Johnson County Community College Special Board of Trustees Meeting

November 9, 2022

4 p.m.

Transcript of Meeting

- Good evening or good afternoon. Welcome to special meeting of the Johnson County Community College Board of Trustees meeting here today for November 9th, 2022. I'm gonna go ahead and call the meeting to order. A note for our administration and secretary, that we have six trustees present with Trustee Hamill, I believe, will join us later.

- He's in.

- He's in now. Okay, good. So, Trustee Hamill, well, all trustees are present by Zoom and in person, and I think as if... And Dr. Bowne is where I had asked or requested this meeting to go over some of our HR initiatives and voluntary issues concerning our voluntary early retirement benefit and follow up discussion. I think Trustee Smith-Everett, I know, had raised issues about the man, the myth and the legend, Trustee Greg Musil not being present. So I felt it was imperative that we have people here.

- Is that what you said?

- That we have a full understanding of what we're dealing with. And I appreciate you all being here, I thank you for being here and for the disruption in our lives and this evening, but I think it's important. And with that said, I'll turn it over to Dr. Bowne so we can get into it.

- All right, well, thank you very much and appreciate everyone taking the time to be here, appreciate all the trustees being here, participating certainly in the room, as well as via Zoom. Tonight we wanted to do two things. We wanted to provide an update and more detail around some of the HR initiatives that are taking place, and then specifically get into discussion regarding the post VERB option follow-up discussion. So I am, I've got notes that I'm going to use as I kind of work my way through, walking through the presentation. And so if I'm looking down at my sheet, it's because I wanna make sure that I'm covering the content that's important for us all to know. So anyways, I'm gonna jump in. So last spring you had asked for regular updates on various HR topics and initiatives, when we provided those most recently in July, August and September, and tonight, I wanted to provide you, and we wanted to provide you with the other update specifically as it relates to the status and career laddering and job families architecture work. We do have, for each of you, we've got notepads there and pens. So for you to write down your questions and we, and respectfully ask that if we could make the presentation and then engage in the questions that it may, from a flow standpoint, work. And we'll see how that goes. So here we go. In November of last year, the board at that time approved the compensation plan. And in that compensation plan, it included acknowledgements of the development of a career laddering strategy. This new compensation plan defined and expanded, at that point, things like shift differentials, on call and call back pay for hourly employees and so forth. And then in May, this past May, we raised, with your approval, raised the base rate of pay to $15 an hour. At that same meeting in May, in addition to the proposal to sunset VERB, at our recommendation, you adopted the plan to allow employees the ability to take advantage of converting sick leave to paid time off up to 40 hours on an ongoing, annual ongoing basis. And to take a one time of sick leave payout or cash to a 403 or 457 Roth plan. And that's estimated, and it looks like that's coming in right at about $2 million is what we had budgeted for. And that's in this year's budget. At the same time you approved the Cariloop caregiver program that is costing about $43,000 a year. It's based on $3 per month per employee. And as a reminder, also in this past year, we put in place a flextime flexplace remote work procedure that took place September a year ago. And the budget that we approved, or you approved, included $500,000 to be allocated towards career laddering for staff positions. And that is currently being used to offset the equity adjustments we're making when folks are being hired within a department, maybe have somebody with comparable years of experience, we're adjusting so that we don't have that pay equity issue within the department. And that always has been part of the career laddering plan was part of that equity adjustments. But we wanted tonight, in addition to that, to take the time to bring you up to speed and provide more detail around the career laddering work and the all important interplay with the pay tables. You've asked for these regular updates, and so that's what we're wanting to provide you with tonight. Now, several of you have asked that, are people being hired at rates higher than the pay of current employees with comparable years of relevant experience? And I've explained in the previous meetings and in one-on-one conversations that we have been correcting those situations as they've happened within the department. Okay? So if you've got multiple people in a department, we've made those corrections. However, we are not correcting across all jobs within pay levels. So there's a real and or perceived inequity there. And this is where the concerns continue to be raised to some of you and to some of us internally. So here's the part that I need to own. The bottom line is that we've not rolled this out very well. We've not communicated effectively what the changes are to our staff or to you and what you should expect. And for that, I apologize and I commit on behalf of the college to improving both process and communication. And that's what we're here to talk about tonight. Part of this improvement is already in process. And I anticipate that as you as a board move to a committee structure, that that will provide, the committee structure will provide the ongoing oversight and accountability that you understandably are seeking, and specifically related in this case to the HR topics. So last week at our cabinet meeting, Colleen Chandler, our interim vice president for human resources, provided an in depth overview of job families, career laddering, and they're in place with the pay tables, and the concerns that you, that we together continue about pay equality. I feel it's important before we dive into the further discussion around VERB alternatives that we take the time needed to be, have a clear understanding of what was approved in November of last year, as well as what we've learned as the implementation has begun. And so I've asked Colleen to join us and to provide that presentation. So, Colleen.

- All right, thank you, Dr. Bowne. As you indicated, we are going to cover a number of topics related to staff compensation and career laddering. So again, just to briefly recap much of what you just said in terms of historical context, how we got here, the board initially adopted a compensation plan in November, 2021, and this board voted in May of 2022 to update that compensation plan, effective July 1. And part of those updates include the adoption of new pay tables that would increase or did increase the minimum hourly rate to $15. So those pay tables did go into effect on July 1st of this year. Let's see here... All right, some excerpts that I think are relevant to the conversation related to the compensation philosophy outlined in the compensation plan is really the purpose of that compensation philosophy. And the purpose of that is to attract and retain talent and employees by offering equitable and transparent total rewards program inclusive of both pay and benefits. And we do that through balancing external competitiveness, internal equity, and financial and fiscal responsibility. So some things, just again, for informational purpose and setting context on what that means and how we've applied that in the past. And previously it was standard procedure for us to review, I'd conduct a market review of all employees on a three year cycle. So every year we reviewed, conducted a market survey for a population of employees. So faculty, one year, hourly employee, another year, staff another year or salaried staff on the third year on a rotational basis. There was, the last market survey that we did was conducted in 2020. And at that time we looked at faculty in anticipation of the faculty negotiations in 2021, we have not conducted a wholesale review of market study, if you will, for staff since either 2018 or 2019, depending on whether they were hourly or salary. But it's important to note that when we did those market surveys, even at that time, what the market survey served to do, or that study served to do, was to make sure that the job, the jobs that we had at the college were appropriately graded based on the market analysis. Those market studies did not take it to the further step of looking at individual years of experience and making sure those individuals were compensated within that level based on their years of experience. So as we've updated those things, we're determining that, say, an administrative assistant should be paid at this level, but we weren't looking at administrative assistance and their relevant years of experience and making sure that within that grade that we're being paid based on very relevant years of experience. So that's just a limitation of what a market study accomplishes for us. So I just wanna kinda clarify that piece of it. So we've had a number of things and over the years that have kinda led us to this point of the internal equity challenges that we have, and there's a number of different things that have contributed to this. At one time, all work experience had been considered, there's typically a focus on using relevant work experience, but we know that there have at least some occasions where all work experience was considered. Furthermore, and perhaps a larger contributor to the internal equity challenges that we're facing is that we've historically capped the experience that we consider when we put someone on a pay grade or a pay level at 12 years. And so if somebody comes to the college with 17 years of experience, they would be capped out at 12. Furthermore, the compa-ratio tables, we use compa-ratio tables that extrapolate within a pay range, what those years of experience equate to in terms of a dollar amount. So over time, we have changed the number of years that it takes to move through the entire pay grade and as we've made those changes, so it's you move through the table faster, that has the effect of adjusting the compa-ratio tables. So historically, where 12 years of experience would put you at 96% of midpoint, now 12 years of experience puts you at 101% of midpoint. So even to the extent that when a 12 year person comes in, they were at 96% and now they come in at 101% of midpoint. So that's contributing to this as well. In addition to that, we've historically, up until July 1 of this year or soon, within the last year or so, we've historically placed part-time employees at the bottom of the pay range. We have not factored in previous experience at all. That was not part of the equation for them. So regardless of whether they came to us with one year or 12 years or 20 years, they were all placed at the bottom of the pay range. That has been changed, but nonetheless, we have employees that are being paid based on where they were placed at the time of their hire.

- Colleen, could I ask you to just adjust your mic?

- Of course.

- Yep. Just...

- Is that better?

- I think... Yeah. Well, we'll find out.

- Okay. Okay. Thank you. Some other things that have been affecting internal equity is the placement upon promotion. Sometimes that those were calculated based on a new hire. So again, where those years of experience would bring the individuals in, and sometimes that was based on a percentage, based on levels. So you just got a flat 5% for a promotion to a higher pay level. So again, there was just differences on occasion on how that has been historically applied. If furthermore, if we looked at bringing in someone in where they would be placed as a new hire, but that would have put them at a pay rate that's higher than existing employees, we looked at internal equity across campus and said, okay, we're not gonna bring in a new employee making more than another employee with equitable amount of experience. So the new employee would come in lower. So we were further suppressing the pay rate for the new person coming in. So even if the first person left, we now have a more experienced person at this level and subsequently anyone new coming in, there's further compounding of that internal equity issue. And then on occasion when a part-time employee would promote to a full-time, there was some accounting of their experience, but that wasn't necessarily a consistent approach year after year over a significant period of time. So those are all factors that have been affecting pay equity and that have contributed to where we are today. Furthermore, kinda shifting gears a little bit, also in the compensation plan, there's language that indicates that we will establish job families in order to place positions on appropriate pay levels, and that also ties into the strategic rank goal 4, employee engagement, where specifically strategy step number 1, it calls for the development of a career path framework within each department or functional role area. So that's where job families enters into the conversation. So up till now we're talking about how we got here. And so then the rest of what I intend to speak to is what we're doing now to overcome these things. So first of all, to address internal equity, it's our plan to first look at full-time employees within their current pay levels, based on their relevant years experience up to 20 years. So moving that 12 year mark up to 20, that's a best practice within HR to allow still a little bit of movement within a range, that's why we're capping it at 20, but it still would better account for the years of experience that individuals bring to the table, whether they're current employee or a new hire. So we're looking at current full-time staff and adjusting their current pay rate based on the... They're already in, to be clear, they're already in the new pay tables, they were just plugged into that new pay table at the rate that they were at. We didn't make adjustments based on the new compa-ratio or their years of experience. So this part of the plan is to adjust their pay rates within those existing pay levels to reflect their current years of experience up to 20 years and remove that interdependency on everyone else. So two employees that are comparably, or that are in the same level, this employee is not, their pay is not subject to what this person says. We're looking at them both independently, what did their years of experience earn them on their pay grade? So it's that decoupling of that, or elimination of that interdependency for that internal equity. So that's the internal equity component. Then as it relates to job families and career laddering, we are currently in the process of still identifying and selecting a vendor to assist us with the development of that work. You may know that we earlier in the year went out for, put that out for an RFP. Unfortunately the responses that we got did not meet the needs that we had for this project. So we have now reposted that RFP and that this month, that's being advertised this month, and with the goal of having vendor evaluation and selection occur in December, and board approval of that vendor either December or January, depending on when that date, when that selection ultimately occurs. Once we have board approval and the contract has been executed, then we will be looking at developing a project completion timeline and as well as the budget development component of that. You'll see that that's to be determined and there's a number of factors for that. So the key deliverables for the work from this vendor will be the creation of a job family architecture. Again, the idea being that they will look at job families, administrative support as an example. And then within administrative support, what are the levels within administrative support? What are the different tasks that are performed at those different levels? How do they differ in terms of responsibility and how do they differ in terms of qualifications or requirements to hold those positions? That is the architecture that we're talking about building. Once we've done that and we've identified, let's use accountants as an example, we've identified a job family and a job architecture around an accountant one, accountant two and accountant three, then we take those positions to market and say, what does accountant one pay, what does accountant two pay? And then there will be a corresponding level for that. Coupling all of that, we will also be developing job descriptions for all of our positions across campus and then we will place employees within that architecture. So looking at individual job descriptions and saying, this job equates to an accountant two, where this job equates to accountant three, and making the necessary grade or level changes for those individuals. And then if there's further adjustments that need to occur, then that would happen at that time. So those are the key deliverables for this project. Going back to the timeline and why it, that's to be determined at this point in time. It's gonna be a dependent and large part on the project approach and methodology of the vendor. They are experts in doing this work, and so we're going to be leaning on them to say what is the best approach? Do we do them as groups that do all administrative assistant design, the architecture, do all the job descriptions and figure out where everyone fits and plug them in and then move on to the next group? Or do we develop all of the architecture at one time and then we develop the job descriptions and take those to market? We're gonna be looking at the vendor to give us guidance on best practices on that. And so in terms of the project approach, and our implementation strategy will be a dependent and large part on what that vendor recommends that we do. In terms of cost drivers, at this point in the process, we're looking at what those pay level changes would need to be based on the market analysis and plugging those employees into the appropriate level or position based on their job description. So that's my piece. I'll turn it over back over to Dr. Bowne.

