologist, Fisheries Research Institute) now represents Research Scientist and Engineers while Danya Tomlinson (Assistant to the Dean, Graduate School) serves as the At-Large representative.

These newly elected Board members join continuing representatives Harold Federow (Associate Director, Program in Engineering and Manufacturing Management), Roger Leger (Research Engineer, Department of Physics), James Mock (Computer Support Services Manager, College of Engineering), and Fred Nick (Director, Center for Social Science Computation and Research). You are encouraged to contact your representatives at any time to discuss your interests, concerns and suggestions.

help select a course of action that the employee is comfortable with and to facilitate discussion and informal resolution of complaints. Employees with supervisory responsibilities can also consult their human resources representatives for assistance with supervisory issues. To determine the identity of your representative, call the appropriate number below:

Staff Personnel 543-2333
Health Sciences Personnel 543-9406
Harborview Medical Center 223-3366
UWMC Personnel 548-6116

The Employee Advisory Service (464-6883) is an off-campus resource contracted by the University to provide services to U.W. employees and their families. EAS does not mediate between supervisor and employee, but can provide confidential counseling and referral on work-related and personal problems of all types, information about grievance procedures, and skill-building for conflict resolution. Supervisors can refer employees here for a variety of assistance.

The Ombudsman's Office (543-6028) offers information and education about University rules and procedures, confidential consultation, and conciliation and mediation services. No action is taken without the client's explicit consent. The Ombudsman's office helps disputants work together to find a mutually satisfactory resolution.

The University Complaint Investigation and Resolution Office (UCIRO) (616-2028) investigates allegations of wrongdoing by University employees through interviews with the complaining party, the employee whose behavior is the subject of the complaint, witnesses and others. The results of the investigation are reported to the head of the appropriate administrative unit for corrective action, if warranted, and are also available to the individual making the complaint.

Ruth Ludwin

Conflicts, Disputes, and Grievance Resolution for UW Employees

While most of us dislike and try to avoid conflict, taking active steps to face and resolve conflict may be the least stressful option in the long run. Finding a solution to a conflict requires that we advocate for ourselves and clearly communicate our point of view. Attentive listening is also essential. Many workplace conflicts are resolved locally. For more difficult issues, tools are available within the UW to help resolve employee conflicts. Knowing how these resources are organized is an important step in selecting the appropriate technique to address a particular complaint. Conflict-resolution resources are generally neutral, in fairness to both parties, and usually offer confidential consultation. The UW Operations Manual; section D46.3, provides additional details.

Three UW offices, and one off-campus office, provide conflict resolution services for disputes between University employees. While an employee can contact any of

PSO Elects New Slate

This past June, the PSO membership elected Steve Graham (Director of Computing, College of Arts and Sciences) to lead the PSO for the 1997-98 academic year. He succeeds Bruce Bennett (Director of Instructional Programs, Department of Sociology) who will remain on the board for a final year as Past Chair.

Also elected for one-year terms on the Executive Board are, as vice chair, Debbie Prince (Academic Counselor, Undergraduate Advising Center), as secretary, Nancy Sherman (Administrator, Applied Physics Lab), and, as treasurer, Arni Litt (Research Scientist, Department of Zoology).

Scholarship Implemented

A scholarship program for UW professional staff members was proposed by the PSO Professional Development Committee and approved by the Board at its September 5th meeting. The scholarship program was implemented due to the recognition that many professional

Position Review Process

On Tuesday, September 16th, Jennie Webster from the Office of Compensation and Professional Staff Programs (OCPSP) conducted a "News You Can Use" information session regarding the salary and/or position review process for Professional Staff. She discussed the position review

Personnel Services Web Development

You may have noticed the increasing web activity coming from Personnel Services. In July, the Benefits Office launched an extensive website which includes online forms requests and seminar registration, full documentation about the medical, dental, life, LTD insurance programs, all of

staff members need to attend classes and conferences to improve their skills and knowledge base but have been unable to do so because of the cost involved and the inability of some units to fund professional development for their employees. The awards, limited to \$250 per person per year, are for full or partial cost of education programs which may be classes, professional meetings, or conferences. The Board hopes this program will enable more professional staff to take advantage of educational offerings from UW Staff Training, other UW programs, and non-UW organizations.

Each year an amount will be budgeted by the PSO board meeting for the scholarships. A budget of \$5,000 has been approved for this first year of the program. Applicants must be permanent UW professional staff members who have been employed here at least six months. Board member, Danya Tomlinson, chair the Scholarship Committee. Professional staff members interested in serving on this committee should contact her at danya@u.washington.edu or 543-9054 as soon as possible. The committee will establish application procedures. Additional information about the application process will be announced on the PROSTAFF e-mail list as soon as it is available this fall. The PSO Board and the Professional Development Committee are pleased to offer these scholarships, as one of the PSO goals is to foster professionalism and encourage professional development. This is a very tangible way to forward the goal. Employees who continue to learn and grow professionally are generally happier in their work, better co-workers, and more productive.

Marge Baylor

process and then opened the floor to questions. There were many good questions asked and lots of helpful information shared.

The session covered the reasons for requesting a salary and/or position review, the materials needed to initiate the review, the factors OCPSP considers when conducting the review and how the review is completed. There are two types of reviews. A salary grade review (full position review) is appropriate when the position has changed significantly enough to warrant a change in salary grade. An in-grade salary review is appropriate to recognize changes in the position's duties and responsibilities; increased level of functioning; and/or misalignment of salary relationships. A summary of the process for requesting these two types of reviews was provided in a handout titled, "Professional Staff Position/Salary Review Process." If you were unable to attend, this two page summary may be requested from OCPSP via email: ocpsp@u.washington.edu. Additionally, OCPSP plans to conduct another session on this topic before the end of the year. Look for an announcement regarding date and location in University Week and on the ProStaff email list.

the retirement plans, and the Voluntary Investment Program. In many cases health care providers and investment companies supporting these programs created connecting websites specific to the UW. Stay tuned to www.washington.edu/admin/benefits for upcoming open enrollment information and the scheduled times and locations of Benefits Fairs.

In August, Training and Development went online with their current course catalog and annual plan of courses, information about their certificate programs, staff conferences and events such as the *Network* monthly meeting, and customized training services. Visit them on the Personnel Services site or at www.washington.edu/admin/traindev to learn more about these programs. In addition to the current webs which are continually modified and updated as needed, other webs in development include supervisory/employee information about FMLA, shared leave, labor contracts, and other policies and procedures. Pictures of the new awards will be added to the Service Award program section soon. New webpages are being added all of the time. Personnel welcomes your comments and they plan to use the web more and more to share information and solicit ideas and input on selected topics.

Bookmark
<http://www.washington.edu/admin/personnel> for access to all the Personnel Services web information.

Liz Coveney