

# NFA NEWSLETTER

Publication of the UNR Nevada Faculty Alliance

February 2008

Editor Jake Highton

*President's jottings*

## Plaudits accorded Rogers, Glick in budget crisis

By **GLENN MILLER**  
UNR NFA president

The recent decisions on cutbacks following the reduced state revenue projections put each unit of the Nevada System of Higher Education (NSHE) in a difficult position. UNR is no exception.

As is nearly always the case, additional money is generally easy to spend while allocating budget cuts is always difficult.

Nobody wants to be in a position of taking money away from needed programs that may already be under stress.

UNR did reasonably well, however, because of a remarkably cooperative and collaborative attitude on the part of the UNR administration, the students and faculty.

Kudo's first of all go to Chancellor Jim Rogers. His strong and vocal defense of the NSHE was important to lowering the mandated cuts from 8.5 percent to 4.5 percent. The higher cut would have meant severe reductions in funding rates that would have done great damage to each NSHE unit.

The UNR administration, particularly President Milton Glick, also deserves commendation. The reductions were spread across campus in a way that was the best that could be done under the circumstances.



**Glenn Miller**

Students supported higher fees (\$5 per credit) that offset some of the cuts. The UNR Faculty Senate and the UNR NFA supported a six-month delay in receiving the merit increases to have begun in July. This turns out to be about \$1 million.

The NFA is generally not in the business of supporting give-backs on faculty pay. But in this case there appeared to be no alternative--and probably would have happened anyway.

The move by the NFA created good will among the Regents. Glick, during his presentation to the Regents, gave credit to everyone who worked on the budget problems, unlike some of the other NSHE units.

If there is a second round of cuts, however, the decisions will be much more difficult and will very likely result in wide-ranging calls for a special session of the Legislature.

Nevada is not out of the woods yet. It continues to experience lower than needed revenue.

See **MILLER** page 3

## PEBP approves domestic partner health benefits

By **JACQUE EWING-TAYLOR**

The Public Employees' Benefits Program board at its January meeting unanimously approved offering full health care benefits to domestic partners and their children, a benefits extension that the Nevada Faculty Alliance has urged for several years.

The Nevada System of Higher Education presidents petitioned the PEBP board last June to make this change to the plan. After getting an attorney general's opinion, the board heard the matter in December, asked for additional information on the fiscal impact and then heard the matter again in January, voting to adopt the proposal and begin the approval process.

This action requires that regulations adopted by the board are sent to the Legislative Counsel Bureau for review and approved by the Legislative Commission before the changes can be made to the PEBP plan and offered to participants.

### **Requirements**

If approved, the plan would define domestic partners according to the following criteria:

1. Both partners are 18 years of age or older and are mentally competent to make a contract.
2. This is a sole committed relationship for both partners.

See **BENEFITS** page 2

# Retirement surprises: 'all of them bad'

By **BRUNO BAUER and STAFF**

The NFA and the Faculty Senate hosted a successful forum on faculty health and retirement benefits.

About 60 people at the Oct. 2 meeting increased their understanding of benefits through presentations by Jacque Ewing-Taylor, member of the Public Employees' Benefits Program and NFA boards, Tim McFarling, director of UNR Faculty Human Resources, and Jim Richardson, NFA lobbyist.

A few years ago the health insurance system for state employees was a catastrophe. The claims processing company had departed, leaving behind

a big deficit and a huge backlog of unpaid claims.

Thanks to the dedicated efforts of Ewing-Taylor, faculty medical benefits are not only solvent again but are actually growing in directions that help us sustain our health.

The health of the faculty is vital to the university. With challenging demographic factors making it harder to recruit new faculty, UNR needs senior faculty to continue working.

Additionally, if the economy continues to perform poorly, faculty will need to work longer before retiring.

Ewing-Taylor reported that the self-insured health care system un-

der PEBP is functioning well and is financially sound because a lower than expected number of high-cost cases.

Ewing-Taylor also encouraged increased involvement of faculty with PEBP activities. McFarling provided an overview of faculty retirement options available to university faculty. He said one confusing aspect of retirement is how Social Security interacts with retirement income.