- All right, thank you, Colleen.

- Thank you, Colleen. I think then to summarize that there are really four key steps associated with the pay table equity and career laddering work. The first, as Colleen explained, is to confirm staff members years of relevant experience and adjust compensation, or plan to adjust compensation accordingly, which will need to be funded. We've allocated to this point $500,000 towards that, but that will need to be funded. We believe we can have that work wrapped up in May, ahead of next year's budget, finalization of the budget. Build the architecture for job families is the second piece and career laddering. Third, as Colleen explain, take the pay table and the job families career laddering work out to market for market comparison, market analysis. And then finally, the last step is to make any market adjustments based on the market analysis. We believe that generally, to be thinking about a timeline for that, while it may very, depending on the vendor selected, generally we're thinking that that's an 18 month process. I have continued to monitor this work as well as the concerns of staff regarding their likely years of experience. We have been addressing the inequities, as I said, within the departments as they arise, but not beyond this. The level of frustration for those impacted is growing. And I do feel that if given the opportunity to do this differently, we would've employed a different strategy and timing, not to cause and to reduce the inequities and the confusion that we're now experiencing. I believe that we must expand the equity adjustments beyond just the departments sooner than later. In other words, we need to address the internal equity across the levels, the pay levels, right? If you think about the pay table, it's 50, .50, or all the way up to 68, .68, there's a pay level. And how do we make those adjustments within those steps within each of those layers? This step is already included in the career laddering and family's work. But I believe we need to move this up significantly so we can correct the internal equity concerns no later than the beginning of the next fiscal year. We'll verify the relevant years of experience and adjust the compensation accordingly. This will affect almost 600 full-time employees, and early estimates at this point lead us to believe that it will cost $2.1 million or it could be more depending on what we learn. But the conservative estimate right now is 2.1 million. To be clear, this is not completing the work of career laddering or job families. This is expediting one portion of that work, which once complete, will allow us to move over the next 18 months to execute job families and the career laddering work as defined. The financial impact of all of that, yes, is yet to be determined, but we have the analysis that we've done so far to provide some initial framework. And with that, we're happy to answer any questions about this portion of it.

- Thank you, Dr. Bowne. Before I opened it up to questions and speaking, recognizing myths and legends, I see that Dr. Judy Korb's here this evening. So I just wanna say hi and say thank you for coming. With that said, thank you Colleen. Thank you Dr. Bowne. And I'm going to go to Trustee Musil first.

- Well, I appreciate that and I really apologize for being at the meeting instead of the committee the whole meeting, because...

- And this isn't no way to call you out.

- No, I know that, I know that, you would do that directly if you wanted to.

- Absolutely.

- But I wanna start before I get the questions just with comments because I know that, I suspect a whole bunch of people are watching offline or online and a whole bunch of you are in the audience, and when we get to HR issues, everybody on this dais and Mark on Zoom are concerned about it because this is a people business. Despite the beauty of our campus and the great buildings we have, none of it would work unless the people are here, and we all are concerned... No one up here wants to be the Grinch, and I don't think, I won't say everyone, I don't fully understand the prior system or the current system. It is... 11 years on this board has taught me a lot about educational nuances, working in, as a city council member and on this board, governmental employees have a different world than I have lived in the private sector. So I will not claim to be any kind of an expert, but I always go back to the three things that Colleen mentioned that have been our goal is to attract and retain talented people based on three factors, external competitiveness, internal equity, and fiscal responsibility. And Grinch has always relied on fiscal responsibility, and I tend to lean toward Grinchhood, I guess. So I'm very careful about this. And my questions ultimately get to that question of, I mean, just the internal equity piece you talked about is likely to cost $2.1 million, and that's not a one time cost, it's an every year cost. It's an increase by whatever percentage we increase, folks. It is not necessarily based on external competitiveness, 'cause we don't know that yet. We don't know what the results of a market survey will be. So I think, I sent to the chair and he read my email before the, at the committee of the whole, that I have some serious concerns about this for a number of reasons. I don't like piecemeal compensation steps, I don't like rushing into it because I think we did that with VERB without fully understanding the consequences of it. And once you make that commitment, that promise to employees, it's difficult at least to take it back and in some cases impossible. So that's kind of my overall thought process as we go into this. And I don't wanna get too technical this, but one of the questions is, we put out an RFP, we didn't get people we wanted, why do we think we're gonna get the right vendor from a second RFP?

- We've made clarifications to the RFP process to clarify the qualifications that we're looking for from a potential vendor. There was one vendor that submitted a proposal that unfortunately due to the way the proposal was submitted, they didn't follow that process, so they couldn't have been considered. Without looking at them, I could only speculate as to whether they would've been qualified or not, but we have been very deliberate working with procurement on this process to make sure that it's really clear to the potential vendors what it is that we need in terms of qualifications for the scope of work. In addition to that, we've done some additional research and specific outreach to potential vendors to make them aware of this opportunity and invited them to submit proposals as well.

- One of the things that's, it almost sounds like we haven't, we're doing job families now and we're doing job descriptions and it, there's a sense that, well, we didn't do any of that, but the studies we did on where people fit in pay grades were at least analogous to job families. Weren't they? Finding people that, similar jobs and placing them at a grade that made sense?

- Yes. So we would send out the job descriptions and they would look at the job description in place and do a market analysis. What we didn't have is that structure, that framework built in where we said, this is the work that we defined for an administrative specialist as an example. And so administrative specialists where then benchmarked. It was individual job descriptions where we might have 20 positions called the same thing, but they may or may not be performing tasks that are equitably challenging or have the equitable level of responsibility. So the vendor was looking at not just the title but the job descriptions. Whereas by building this framework, it'll give further clarity when we do that market analysis so that we really know we're comparing apples to apples when we say, let's take an administrative assistant to market, we know what level administrative assistant really means.

- And so we, it would be a separate vendor for the market compensation or is it the same one that created the job families?

- Same vendor would do both pieces.

- And that is an 18 month process, probably?

- Likely yes.

- Will that survey of the market compare all aspects of pay and benefits, for your hourly or salary, but will it compare all aspects, because we get into our next topic, my question's gonna be, what's the basis for doing something other than VERB was removed? Is it an external... We don't know if it's external competitive because we haven't done the study, right?

- That that's something that the vendor would look at in terms of the compensation and benefits.

- But on the recommendations, and that for the board, the recommendations from the committee, and I deeply appreciate the work they did, but again, it's a piecemeal effort that is not part of the overall compensation study that tells us whether we can attract and retain talented people. So that, that's what I wanted to confirm is that we really don't know on a paying benefits level where we stand in particular grades or what will ultimately be job families.

- Right now it is our belief just based on the latest market study that they're at the appropriate level. But we have not gone out, as I noted before, we have not taken that back to market on a whole scale level since 2018 or 2019. So it would be necessary for us before we could say for sure that they're at market, equitably, external equitability, if you will, that would, we wouldn't know that until we have an updated market study.

- I'm very interested at some point in hearing about the third leg of the stool, which is the fiscal responsibility part. I don't remember what the total line item is in the budget for salary and benefits.

- It's about 100 million.

- So 2.1 and then increases each year. And again, I go back to our challenge to continue the salary and benefit line with 8,000 fewer students than we had nine years ago. And I don't know, I don't have a way to square that in my own head yet, so that, that's where I am, and Mr. Chair, I'm sorry, I overstayed my time.

- You did fine. I called on you first. Do you have anything further, Mr. Trustee?

- No.

- I have Trustee Koesten next.

- Thank you. I thank you. And Trustee Musil, I appreciated your comments because helped me understand where the dollars were going because the 2.1 million threw me, so I'm glad to know that is what it would cost for us to bring everyone up to the estimated equitable pay. I mean that's what, I just didn't catch that, so I appreciate that. I just wanna ask, is this particular approach that you're proposing standard across other institutions of like size?

- Do you mean specifically the development of the architecture?

- Architecture, the job description, so that if truly we wanna be competitive, we have to be looking at institutions that offer similar jobs. So is this consistent with other institutions?

- Yes. So this is an, to have like this, with this career laddering, that is an HR best practice. So that is something.

- Best practice, but is it a best practice for community colleges? Is my question. Because it might be best practice for a corporation, a small, even a smaller medium sized business. But is it best practice for community colleges?

- Again, I'm not necessarily distinguishing that simply because I don't have any indication that it's not a best practice for that. It's, when you look at compensation, you want a structure that has some clear delineation between the different levels and ties back to market. So where we struggle as an institution is that we have titles that aren't necessarily tied to a true job family or a job level. And so that's where we get even internal perception differences. Well, we have two directors that are getting paid at different levels. It might be that it's a really, one should be a director one and one should be a director two. But because we don't have a structure that calls that out, there's a perceived inequity when they're paid at different levels because we don't have that framework to support it.

- I appreciate what you're saying. I just wonder if, again, a standard practices across an institution such as ours, I think it is kind of an important comparison to make, so that we get the internal aspects of being able to say it's a level one or level two. But if no other institution across the country, or a few, only few are using a similar approach, then we're really competing with business and industry.

- Colleen, let me jump in here, if I may.

- Yeah.

- I think that we've done this in part because of COVID and inflation and market realities that we live with. Is that a fair assumption?

- That is partially true, but it's also what our employees have been asking for. They want a, many of employees are asking for a clear pathway to know how do I progress here? Because right now I'm either in my job or I'm a supervisor and there are eight of us and there's one supervisor, what's my career progression opportunity? All along as I increase my knowledge and skill, I'm adding,.. again, if we believe and we do, that there's career progression opportunity and with that more responsibility, higher performance and so forth, that giving that clear pathway is something that our employees are also asking for.

- Fair enough. And I think, well, I don't personally think we should totally operate like a business. We are nevertheless market participants and we have to react to the market accordingly, right?

- That is correct.

- So to use a best practice that is done at other institutions is a reasonable business practice to adjust our pay scales? And I share many of the concerns Trustee Musil does, and I thank Trustee Koesten for questions. I just, I wanted to frame, I think, why we are doing this and why we adopted this last November because we're stuck with some market realities and Trustee Musil raises a great point, we have a burgeoning budget with fewer students and that's attention. So I just wanted to jump in there. I hope that was helpful to somebody, but I'm trying to support you in what you're doing because I'm okay with it and I'm just expressing my thoughts there. I'm not trying to dispute you, I'm just...

- I'm just trying to clarify the whole notion of best practices and who the best practices are being compared to. I don't dispute that these things need to be examined and we need to upgrade our processes, I'm just trying to make sure that I understand what it is, the comparison, what's the comparison? Is it against other institutions or is it against the full marketplace?

- I think that's a good question.

- And you answered my question.

- But if I may, just one more thought. So when we look at the cost associated with this work that we're talking about, it falls into two buckets. One bucket is the market analysis, right? And that's our competitiveness across industries, our ability to attract and retain employees. But then there's also, the second piece to it is associated with the internal equity challenges that we experience. The career laddering in and of itself is not likely to add much expense to the process. It's really those two buckets, right, Go on, that's what you and I...

- That's... Yes, that's accurate.

- Very good. Trustee Koesten.

- And can I follow up with one other question?

- Yes, ma'am.

- So I wanted to get back to the timeline and it sounds as if this is at least an 18 month process. In the interim, how do we make sure, let's say we go forward with all of this. How do we make sure that people are really convinced that this is going to, in the end, be a good thing for them? I mean, that's 18 months of miscommunications or missed opportunities or people getting preconceived notions about what could or couldn't happen. I mean, 18 months is a long time in any organization when you're trying to transition change. So how do we ensure that we're really going to be managing that communication effort?

- So I think there are, again, two aspects to that. One is the communication that we have not done well as we look past, the past four or five months, right? In terms of helping you and our employees understand this is the timeline, this is what it looks like. As I said, there are two buckets of costs associated with this. My belief is addressing the internal equity is probably where the bulk of the cost is based on my conversations with Colleen. The market forces certainly will add to that, our competitiveness and where we want to be in the marketplace competitively. But the two components are internal equity and market analysis. It's not the career laddering piece.

- I, is it, are you finished there, Trustee Koesten?

- Sorry. Yeah, thank you.

- I have Trustee Ingram and Trustee Hamill.

- And the market analysis that we're talking about is the $500,000 piece? Is that correct?

- There's a $500,000 piece that was previously approved for the board to start the career laddering work. That's a different, I mean, to Dr. Bownes point that that was to, we've been using that to place people to adjust internal equity since July 1 and we've been bringing people in, but that's, there's more to it than that.

- Right. And I remember that from our budget this year that we put that $500,000 in that. So I get that. One of the things that we've talked about is addressing some of the inequity pieces that we're talking about. Are we finding solutions for those folks right now?

- So the solutions, as Dr. Brown spoke to, we've been looking at a strictly departmental level when we bring in a new person doing like work with others within a department, we've been making internal equity adjustments for those individuals that are already in that department.

- So we should rest assured that those things are not only being addressed, but solutions are being found?

- Within that departmental?

- Within the departmental-

- Yes. Yes.

- All right. Several of my questions have been answered, so I appreciate my colleagues and... But one of the questions that I did have you mention, proposed adjustments are because of the new salary tables, is that correct?

- Can you clarify that?

- The proposed adjustments are because of the new salary tables? Did I write that down incorrectly?

- So I'll try to speak to, I'm not sure if I'm clear on your question.

- I guess why were new salary tables needed?

- So what, to the $15 an hour minimum, we had to have a new table. So we developed new tables for that and then as part of putting everyone on the new table, they moved over to the new table to the level that had the midpoint most closely correlated to the pay level that they had enough old table. So there was a crosswalk that put them over, but they did not get adjustments to be at the same compa-ratio to the midpoint over at, on the new table. Their dollar amount just moved over to the other pay table. So that's where part of that pay inequity occurred. So does that make sense?

- Thank you. I guess for right now, I will move on.

- Thank you. Trustee Hamill then Trustee Koesten.

- All right, thank you. I do have a question. The $2.1 million, just making sure that is an every year cost we're looking at, right?

- Yes, that is correct.

- Okay.

- It would be baked into ongoing salary cost.

- Okay. And so a lot of these looks like we had issues, we moved a little too fast, and so we caused these issues and now we're gonna fix them, right? What assurances do we have that this is actually going to correct all those issues and we won't have more of the same issues next time?

- Do you wanna answer that or do you want me to answer that?

- Either one.

- Let me take a stab at that. To my knowledge, and I hate to be a broken record, I think we went up to $15 an hour in part because of the market realities late last year.

- That's right.

- I mean, so at some point this is COVID and then I understand and I appreciate the addressing of the 20 year issue where that's another inequity that has popped up, right? So I had this prepared in my statements or comments. I thank the administration for the candor and disclosure here. And there have been inequities and I'm confident that they're being worked through and I'm reminded of, I forget when he said it, but former president George H. W. Bush said one time, nobody guessed this or guess what would happen after COVID or the inflation that is followed from two different administrations pumping money into the economy? So since nobody guessed this, like nobody's right. So we're tackling these issues as they popped up. And I just wanted to support our administration to say, and I appreciate all of your comments and I, they're good questions. I'm just also trying to say I think that these are the realities of the time we live in. Is that a fair statement?

- Yes.

- And so as these things have popped up, nobody knows how to do this. We didn't have this community college 100 years ago. There's no template on how to react after a global catastrophe. So Mark, I forget your, Trustee Hamill, I forget your question, but I just wanted to address it in that way. I mean, your concerns are valid. I appreciate that. I'm just trying to say... You can blame me. I mean I approved this last year and we didn't foresee the realities coming from what we had set up, so I apologize to you.

- Yeah, and it's not, and again, I'm not looking for blame, I'm just trying to figure out...

- You cut out, Trustee Hamill.

- And so one of the things I'm kind of hearing is looking at these issues by department only and then in 18 months we're gonna be looking at a career laddering program that's gonna be looking at it more holistically throughout the entire campus, are we possibly looking at more tweaks and changes in the salaries again because of that that could cost more? Those are my concerns.

- So, I think, so, but I don't...

- Yeah, let me jump in and, because your first question I believe was if we do this, is this going to fix the breadth and depth of internal equity challenges that we face, right? Is that a fair paraphrase of what you ask?

- Sort of. Yeah.

- Okay. Correct me then, I wanna make sure I answer your question, or that Colleen and I do.

- Vice President, you are.

- So again, we, we've had people that have issues and obviously I know that we've done a lot to try to fix the issues and there's always gonna be issues in everything we do. And so we spent I guess a half million dollars now trying to fix some of the issues. Now we're looking for another 2.1. And I just wanna make sure we're taking the time to really look through these things before we make this jump and get it right. And so...

- And so, Trustee Hamill, if we go about this plan the way that Colleen has identified this and laid this out and the methodical way of doing it, it will get us to the point where we are looking at years of relevant experience and the pay level that they're in, and boom, they land on this dollar amount. And so it erases the inequities that we have based on our system the way it is. It allows us to pay people appropriately for their years of relevant experience because that's where things are bumping up what is creating the internal equities. So this would, this process, this way of going about this would correct those systematically.

- So will there be like a formula that anybody could easily see this is what it is and this would be my answer?

- Yes. You cut out, but what I heard of your question... Yes. So if you're at a pay level 61 and you have 10 years of relevant experience, you meet that, in a box, in a matrix, and this is the dollar amount that you would be paid. It's no longer, well, but we have this other person that doesn't make that much, because we're independently also moving them to where they should be based on their relevant years experience and their pay level. So we're looking at individuals independently, we're decoupling this notion of we can't move this person up, this person because of their previous experience.

- Okay. And the next question I do have is we were talking about the 12 years to 20 years, which I agree it makes much more sense. My question is, if you're maxed out at the 12, are we adding in eight more levels on top of that to get to 20 or are we spreading it out? And if you were at 12 now you're more moved down into three quarters of a mix? If I'm, hope I'm explaining that well.

- I think I'm tracking with your question. So our pay levels already have a min and max and a midpoint. And so the compa-ratios is a percent of the midpoint. And so there's a table or crosswalk, if you will, for years of experience, relevant years of experience as it relates to a level or pay rate within that range. So it already goes past 20 years to allow for the annual increases that the board may vote to approve and the individuals that are in that pay rate, are in that pay level would yield those increases. What's happening is when we place someone, a new hire on that pay level, we're capping them out at 12 years and that's the compa-ratio that we're providing, which is 101% of the midpoint at this point in time. So there is almost half the pay rate range above them or that pay level above them that they can move through sequentially. We're just saying we'll recognize more than 12 years, we'll recognize up to 20 to get you closer to, but not all the way to the end of that pay level.

- Okay. Is it possible to get examples of what that would look like for somebody who's maybe a 10 years experience and 20 years experience and kind of see how that's gonna, where they're at now and what that's gonna look like when that's, when we complete those changes?

- Yeah. Yes. That's readily, that's something that we could provide.

- Okay, thank you.

- Trustee... Trustee Hamill, does that conclude your questions for now? I mean, you may have something pop up?

- I actually, I'll do one more. I am kind of curious about in internal and external hires and kind of what rate, I guess that kind of applies to the career laddering. Is there anything you can address what that looks like? What percentage of these people are hired for promotions that are company internal versus external?