## Social Security limits

McFarling noted the Social Security windfall elimination proviso substantially limits the Social Security retirement benefit of most faculty members.

Rich Siegel, retired political science professor, said: "There are many surprises when you retire--all of them bad."

McFarling emphasized the importance of understanding how the various retirement options work, advising increased attention to retirement as the retiring date nears.

Glenn Miller, president of the UNR chapter of the NFA, sent a letter to President Milton Glick noting phase-in retirements are difficult for small departments because of the lack of teaching coverage for required courses.

When a faculty member approaches retirement and takes advantage of 50 percent appointment, the number of courses taught will also be reduced by that percentage. One solution to this problem is to return the retained phase-in retirement salary to the college and/or department of the specific faculty member so funding is available to hire instructors for those courses.

Miller noted that the new UNR ombudsman, Pamela Haney, has been working well with faculty and staff. The position was established by Glick to help resolve personnel problems.

## BENEFITS from page 1

3. That neither is married to another.  
4. That the partners are not related by blood.

5. That the partners provide each other with mutual support for the necessities of life.

6. That the partners have shared a residence for at least six consecutive months before the coverage effective date and continue to share a residence.

7. That the employee is responsible and agrees to notify PEBP within 30 days of the dissolution of the domestic partnership.

8. Full names, address and dates of birth for the partners will be provided.

9. Social Security numbers for both partners will be provided.

10. Acknowledgment of possible federal income tax consequences.

11. The affidavit and all criteria will be re-affirmed on an annual basis during open enrollment.

## Effective date

Given the length of time required by the approval process, it is doubtful

that these benefits will be offered beginning July 1. But if all goes smoothly, the benefits should be available for the open enrollment in May of 2009 for an effective date of July 1, 2009.

## Fight looming

Final approval will not go through without a fight. At the PEBP board meeting in December, a group that successfully pushed through Nevada's constitutional amendment banning gay marriage, vowed to rally its constituency for the Legislative Commission hearings.

When the time comes for those hearings the NFA will let you know.

Gary Peck, executive director of the Nevada American Civil Liberties Union, lauded the PEPB board for its decision. He said the board had "the vision and courage to do the right thing by extending these benefits to people who clearly deserve them."

"This is another step on the long road to equality for all of Nevada's residents and workers," Peck said.

# NFA fights for faculty rights. Join it!

By **DOROTHY HUDIG**  
and **STAN OMAYE**

UNR faces record numbers of lawsuits with more than 30 federal suits. Most of these lawsuits deal with faculty rights and employment issues. (\*See PACER Web site below for further information.)

With the fiscal shortfalls and pending cutbacks, more faculty members could face dire consequences.

NFA believes that such unfortunate situations could be circumvented by their supportive mediation. Therefore it behooves you to join NFA, your local advocate before the need--and in time of need.

Your employers and peers recognize NFA, an American Association of University Professors (AAUP) affiliate, as the mark of respected professionals looking out for your interests.

As does AAUP, the mission of NFA is to advance academic freedom and shared governance, to define fundamental professional values and standards for higher education and to ensure higher education's contribution

to the common good.

Long seen as a respected leader in Nevada academics, NFA has expanded its reach, bringing more services and value to its members than ever before.

## 10 reasons to join

1. Protects the rights of faculty for free and open investigation, speech and thought.

2. Advocates for those rights before university administration.

3. Provides an effective voice for faculty and higher education in the Nevada Legislature.

4. Advocates for decent faculty salary and benefits and, for several years, has had an NFA member of the Public Employees' Benefits Program (PEBP) Board.

5. Provides legal advice for members and non-members when rights are in question.

6. Provides legal consultations to members on faculty rights issues.

7. Has been active in establishing and maintaining the NSHE merit pool, and competitive salaries for faculty.

8. Is the Nevada affiliate of the AAUP, the longest existing organization for advocacy of the faculty.

9. Has great people in the organization who uniformly feel that protection of the university is critically important to a functioning society.