- I'm sure we could provide that data. I don't know it right off the top of my head in terms of how, what percentage we're hiring internally versus externally.

- And then we're probably looking at seeing that increase and improve by doing the career laddering and making it easier for people to figure out how to get ready for these next positions?

- Exactly. That's the goal of the career laddering, to help employees see what the next, what work look like and what the qualification for that work would look, what that would look like.

- Thank you.

- I think that concludes his remark. Mark, are you done?

- Yes. Thank you so much.

- You're welcome. Thank you, Trustee Hamill. I had a trustee Koesten next, then Trustee Smith-Everett.

- There's two points, , Colleen, you said something about a matrix where you're able to look at years of service. I'm assuming that there, it's a pay range within each little box? It's not a specific dollar amount, but it's a...

- So that's where, the pay level is a range. But then when you use the compa-ratios based on years of experience, that's a calculation of the midpoint.

- So allow for any individual negotiation, if somebody comes to you with 12 years of experience and they plop in at that level and they say, well, if you really want me, you're gonna have to pay me $3,000 more. So there's none of that?

- That's not built into that one.

- Okay, I was just curious about that. And then the other thing is the numbers, the 500K for current equity solutions, the 2.1 million for future equity solutions, what are we paying the consultants and we're, what's the number of, what's that figure for the 18 month project? Do we have that figured out yet?

- We don't at this point. Again, it's out for RFP. So until we get qualified proposals, I don't have a...

- Okay, so that's a big unknown because 18 months of that kind of work is pretty costly. Right? What would you expect it to be?

- Oh, I don't know that I feel comfortable just giving a guess 'cause it would just-

- $20 million?

- It'd be less than that. I feel comfortable saying it's less than that.

- We'll have no, I'm finding less than 20 million...

- Make sure I wasn't missing that number because that is a really, it's gonna, it'll be a substantial number and I just was curious, I first thought it was the 500K had been set aside for that.

- No, that's not-

- Now I get it. Okay.

- The 500K is actually part of the 2.1 million, right?

- So is it part of the-

- Well, I mean it certainly could be, right? If we estimate the cost is this point, given the information we have could be 2.1 million...

- I thought the 500K was approved last... Okay, so that was set aside.

- Yes.

- So we could, what you're saying is that that 500K could be taken out of the 2.1?

- It all rolls together, right?

- It's not different to.

- Right.

- Unless the data comes back and says you actually need 2.6 million, then it is that plus that. But again, what we know based on the data that we have inside our records, if we were to take that and correct internal equities to adjust people to the appropriate, in their level, their years of service, at this point that's estimated at $2.1 million.

- Excluding the 500k set aside?

- We could use the 500,000, if it happened this year, we could use that as the first 500,000.

- Okay. I'm just trying to get a global perspective of the total cost of what this might look like.

- Trustee Ingram, Smith-Everett and Trustee Ingram.

- Thank you. First of all, I wanna start by thanking Colleen, your presentation gave more clarity and description than we have had, and you are taking on inherited work for fair or unfair, here we are and I appreciate it and I appreciate that you're up here among the firing squad, put in a position to take on something that was adopted and your predecessor stepped out and then you are having to step in and basically clean up. So I wanna thank you for that, because it needs to be recognized that is a tremendous stressor for anyone and I personally appreciate it.

- Thank you.

- I also wanna say that the level of detail that you provided today harkens back to why we need a different committee structure and that this is the kind of information we need to have in our... What do we call it? We didn't like people pusher...

- People power.

- People power. Pushing people...

- It's on HR-

- Team... HR team, okay. HR committee. This kind of level of detail is the kind of level that we need going forward. And frankly, it's on us up here, the seven elected officials, to ask the questions before this is allowed to go on. Dr. Bowne, I appreciate you taking the responsibility and owning that it's a bit of a problem right now. But also it should be us recognizing that we didn't ask enough good questions and we are blindly approving things without being clear what we are gonna do to our staff and the burdens we're gonna put on administration to then implement something. And so for my part, I wanna own that because I think that's a serious part of this responsibility here. I have now been, I feel like every few months, it's like a new layer of what this job entails and part of it is the real burden of responsibility of people that we are responsible for, which we, Trustee Cross, you've spoken about several times that people are what makes a place run and how important it is that we take care of them. So I just want to advocate that our, in our committee structure, that the level of detail you're providing and the kinds of questions we are asking is what we continue to do in a committee structure so that this gets worked out before it comes to a board level because it's a frustrating and unfair position to put people in that we're now having this discussion here. All that said, I agree that I think the biggest thing, question for me is the costs in total. We approve that $500,000 as part of the strategic plan as part of this idea of career laddering. And I think, to Trustee Hamill's point, I don't think HR is ever gonna fix and be done with things. It is just the nature of your work. I mean, it is, it's like education. It is constantly evolving, it's never you just, you, suddenly, everything, the way you teach is done. We will never change the way our approaches. It just doesn't work. I wanna recognize that because I can't imagine that there won't be another thing in six months or a year that we'll find out is the new thing that needs to be adjusted or considered when looking at people. I have heard, I have several people have communicated to me that they were frustrated trying to come work at JCCC when they had years of experience that were never recognized. So I think that is a, and that's been the last several years I've heard that. So I appreciate that we're adjusting for years of experience. I think it's probably... Because I'm in education world, I understand, I know you're always frustrated, Trustee Musil about the pay and how it works. about But column and step is a very familiar thing and I think what we need to do is offer that clarity for both ourselves, which we've never had, frankly, on this board is the clarity of how our pay structure works. I've never seen a table here, but as an employee in another place, there are many people I work with who are constantly opening up that table, looking where they are, looking what they have to do to move and making sure that they have a plan going forward to move. It's a very common practice in the educational world. So I just wanna reassure people we're not outside the realm of what normal, I think, educational institutions do. And so I will get to VERB and I wanna talk about that because it pigeon-tails with several of the other things that have come up today. But I think the question for me is the, if the 500 is part of that 2.1, how we pair that and we've gotta have the conversation with enrollment and how we're ensuring that we're taking care of our people while also ensuring this institution can go on another 50 years sustainably. And that, those are the nine questions in the back of my head for another time, but I just wanna put it out there. I guess my question is how do you accept, how are we moving these people that came in with 12 and but they really had 20 and what is the process behind the scenes to have that one, which is a now question that you're dealing with. So again, we can talk offline or maybe you can just provide us with that or we could do it in an HR committee, but I sort of wanna be able to answer if an employee says, look, I came in with this and I'm not getting what I thought I was getting, or I found out somebody else, I kind of wanna know what your process is. I don't need to know the details of each person's positions, but just process wise, how are you doing that? So that I can answer for, that it is a practice that I support. That was very long winded. I apologize. I was all over the place. Just all the random thoughts here.

- Thank you.

- That concludes my...

- Did you want a response, I guess, to...

- Colleen, do you wanna at least provide a high level?

- Yes. Generally speaking, we'll be working with employees and supervisors to make sure that we're fully accounting for the experience that employees bring to the table and determining the relevancy of that experience to the position and then doing some verification of that information so that we know or feel confident to the best of our ability that the individuals are receiving full credit for the appropriate, relevant levels of our years of experience that they bring to the table.

- I have Trustee Rattan and then I think Trustee has another issue.

- I do think additional clarity on how the system works is going to eventually improve employee morale. The more clarity you have in how you're paid and how you progress, you know what to expect, makes everyone feel calmer. I also would like to see a table of how it works, I'm trying to picture it in my head, but I'd love to see it in black and white. Could you clarify a couple of things for me? When you talk about relevant experience, how is that decided? 'Cause you emphasized, not just experience, relevant experience. The other question I have is, you said this affects 500 employees of our total population. Is that affect in certain departments, certain areas, certain levels? Can you give me some facts on those 500 employees that you have identified?

- Yeah. So to your... Can you restate your first question? I wanna make sure.

- First one was define relevant experience.

- Yes.

- How is that decided? If I think it's relevant, but you may not, or...

- It's really primarily driven by the job description. So what is the requirements for the position, what is relevant to the task and the work responsibilities for that position. And it'll be, honestly, in large part driven by the hiring manager in terms of helping us determine what is appropriate, relevant experience. So that's that piece of it. And then to the other piece, it's I think-

- 500 employees.

- Yeah, I think it's-

- Is it concentrated anywhere?

- I think the figure's 660...

- I mean, when you look, provided me with that initial date, it was 583-ish...

- Oh, okay. So I know what you're... So that is the, taking the current employees that we have, of current full-time employees, hourly and salary and applying that to those individuals.

- So it's not a certain department or concentration of who's affected? It's across all departments, all areas?

- Correct. It's all full time non-bargaining unit employees, whether they're salary or hourly.

- Thank you. Yeah?

- Any other questions? Trustee Rattan?

- That's it.

- Trustee Ingram?

- Thank you. And thank you for that clarification of the 583, because I thought someone had said 600 and then she was saying 500 and we're getting all these numbers here and I think it's important that we know what we're talking about. So thank you very much for that.

- You're welcome.

- The thing that I wanted to go back to, I was doing some, looking back at that compensation plan that we talked about, and this was November 1st, 2021. But I wanna go back to a couple of the pieces that we were told just because I think they kind of feed into your comments earlier, Dr. Bowne, but one of them said the new plan will ensure transparency, clarity, and consistency in compensation decisions. The current pay ranges are not changing. There is no impact to current employee wages. And then it advises, there's no, it does not apply to bargaining unit employees. So I think we went in with a fair decision initially when we were listening to some of this, but I just want to go back to the fact that yes, you are absolutely right, we need to ask better questions, but I feel like questions have been asked throughout this... I just wanna always make sure... The only way that we can make those decisions is to have accurate information and to have that information provided to us in a timely manner. And that was one of the things that really troubled me this summer was I felt like this was placed before us, we have new people working in this position, but it's just, as you say, we have to own some of this, we have to own it, and you wanna apologize, you feel terrible, this is people's livelihoods that we're talking about. This can't happen again.

- Understand it.

- Just can't happen. So please follow up, Trustee Musil, but I just feel like there have been so many questions and I've asked questions about equity and point blank asked those questions and I'm not sure that I felt comfortable with some of the answers that we were receiving. So this has been really helpful. I agree, your presentation has been tremendous. Thank you very much for the work that you've done because you did inherit it and we've talked about that before tonight. But it's just, we've gotta figure out how we move forward.

- And one question and then some wrap up comments, but 583 employees have been identified in a holistic approach as needing some type of internal equity?

- Not every one of those would actually need an increase based on their experience. We looked at all full-time employees and that number's inclusive of everyone we looked at. And then that, based on the years of experience that we have in the system, again, understanding the limitations of our data, when we put them in the system and gave them credit for 12 years, it's capped, so that could be a low figure in terms of if somebody really brought, 10 years ago, they brought 5 years of experience with them... Well, that 5 years isn't a good rate, 12 years of experience, 14 years of experience 10 years ago they were capped at 12. So the system will show that they have 22 when they really have 24. In that example, it's capped at 20, so it doesn't make a difference. But someone who came in three years ago with 17 years of experience now has 20, but our system says that they have 15.

- You, you've done more depth analysis to come up with $2.1 million? I mean, you know something more than that there are 583 employees. Are you just, are those just estimates of how many of those might need...

- What it is it takes all of our current full-time non-bargaining unit employees and it applies the years of experience that the system tells us they have, recognizing that limitation of the 12 year cap and applying the extrapolation table to their pay range and what their pay would be if they were paid based on the relevant years of experience up to 20 years, assuming that the system, the years in the system is accurate, again, recognizing the limitations on that 12 years and applying that, the pay adjustments, not every single person would need a pay adjustment, but for all of those people in total, we're looking at 2.1 million based on all of those assumptions that I just said.

- And so that number is based on a number of assumptions that would be determined as we go forward on, we've got $500,000 budgeted for that process, and you're doing it department by department when there's a new hire?

- Correct.

- As I understand it. So knowing whether I agree with the angst that's out there or not, knowing the angst that's out there among employees, how does this process satisfy that when, I don't know, my department doesn't have any open positions, so they're not gonna be a new hire here, so we're not gonna look at you now, I mean, when would they be looked at? Would that be the new vendor or is that just an ongoing process that we have to do internally?

- Yeah, so that's what I was speaking to in the presentation of the first step of the solution is to not wait for new hires and look at it just as a, an individual within an apartment approach. It would be looking at all full-time non-bargaining unit employees and applying the, determining what their true years, relevant years of experience are, recognizing that for some in the system that's number short of what it should be, and then applying those appropriate years of experience up to 20 years and then that, making those adjustments with the goal of that work being done for the next fiscal year.

- Okay, so July 1st, 2023...

- Correct.

- We would budget for all any of those 583 employees that needed an adjustment?

- Correct.

- And we would spend up to 500,000 in this fiscal year? Is that kinda what I'm hearing?

- That's at least what's in this year's budget. I'm not sure that we would spend that, this year's 500,000 next fiscal year.

- Right. Well, that's what I mean. We're gonna, this is gonna be an ongoing process through June 30th and we're gonna use that 500,000 to make the adjustments that we identify.

- Right.

- And then next year you estimate we need 1.6 million additional dollars to, at this point, based on all the assumptions, to make those other adjustments?

- I would just leave it at the 2.1 for right now. It depends on timing of implementation.

- Okay. Well, my comments I wanna get to, I wanna get to the VERB stuff too, I know we all do, but change from 12 to 20 isn't gonna eliminate issues with people who have 21 years. I mean, we can make all of these adjustments we want and, in a flourish of bad rhetoric earlier, in an earlier meeting, talked about the cross of internal equity because it makes it very difficult for us at all times to be equitable, as equitable as somebody wants us to be. And it creates a bureaucracy and a stodginess or a stayed situation. My frustration with governmental pay rates, not just education, is I don't know, unless you move up the ladder and we give people that opportunity, you're stuck in this formula and no matter how good you are, no matter how bad I am, if I'm on the same play grade as Trustee Smith-Everett, we're gonna get the same amount. And I have seriously wondered if that's the best way to do this.

- If I may, part of it is we as an institution, and it's why educational institutions in particular have to do this, we have to arbitrarily pick a cap because we have to decide what we can afford to adjust for. So every... I am in a current position, I came with 18 years experience, I am only being paid for a rate of 10 because my institution cannot afford to pay every person that comes in. Well, it's gonna be the same case no matter what mark we pick that people will always come in with more experience. The question is what can we afford and what, that number is arbitrary, but it also is, with an institution that has compensation plan like this, where it's laddering in steps, yes, unfortunately you can have two people, it's not a free market approach where a person who performs, because what performance is in education is a whole other bucket you don't wanna open of how we determine what somebody doing great is versus somebody doing mediocre, is really, really murky because then you've got students who you can't control totally their outcomes or how they're performing, affecting your pay. And that's when... I know it's not a free market system, which is probably your preference that you're referring to where a stellar person can move up, however, if that stellar person is administrative assistant level one and they are doing stellar work, they can see, look, I can move up to administrative level four in the next five years by doing such and such and such and such and I'm gonna, and that's what stellar people do. They figure out how to use the system, the columns and steps with very clear, different institutions have various levels of clarity what it takes to move, and they can do that for themselves and often do because they realize how to use the system to better themselves financially or to move to a job that is something more appropriate for what their skill level is.

- Yeah. And I don't worry about the stellar folks. I think they're gonna find ways to succeed and the ways to move up. But I would disagree with you in the sense that that is somehow different in education or government or anybody else. Everybody has limitations on what they can afford to pay their employees and must get efficient and productive work out of them. And that's my... And be able to attract and retain. And that's what I'm going for. I'm not trying to change the system. I know I might disagree with the nuances of it. I'm not trying to change it. I just, I've been on 11 years, we've never had a time when all employees are saying, you guys are great and taking care of us fine. And they're not, because doesn't have any private business either. So just again, policy changes and implementation of this program will not fix, as Trustee Hamill asked, we're not gonna fix things. Our job is to be as fair as we can be, both to employees and taxpayers to attract and retain the best talent. And I know that's what we all want.

- I have a question-

- As entertaining as this is, are you done?

- Yes. Sorry.

- But that begs another question. Now, I have, because, as we're also doing some work in performance reviews... So the, if you get a stellar performance review, is there a range for merit within that matrix? Or the only way, if you are doing stellar in your performance review, you have to ascend through the chart and get a promotion, but you can't stay at the level you are and just make more money based off merit? So that doesn't, that's not allowed in there?

- Generally, public higher education does not do merit based systems. If there's one thing that will freak people out, it is merit based systems and the ability to manage that effectively. That, it's always the challenge. And I've I worked at a college that tried to do merit based and it's fraught with challenges and yet I can fully appreciate having come from the private sector, the beauty of merit based compensation.

- Okay, thanks for the clarification.

- Yeah.

- I'm gonna, are you finished, sorry?

- Yes.

- You were saying... I'm gonna step out and go to the restroom, as I told my colleagues next to me, but I, it was 20 minutes ago. I wanted to thank everybody for the discussion, and 'cause I love presidential quotes, I think there's the presidential candidate, Mitt Romney, that said corporations are people too, I think the administration are people. So as we struggle through COVID, you can ask Dr. Bowne, I don't always step in front of him and sometimes I'm not nice about some of my input but I've asked him to be honest and candid with us and disclose things like this. Not for nothing. I think I was the only vote on my position on the mill when I raised grave concerns about inflation. And here we are. I mean we have inflation and we have full employment and we're gonna face these issues in the time to come. And so I'm not trying to relitigate that, I'm gonna support this board, but I'm certainly gonna support this president as they have presented information to us, as I've requested, I assume as you wanted, and maybe that was too Jimmy Carter of me, too naive, to just present things in a straightforward fashion, but I see this as an absolute growing pain with respect to COVID. I think your concerns as fiscal responsible people, as all of us are, and budget hawks as many of us wanna be, I understand it, but some of us have called the ball and I know that I would categorize it as a growing pain, I'm gonna say that and repeat it because I'm decent at this game. It's a growing pain through COVID, through inflation right now. And we'll get through the growing pain. But the risk of uncorking another argument, despite some categorizations that I don't pay attention or I blindly approve things, we did ask questions and I think I personally do have some disagreements with respect to how certain things are handled or maybe perhaps how certain people weren't included on the calculating numbers in the past year, and I've got criticisms, frankly, to probably outdo you all with respect to Dr. Bowne's administration, but those are mine and what I spend the time to do and process for my own self. And you can ask him. And we had a heated discussion last week, Dr. Bowne and I, but I have always asked him to be honest and candid with us. I think that we are market participants whether we like it or not. I appreciate your input 'cause I don't fully understand everything you just said, although I respect you and you have years ahead of me in public education that I do look to and appreciate your guidance on, and I think it's people working to be fair and equitable. And I think, Colleen, I do wanna ask you, the market studies do not review pay of individual employees within their grade based on relevant work experience? No, excuse me. Where's the part where we talk about, we don't address pay equity across campus? Which slide that was on? Did I have that right?

- Eight maybe?

- The work we do within the department, but we didn't work to do it across rates...

- Yeah. That was verbal.

- Yeah. Since July 1 when we have been bringing in individuals with, on the new pay levels, we have specifically narrowly focused our review of internal equity to within the department. That's what that common is to...

- Right. And I see that and I interpret that as a fiscal responsible thing that you, we have done, right? So we're trying to address the inequity within the department, but we don't wanna go college wide. And maybe that's not fair, I don't know, but we have to draw the line somewhere, and I'm a steward and a fiscal responsible person. So am I interpreting that right? I think that I see that as we're trying to address this as needed or certainly in a prioritized manner, but we're not gonna go looking to correct every possible inequity, right?

- That's correct. Yeah.

- Oh, here.

- That is the ultimate goal, I believe.

- Well, I'm just saying, I'll say it again. I think it's a growing pain and I think that the administration is working to do this. I had one other point, I lost my point, 'cause I was paying attention to you all. Begging your pardon. Okay. Oh, what are your staff needs? I mean, do you have the internal staff that do this or are we shipping this out to vendors or how are we addressing all these inequalities this year and next? And I'm concerned about that. I'm sidestepping my president to ask you, so if you wanna look to him, that, I get that, but I'm just saying I'd like to catch you right now, what are your staffing needs?

- Yeah, I think in terms of the internal equity approach, that first step, it will be a project that involves working with employees and supervisors along with HR to review the relevant years of experience to make sure that data is correct. But beyond that, speaking to the career ladder and job families, we don't, I mean we have staff that is capable of doing that for sure, but to do that in an expeditious manner is just not reasonable. So that's the purpose of putting that out for an RFP to hire a vendor. We could do that work internally, but it would take far more than 18 months to make that happen.

- Well, I mean, Greg Musil would say, I'm a tax and spend liberal anyway, so whatever you need, we'll go get it there. But I think it's reasonable to do.

- I never said that.

- I know that. Wasn't it funny?

- I've thought it but I never said it.

- So anyway, that's why you you're issuing an RFP, you request...

- Yeah, that's correct.

- I've talked long enough. Does anybody else?

- Five minute recess would be good.

- That'd be grand, that'd be great. Unless there's anything else here on this issue, I would, I believe Trustee Musil has moved for a five minute recess, is it...

- I move it.

- Moved and seconded. Any discussion? Seeing none. All those in favor, please say aye.

- [All] Aye.