10. Members receive the AAUP publication, *Academe*, which keeps members up to date on national trends of faculty employment issues.

To join, fill out and mail in the membership form on the back page of this newsletter or contact the NFA Membership Committee (Dorothy Hudig, [dhudig@medicine.nevada.edu](mailto:dhudig@medicine.nevada.edu)).

\*Public Access to Court Electronic Records (PACER) is an electronic public access service that allows users to obtain case and docket information from federal appellate, district and bankruptcy courts and from the U.S. party/case index. Access is available at the Nevada State Court, clerk's office, third floor, 400 S. Virginia St., Reno, Nev.

## MILLER from page 1

Other issues:

- The search for a provost continues. Faculty input is being requested so get your comments to the selection committee or to President Glick. There appear to be some good choices.
- With the recent assaults on women near the university, we need to be reminded of the importance of safety. There may even be a need to have a review of lighting and safety practices

on campus. If anyone feels that an area is unsafe because of the lack of patrolling or lack of lighting, comments should be made to the UNR administration.

- Join the Nevada Faculty Alliance. It serves to protect faculty rights and improve the working environment at UNR. It seeks to ensure that fairness and due process are always observed.

## Updated NFA Web site

<http://www.unr.edu/nfa/>

The NFA Web site has been updated. It features information about forums, links to AAUP, articles, events and faculty assistance.

### UNR NFA BOARD

Glenn Miller, president  
Elizabeth Francis, vice president and legal affairs director  
Barbara Scott, treasurer  
Bruno Bauer, secretary  
Frank Hartigan, past president

### BOARD MEMBERS

Bruce Blackadar  
Jacque Ewing-Taylor  
Mike Havercamp  
Jake Highton  
Dorothy Hudig  
Jerry Johnson  
Stan Omaye  
James Owen  
Ron Phaneuf  
Mary Stewart  
Leah Wilds

**Nevada Faculty Alliance**  
Membership Application Form  
Please mail completed forms to:

Mary Phillips  
903 Crowfoot Cir.  
Henderson, NV 89014  
(702) 898-2849

or

Mary Paszek  
3670 Jacobs Ct  
Washoe Valley, NV 89704  
(775) 849-2272

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ SS#: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Institution: \_\_\_\_\_

Campus Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Mail Stop: \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Campus Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Department: \_\_\_\_\_

Fax #: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Years at Institution: \_\_\_\_\_

- Full Time     Academic Faculty    Tenured:  Yes  No
- Part Time /Adjunct (less than .50 fte)     Administrative Faculty     Non-Tenure Track

**DUES STRUCTURE**

- Gross Annual Income under \$40,000: Dues are \$20 per month
- Gross Annual Income from \$40,000 to \$60,000: Dues are \$25 per month
- Gross Annual Income over \$60,000: Dues are \$30 per month
- Part Time/Adjunct Faculty: Dues are \$45 per year
- Faculty spouse: Same as above, but 50% off for life (\$15 per month cap)
- Retired faculty: No dues for life. Subscription to Academe (required by AAUP) \$30 per year

**MEMBERS OF THE NFA ARE ALSO MEMBERS OF THE AAUP**

I hereby authorize my employer to deduct from my salary and pay to the NFA, in accordance with the agreed payroll deduction procedure, the professional dues for the current membership year and each year thereafter, with the understanding that I may terminate my membership at any time by giving written notice to my campus payroll office and by sending e-mail notice to the NFA at [nvnfa@yahoo.com](mailto:nvnfa@yahoo.com). I understand that notice given after the fifth day of the month will not be in effect until the first day of the following month.

\_\_\_\_\_ Member's Signature    \_\_\_\_\_ Date

**Political Action Committee Contribution**

The Nevada Faculty Alliance requests that members contribute to the Political Action Committee for the support of the NFA political action and public relations activities.

- Yes, I will contribute to NFA's Political Action Committee
- No, I do not wish to contribute at this time.

If yes, please check one:

- \$2 per month             \$4 per month
- \$6 per month             Other \$ \_\_\_\_\_