- Opposed? The ayes have it. Thank you. We'll be back in five minutes. I have 5:28. We're back. It's 5:33, 5 minutes later. Thank you all for being here. The next item on our agenda, I believe we're ready to move on...

- Correct.

- Absolutely. Is the post-VERB follow up discussion. Again, I'd requested this because I have a hard time wrapping my mind around it. So I appreciate Dr. Bowne came as well as Trustee Musil's candor quite often when he says what frankly all of us are thinking, what does this mean and how do I understand it? So talk to me.

- All right, so we spent the last hour and a half working through the pay tables, career laddering and so forth. But we felt it was important for us to have that conversation to understand the context of the whole as we work through this and now I wanna shift our attention to what could be behind the sunset of VERB and reminding us that again, we approved the sunset of VERB with a negotiated 12 month advance notice last may. To be clear, my recommendation at that time as well as a recommendation of administration was to sunset VERB to approve the other items under consideration that we've discussed tonight. That was at that point and still is my recommendation. To date, so you know, 20 faculty members and 31 staff members have submitted their paperwork to take, to utilize VERB while it's still available.

- Can you repeat that?

- Yep. 20 faculty and 31 staff have submitted their paperwork to utilize VERB while it's still available. If we look back at our original discussions around VERB, we talked about 262 faculty and staff who were VERB eligible and most likely to benefit from VERB and were used in the calculations of estimates. When you consider those who have applied for VERB as well as the VERB eligible employees who did the sick leave payout, there were 109 of those who fell into that category of likely to benefit from VERB, there were 109 of those employees. To split that out, that's 44 faculty members and 58 staff. So that leaves that 102 are still eligible, out of that 262 initial look, there are 102 of those employees who are still eligible for VERB may be considering that. At the May meeting, several of you asked for alternatives as you were considering the vote, asking for alternatives and ask for a committee to be formed to come back to you with options. And so at our committee of whole meeting, on October 31st, they brought forward their presentation. Committee members Barry Bailey, Doug Copeland, Robin Judkins, Jim Lane, and Ed Lovett represented employees from across the college, faculty and staff. And we had resources to support their efforts, Colleen Chandler, Rachel Lears, and our benefits consultants, Holmes Murphy. In your board materials is a summary of an analysis that was conducted by a subset of cabinet, Colleen Chandler, Rachel Lears, Chris Gray, and Kelsey Nazar. And the document being shared, that we have shared with you and placing the board materials is a summary of the actual presentation you received, and I know you also received that again in preparation for this meeting. And I wanted to walk us through that. So if we could bring it up on the screen... Thank you, Jason. The first committee recommendation is to continue the current Early Notification Award. And as the group looked at that, there are no concerns. It's in the master agreement and we believe that that should stay in place. The second committee recommendation is to increase the college's 403 contribution by one and a half percent. For group one employees, that's from seven to eight and a half percent. And for group two employees, that's eight to nine and a half percent. And so we offer the following observation and analysis. A one and a half percent increase in the college contribution will cost approximately $1 million in the next year. This amount will increase year after year by the same amount as the compensation adjustments or compensation increases that are made in future years. That will continue year after year as we move forward. The college's 403 contribution is codified in the master agreement. So such an agreement or such a change would be subject to negotiation. And I do recognize the committee's desire, their deep desire to recognize employees that have many years ahead of them, however many years that may be, right? The 403 contribution provides more opportunities for employees that have more time yet to work at Johnson County Community College. So that's the second of the recommendations. The third committee recommendation is to make a lump sum available at the time of their retirement. At any time that someone is employed, excuse me, at any time that someone is employed on July 1st of '23, retires at some point in the future. The proposal that would take a snap, this proposal would take a snapshot of the full-time employees on July 1st of '23 and multiply their years of service by their annualized salary or wage and multiply that by three quarters of a percent. And so we offer the following observation and analysis. The college would need to book a liability of approximately $3.5 million on July 1 of '23, less any employees who take, who utilize for. This liability amount would be adjusted annually and would remain on the college balance sheet until all approximately 900 eligible employees either retire or separate from the college, which could take, candidly, decades. The maximum total payout under this proposal would be approximately $7 million. They've done the analysis of looking at the employees that we have today, what would that look like on July 1 given what we know about our employees. And again, the committee did great work in trying to find a solution that recognizes the long term employees' contribution to the college. And the fourth and final recommendation by the committee is to provide what I would describe as a series of perks, if you will, for those retiring, such as retirement planning sessions, maintaining employee email as retirees, having college IDs for access and discounts and access to Cariloop. And again, I offer the following observations and analysis. HR does offer ongoing retirement planning sessions through TIAA and TwoWest, our partners. And in October of this year, for instance, they offered informational sessions from Social Security Administration and KPERS for employees considering retirement. And HR will continue to analyze the needs for ongoing retirement planning workshops for employees as they consider future retirement. And if there are costs associated with that, we would factor that into future budgets as needed. Information Services does not recommend allowing retirees to maintain college email accounts due to the concerns related to security and potential legal liability. And a quick side note on that, we get requests from retirees periodically asking that same question, can we have access to our college email addresses? And our answer to that has been pretty consistent. No, we're not able to do that across the board. Access control and campus police do not recommend allowing retirees to use JCC ID cards to access our facilities due to concerns related to safety and or security. And finally, HR will continue to analyze costs of providing retirees access to Cariloop, cost of providing post-employment benefits is subject to other post employee benefits, OPEB requirements, requiring annual actuarial valuation and liability accounting, like existing post-employment medical and prescription drug benefits. What questions do you have about the proposals? Yes.

- So I'm a little confused on a couple things which shouldn't surprise anyone. So on these recommendations, these are four distinct options for moving forward with how we change from VERB to a new future plan? I thought that the eligible, the employees that were eligible were just the 262, is that correct?

- Those who are eligible and most likely to benefit.

- At this point or ever or where is like...

- At that point in time.

- So are the, so there are future people who could have been?

- That is correct.

- So it's the could have been eligible had we not taken it away, that we're specifically referring to in recommendation number three, that 900 people were... So how does that reconcile with the 262? I guess I'm confused where those two numbers, how they align.

- The 262 are individuals that currently as of today or as of July 1, will qualify or meet the requirements to retire under VERB as of June 30th, to retire July 1.

- Okay.

- The additional, the balance of that between the 900 and that 262 are any employee, myself included, I will not be eligible between now and July 1 to take advantage of VERB. This is accounting for someday I may become eligible if I stay with the college and I hit the requisite years of experience in the KPERS qualifications to retire, then I would become eligible to retire under option three, at whatever future date I may choose to retire.

- But option three isn't, doesn't have anything to do with VERB per se. It is an alternative option, Is that correct?

- That is correct.

- Okay. So you're just suggesting that we took away VERB, on the one hand you're saying this is another option that we could give our employees as a way to incentivize them and reward them, whatever, right?

- That is correct.

- So a payout of the potentially 900 employees is what? Okay. Just trying to reconcile the numbers.

- And to put some context around it in terms of the value, if you will, or the individual employee, the calculations that the committee did and that the team did would estimate that it's about half of what one might receive if I would compare somebody took VERB and somebody who would utilize this proposal, it's about half of what was available through VERB.

- Okay, thank you.

- Other questions, Trustee Rattan?

- Can the committee consider using the same structure and processes VERB, but scaling it back to a fraction, like the same calculations, the same way sick pay is paid out, but it's just a fraction of what it could be, if that makes sense.

- I think so. I honestly can't speak to all of the things that they considered. I came in kind of late in the process. I wasn't part of those meetings initially. I just know that the committee did a tremendous amount of work starting back from May, they met weekly to brainstorm ideas that, possibilities and what they, again, I don't wanna speak for the committee, but from my vantage point, working with them as a resource member, considering what they thought that would be an acceptable alternative for the board to consider.

- Well, these are just all brand new, instead of saying VERB as it is, let's do it at 25% of what we were. And so these are all like brand new versus like take the current framework and adjust it. So I didn't know if that was considered.

- I can't speak to that specifically. I don't know.

- Other questions? Yeah, Trustee Musil.

- Just for my edification, what is the last date that somebody can now give notice that they're going to take VERB?

- December...

- It's December something, but I don't know if it's the 31st or...

- For faculty it's December 1st of 2022. That's a requirement of the master agreement. For staff, they have to give six months notice. So six months prior to June 30 would be December 31st of 2022.

- Yeah.

- We talked about certain parts of this are in the master agreement. I just wanna make sure I'm understanding that we have all, we've generally treated benefits and salary increases equally, whether they're for staff or collective bargaining, and we have treated these provisions equally, whether they're for staff or collective bargaining unit, right? We don't have to do that. Is that, Kelsey? I mean no, we...

- We have to do, it's in the master agreement.

- We have to do the master agreement. That's a collective bargaining agreement with the full-time faculty. The other things we have done since I've been on the board on an equal basis. But I think it's important to understand that we don't have to do that. We have chosen to do that as a comfort level and a commitment to our non-bargaining unit employees. And so I think that's important to note. On the 403 ... Is that a match of what employees put in their 403 or is that just a flat out 8.5, 7% now that would go to 9.5%, 8% now that would go to 9.5%?

- The current seven and 8% structure is not a match. It is just a contribution from the college regardless of whether the employee elects to make a contribution of their own. And my understanding of the committee's proposal is that would simply be a 1.5% increase to that amount. It would not involve a match.

- I'm gonna sound like the Grinch again, it's not a 1.5% increase. It's a 21.4% increase to go from 7% to 9.5% and it's a 17% increase to go to 8% to 9.5%. So those are the kind of things when we sell things and we try to explain it to the public and say we increased at 1.5%, we didn't increase at 1.5%, we increased at 21.4%. Which, and that's why you get to numbers that are big numbers and that will continue to grow as our salary base continues to grow. And leads me back to the fiscal responsibility part of our three legged stool. So I think that's important.

- Can you walk me through that? Where, put that together, I'm not connected-

- If we go from 7% to 8.5%, the increase is 1.5 over 7, okay? It's 1.5% increase over 7%, 7.0 base.

- The Yankees fan concurs.

- So that's 21.4%. I did the math.

- 1.5 percentage points percent-

- Yeah.

- 21%-

- Right. So I don't wanna hear from a taxpayer that says, you said you increased at 1.5%. Have you guys ever been to math or statistics? Because it's not 1.5%, it's 21.4 and 17 point something I believe. So those are big increases and those go into our base and those go up every year by 2%, 2.5%, 3.5%, whatever we agree on collective bargaining and if we keep that tied with our staff and administration, which I would continue to recommend. On the new, on recommendation number three, if I'm hired on July 1st of 2023, do I get that?

- No, it would be for... The part of the factor there is the years of service to the college prior to July 1 of 2023. So if you don't have prior years of service prior to July 1st, 2023, that would not be, you would not be part of that population.

- And this is what troubles me. We talk about internal equity, I think in 2013 we changed and we have two tiers of employee benefits. If you're hired July 1 of 2014, I believe, you went to a different benefit structure and you got the higher 403 , but lower other benefits and salary, I'm not sure the exact details. So we split apart our employees into two different groups. Here, in the payout that we did as part of eliminating VERB, we treated different people differently depending on where they were in the structure. This would say anybody new doesn't get the same benefit. And yet we talk about internal equity. I don't like splitting up our employees into different classes of employees. And this would be another example of doing that. And eventually the, some board in the future is gonna say, well, we need to do it for people that were hired after July 1st, 2023, because they've been here five years now and they don't have any incentive and they haven't been recognized for their service. I'm very much in favor of paying our people right in the market, giving them benefits that are comparable, and that's what we do, that's what employers should do, treating their people right. I'm very uncomfortable splitting this up and saying, everybody gets it now and nobody new gets it because that's not fair and it will lead to pressures in the future to get it. So those are my comments and my questions to make sure I understood what the recommendation was. That the recommendation on the whole ends up with a total cost very similar to VERB. We're gonna be putting the same amount of money aside in our reserves that we can't spend for new faculty, new employees, new buildings, new programs, because it has to be set aside for legal purposes and act as an actuarial table. So that not only creates different classes of employees, but it limits future boards from what they can spend. So, and again, as I started out tonight, this piecemeal, I'm not, I'm absolutely not ready to consider this until we get to an overall study of what our compensation package is and how it's comparable in the market. Because otherwise we are not testing the external competitiveness and we are not testing fiscal responsibility. We're doing something because we made a mistake three or four years ago, not understanding the consequences, we had to take that back as a fiscally responsible manner, and now employees are saying we'd like some more because we feel like we've been not recognized and not acknowledged. And I don't wanna, I'm not gonna put this board or the next board in there, at least individually as one trustee.

- So can I clarify, I was not aware that there are two different benefits packages. Is that faculty versus staff? Is it, what...

- No.

- Hiring base. Doesn't that make it more complicated internally to manage two different benefits packages?

- Is it rhetorical?

- That was rhetorical, thank you.

- Well, I was gonna ask, I barely understand it or what I can remember and I drove Judy nuts with that, but if anybody wanna address it, I'd, it's fine if you wanna, if you want us to move on, we can.

- Yep. I just wanna make the point. I was not aware that there were two different benefit packages and I think that's a problem in and of itself. I agree. Just, it's just something that we probably should address before we compound the problem with a new system that...

- Let me go back to Greg and then, yeah.

- What I remember, I think it was, I think I'm only one on the board that did it. There was a committee from the faculty association, there was a committee that studied and it was about the sustainability of the current benefit package at the time, and it was determined that it was not gonna be sustainable. And I suspect Trustee Bob Drummond was part of that discussion because he was always looking to the future. And so what we ended up doing reluctantly with the recommendation of that committee was to say, if you're hired, I think it was July 1 2014, I'm seeing some yeses, you're hired on July 1st, 2014 or afterwards, you had a different benefit mix that was less costly to the college than those who had, were on staff before that. And so that, and I know there were concerns at the time that were creating kind of two classes and I don't know if it's worked, I mean it's worked fiscally, I don't know if it's worked morale wise or if people even remember it, but I think it's important to note we've already done that once. And so when we keep talking about internal equity, I keep thinking I can list things where we have ignored that for specific reasons...

- Well, if I may, my understanding, I think I was here on the end of it. I remember we had a dinner in the Sunflower Room September of '13. So I was brand new. And I know that many other corporations and institutions do that. They tier their benefits package. And I think one of the distinctions in this example, because I love arguing with you, is they choose it, right? They can opt into one system or the other. My knowledge, is that not right? Rachel Lierz is frowning at me, says no.

- Individuals in group one can opt to move to group two. Once they do that, they can't move back. But, and your placement at group one or group two is based on your hire date.

- How many people are they in group one?

- I can't speak to that tonight. We would have that information. I just dunno.

- I'm done, Mr. Chair.

- Thank you, Mr. Trustee. Trustee Smith-Everett.

- Thank you. In an effort to move along kind of conclusion tonight, Here's my two questions. What was VERB's promise? And I am in complete agreement. You're going to be shocked, Trustee Musil, I am in complete agreement that I think that making a decision on this is not in our best interest without a complete picture of our compensation plan. I think that that is a critical component that we're just flying blind on that I don't think is fair to either our employees or us to make the decision. And so then my second question is, if we were to choose some of these in particular, does that make us liable to then have to reopen the negotiated agreement as a whole? Or is, are we allowed to simply take that one component and go back in? How does that work with the negotiated agreement where we're gonna, we're looking at taking a piece, I think it's number two, right? That we would need to, that is part of the negotiated agreement. We say we're gonna do that. Does that then open up, we're gonna renegotiate, everything is eligible to renegotiate, or we are able to renegotiate one item?

- Talk about what you know...

- And then we're down that rabbit hole of getting committees together, having our representation, their representation to come together for an agreement on that, which is a six weeks, six months process. Right? Is that in potentially? Is that correct?

- I'm not exactly sure on the exact... Is that about right on the dates and the notice required, Kelsey?

- I mean, this would be off cycle. So it could be done.

- Theoretically could be done. It's just a pain and perhaps a bad precedent to be set.

- Yeah, that's exactly my point.

- So are you saying if we negotiate one of these or are you going back to the issue of the two benefits packages?

- No, if we, the one where it would affect the negotiated agreement, I, sorry, I was skimming earlier. One of 'em affects the negotiated agreement because it would affect the... Yeah, because it affects the pay and the contribution and then we're...

- Cement negotiations.

- Yeah. And I've been in, I've been in situations when you, once you notice, even though we might notice, that opens up Pandora's box of other things that get put into that renegotiation even though it's supposed to be a narrow renegotiation. So that is a big concern of mine. I am not interested in that. I again, I don't, you might be the only one that was here, what was VERB's promise at the time? I always thought it was an early retirement incentive and I now learned in the last year it was not, it was just added as a benefit. What was the promise of VERB? How was it sold to the two of you? What, from your recollection?

- I believe, I mean, it's called a Voluntary Early Retirement Benefit. It was discussed and approved as an early retirement benefit, so people might be able to retire earlier than 65 and place money into an HSA or take a cash lump sum to get them to their Medicare eligibility. So whether people used it for that or for other purposes was up to them individually. But that, and the folks that talked to me about supporting it were, some were pretty candid about, I'll retire early and you'll be able to hire somebody at a lower salary than me, so it's a net benefit or not a big cost. And my response to all them was, if you're good, I don't want you to retire early. So, but it was intended to let you retire early. In the old days, the college covered everybody's health benefits until they were on Medicare. I don't know how many people were here that remember that, Judy does, lots of 'em. So, and that became unsustainable. So we stopped healthcare for retirees up to their 65th birthday. And VERB was a recognition that if you retire at 60, you've gotta cover yourself for five more years and let's find a way to help employees do that. And if they took the cash and put it in HSA, they could use that to cover healthcare costs or they could just take a lump sum cash payment. So that was how it was described at the time. And it's amazing that there aren't too many people here.

- My memory is that the faculty had wanted it in '18, we were redoing the master agreement and I believe, multiple sources have told me the doctor's administration hadn't properly scored it or didn't feel comfortable offering it or understanding the ramifications in '18. And then the administration, with our approval, unilaterally presented it and approved it in '19, '19 is my memory.

- Don't remember the dates, but...

- Well, I wanna say the name of the person that went around and really was part of the loud vocal minority. Yes, there was a shocking people that wanted it, to retire early that were close. And then I think it was both an early retirement incentive and something of a wanted benefit, if that makes any sense. So I think the administration now has deemed it, and we approved, moving it, so now we're exploring replacing it. Not to belabor the point, I'm just trying to reframe us where we're at.

- Yeah, thank you.

- And before I talk any further, is any other comments or questions here?

- I think it's important to have the history. We had previously done a temporary, a sunsetted VERB where we had tried it for a two year period, I think, I'm looking at Judy because she was helping us, and then it sunsetted. So it was an effort to see who would take it. And we'd have to go back and look at. And then, because it was relatively popular and seemed to serve its purpose, it was proposed to do it as a permanent benefit and, or at least adopt it without a specific sunset, let me say that way. And those processes become permanent or 'cause controversy if you try to make them less than permanent.

- Interesting.

- I'm trying to see if I have a complete thought here. I think as you have spoken about, Mr. Chairman, about the market, we are looking at an employment market as very different. And I think we need to think about keeping employees rather than incentivizing them to move on only because we don't have the replacement people coming that we traditionally have in the past, where that incentive helps move along the more expensive employee that's been here in order to then replace with the cheaper... So I, that's a concern of mine, and I wanna hold the promise that we've made to employees, especially those that have served a long amount of years, but I don't know these are any of that, are gonna do that. That's it.

- Anything else? I have a few things. Number four here, perks and resources for retirees, don't we do this for, I have some memory in one of our discussions we do this for emeritus status professors who retire or have emeritus?

- That is correct.

- Okay. So there's, I'm asking, I guess there's some provision existing for potential retirees to apply and or maintain their email in the current system that we have? I dunno if that was the current sentence or question, but...

- Yep. With the emeritus status, yes.

- Is this just for faculty or is that for all staff or...

- We have had individuals apply for emeritus status that were not faculty, but it is primarily for faculty or it has been primarily utilized by faculty, I will say it that way.

- I have looked it up. What does emeritus mean? It just means in perpetuity or it means, what does it mean?

- I'm gonna look to someone who knows the answer far better than I do.

- Emeritus speaks to-

- Must be able to keep it off...

- Pretty good service. And then continue connection service.

- So, how does it work? And I'm sorry to belabor the point, but if you follow me, I have some strategy and logic here...

- So to become, when you become an emeritus faculty member, our system is different than most places. At most places, becoming an emeritus faculty member is at the behest of the institution when you are a...

- I think there's a bit of a long answer here. So... So Mickey McCloud, executive vice president of Academic Affairs, when you apply for emeritus at most institutions, yes, it is not something you apply for, it is offered by the institution. Ours is a reverse system, because at most institutions, emeritus serves to fill a gap that is difficult to fill in the workforce. So an individual wishes to retire, but they have a specialty that is not easily obtained out on the job market for a faculty member, and so you ask that individual if they will remain with the institution in a retired, but still eligible and occasionally teaching capacity, so that they can get their retirement benefit, and at most places it is either a state, but most of the time at private benefit for retirement that is obtained, and then they are still eligible to be on the payroll, but at a reduced level and only teaching one to two courses. In our system, you apply for emeritus status and then a faculty committee oversees that and then sends it through my office, an individual who obtains emeritus status is then eligible to come back to teach for us at a higher than the adjunct rate.

- So if I may, trust me, Trustee Musil it's sort of like the senior judge system in federal court? Or senior judges, don't they operate somewhat similarly?

- Exactly the same. I don't know. It's, I think it's similar to that.

- I mean, I'm trying to frame it, I'm not saying it's exactly similar, but they're essentially on the bench and we pulled them out of retirement as we have the, right, like a lack of judges.

- And I don't know how many of our emeritus actually come back to teach or if it's more of an honorary...

- At this point, at this institution, it is far more honorary than it is actual. We probably only have about, currently, I would argue, 40% of the emeritus faculty still teaching actively. But you never lose that status. So of course as the years go by, you end up with more and more people with the status who are no longer teaching, because in some cases it's been 20 years since they filed for actual retirement.

- And this is not a ramble. There was one human being that, and perhaps more, as a part of the recommendation, they wanted to keep their email handle as they retired. Right? So there's a process in place where a human being could go apply and perhaps have emeritus status in order to keep...

- Yeah, you can apply for emeritus status.

- What are the odds that he's approved? Or she's...

- They're fairly high, but you have to have already met the threshold for years of previous service to the institution, having gained full professorship, being in good standing... So there are a number of pieces there upon retirement that gate keep before you get to the committee.

- So that way we know who we're dealing with and if we grant certain rights and privileges, we know who we're dealing with?

- Effectively, yes.

- Trustee Smith-Everett?

- It's only faculty that are, I mean...

- That is correct. Faculty is, faculty gain emeritus status. We do have emeritus administrator sitting in the room. So there are other folks in that pool. But it is primarily a faculty benefit as designed.

- I thank you, because, like I have reservations about all of this and I certainly supported the administration when we withdrew the VERB. The Trustee's comments and input here. And thank you, Dr. McClean. I wanted to just make sure everyone's eyeballs and brains were on this because we were in different places by design and necessity. And so I wanted you all to see this and I wanted to further discuss it so that we knew what we were doing or having a more informed decision, I think, coming to next week. So, we're taking no action, trying to frame my thoughts on the fly here... I don't know that I'm in favor of any of these, candidly, to just close that publicly here. And at some point, we've talked about in numerous meetings, collegial steering today and other private meetings where the pressure of growing, a growing budget with a declining enrollment is a reality. And I think Trustee Musil made the greatest point of all, until we complete this compensation study, I don't know how we're in any kind of informed position to call the ball here. So...

- Can... Sorry, I thought you're prompting me to... So what can we do in the interim so that we don't have a group of people who, as I understand it, there is a group of people in limbo currently waiting for us to make a decision so they can decide whether they're going to make a decision on, what, that December 1st or December 31st deadline depending on who they are. Is that correct?

- Well, right, and that's what they presented here to us. They've made these recommendations. So essentially, just to go back over it, I'm not trying to be rude or a jerk, I'm just saying we could make no modification, keep VERB, vote to keep it. They presented different options here and I think not before us perhaps is to do nothing. Just to go ahead and eliminate the VERB, which, as an amateur student at finance these last few years, is a market decision, to do nothing is a decision, and provide some certainty for those applying in the next... That's why I wanted to do it today. We have a December 1st deadline, December 31st deadline. And so to move and even to choose to do nothing come next week, then there's some certainty provided, good, bad or indifferent for those that need to make a decision. So that was my goal and impetus and I appreciate you all getting back to all of us and Caitlin and I so quickly on the dates. So I dunno if that answers your question, but...

- But he, Dr. Bowne sounds...

- Yes. Just to clarify though, the decision was made back in May to sunset VERB. VERB is going away. What the committee has brought forward for your consideration is a set of proposals as an alternative that could follow behind VERB, should you choose to accept any or all of it. And so just to clarify it, it's not VERB that we're talking about, it's the proposal that's here in front of you that you need to decide to do something or nothing with. And I would just, from my perspective only, I see three options. I think one is to accept some or all of the recommendation that was made by the committee. Secondly, to your point, Mr. Chair, to pass on the recommendation or the proposals that are there. And the third is to now or at some point in the future consider an alternative... And I will just very quickly say that the, this subcommittee from cabinet that worked on this in providing more analysis and observations for you, said, building on the idea of the third proposal, which was that lump sum locked in July 1st, right, you could, potentially, if you wanted to, if you wanted something to phase it out, you could say, in offer truly an early retirement incentive. And the subgroups thinking was it's based on the work that the committee did in that option number three and make it available for a three year period with a termination date. So you go into it, that could be now or it could be some time in the future or none of the above. So it's some to yes to all or some, no to it all, or three, there could be an alternative.

- Trustee...

- Yeah, Trustee...

- I have a...

- Trustee Koesten and Trustee Smith-Everett.

- Forgot my question. It had to do with, come back to me, Nancy.

- Trustee Ingram.

- I forgot mine.

- Must be getting late.

- Back to you.

- No, well, number one, I wanted to thank you for doing this because I think as a result of committee as the whole, there was some discussion that at that particular time, because of the impending dates of December 1 and December 31st, that we owed it to people and I've got 102 people still eligible for this decision that we could not afford to wait until the December board meeting to make that decision. That was after the one date, that was just wrong. 1 date So I wanted to thank you for moving this along. I'm anticipating that we will have something on our agenda next week, as far as further discussion, a vote, recommendation, however, whatever that looks like.

- That was my goal. We're here two and a half hours. And so I was trying to take some time away from that and, you know-

- Right, right. But this allowed us the opportunity to speak openly about it, to have people hear our discussion about it. So that was the sole purpose of this. So we have three options, if you will, that are before us now to consider. So that's something that we'll have to do in business next week, is that correct?

- So just slight recommendation, I mean, there's a fourth possibility of some other alternative that is not before us.

- Okay.

- Does that mean, I'm just...

- Sure.

- Is that right?

- Or nothing, it's really not.

- So, Mr. Chair?

- Yes, ma'am?

- So my question then goes back to, is it the 102 people that are in limbo that we are concerned about?

- Yeah.

- While we wait to understand the benefits package analysis or think there might be something better in the way of an offering, how would any of that change these individuals' minds about whether or not they're going to take, 'cause I mean, they have the option now to take VERB. They, I mean, that's there, that's a given. It's right there. So they, what they're holding out for, then forgive me if this is ill, how do I wanna say, clumsily stated, what they're holding out for, is there gonna be something better than VERB, should I stay, will I lose everything if I stay and then we don't come up with something... I mean, I'm just trying to, in my mind, think about what would put somebody in limbo. And again, I'm new to this, I'm new, I don't walk in your shoes, so don't take it as an insult. I don't mean it that way. I'm just trying to figure out why, what is it about this transition that's causing these individuals to say, well, I think I wanna wait until I hear what better proposal is out there.

- Well, it's probably my fault, Trustee Koesten, because I know I was one of a few that had asked if we vote down VERB that we consider replacements. And Dr. Bowne stayed for 45 minutes to an hour with Trustee Ingram and I last week and explained it, took me through it. And so then I, Trustee Ingram and I decided that a special meeting could be necessary here to discuss it. So we have at least some process and consideration of those 102 people are in limbo. And even if we do nothing, that's still the decision that provides some certainty to those 102 people. And that's my goal. Because I'm not sure what we can afford to do, I'm not sure I'm happy with any of these proposals, and so...

- I wanted to make sure.

- I wanna make sure we were informed and understood... So if we do nothing next week, those 102 people know.

- Yeah.

- If that makes sense.

- Yeah. And Mr. Chair, I wanna echo that too. I think that we've all... There's too much unknown for us to make a good fiscal decision. I wanna honor what I said when we voted for this, which is we need to honor our people. I don't, I'm not comfortable taking no action, but on the other hand, the fiscal part of this job is that I don't think these options are the best. I would argue, I think this needs to be something we do through committee process. And I think it needs to be in cooperation with whatever staff or faculty committee, so that they come to our committee first, present and then... They don't hold the fiscal responsibility we do. So they don't think about the implications like reopening a negotiated agreement if you choose this option or the things that we have to weigh. And I think we need to work that out in a committee structure. And I guess all I'm saying is I would just make the promise that I would be committed to continuing to find a solution. I don't know that what we've been given today are any of the solutions that I am willing to sign on to.

- Right. And I concur with that. I just wanna also clarify that I think the committee did essentially what I, we had asked or what they thought.

- Yeah, agreed. Yes. So yes, thank you.

- Appreciate the work of the committee, appreciate the recommendations made. If we choose to do nothing with them, that that's just our option and I'm sorry if it goes that way, but we thank you for the recommendations. I do see Trustee Hamill's and Dr. Bowne reminded me. I'm sorry, Mark, I didn't get to you sooner.

- You're good. No worries. So I don't really wanna ask, a lot of the questions have been answered and I don't really wanna keep asking the same kind of questions and I appreciate everything... I am curious though, do we know what the cost is with VERB? I think 51 people have accepted it. Do you know what that cost looks like? And then also what was the cost of the sick hour leave payout? I think we budgeted 2 million. I'm just kinda curious what those costs come out to be.

- I don't know.

- We do know. So we do know, well, we know the sick leave payout, we budgeted 2 million and it actually came out right at basically 2 million.

- Okay. And do we know what the cost of VERB is so far with 51 people taking advantage of it?

- Not off top of our heads, but...

- Okay.

- Did we budget anything for that?

- Yes, we budget... Was that, was it a million? I'm gonna look to our CFO, Rachel Lierz's, what was the dollar amount that we budgeted for VERB pay?

- We're budgeted for payouts that... We also have a liability on the books to settle. It's fully, it's... It's fine, yeah.

- Any other questions here on this topic?

- I'll just say that the last thing is, I do really have concern over making a two class system, as a lot of people have referenced, and that really bothers me to be a solution. The other thing is I am concerned about losing our good faculty and staff. So this, obviously we know this is a really tough situation. So, thank you.

- Thank you, Trustee Hamill. I guess unless there's any other questions or comments, that brings us to the conclusion of our meeting this evening.

- Can I just say I, we appreciate every person in this room that works for this college. We take, there's, this is a weighty decision that is very difficult to balance the fiscal responsibility we have as well as taking care of you all as our employees that we trust with executing all these decisions for better, for worse, that we make up here. So I wanna thank everybody here because I know that this is also people making very important decisions for their own livelihood and I just appreciate it. And I'm sorry I don't know that we've got great answers for tonight, but I appreciate it.

- Well said. Thank you. Any other questions, comments? I think I'll ask for a motion to adjourn, if I may.

- So moved.

- Second.

- Moved by Trustee Ingram and seconded by Trustee Musil. All those in favor please signify by saying yes.

- [All] Yes.

- Those opposed? The yeses have it. The opinion of the chair. Thank you, all, for coming.

- Thank you, all.