

UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON
FACULTY COUNCIL ON RETIREMENT, INSURANCE AND BENEFITS

The Faculty Council on Retirement, Insurance, and Benefits met on Monday, January 5, 2004 at 10:00 a.m.. Chair Patti Brandt called the meeting to order at 10:34 a.m.

Present:

Professors: Bliquez, Boxx, Brandt, Demorest, Dugdale, Haley, Johnson, Kochin, Martin, Waaland, Whittaker

Ex-officio: Dougherty, Dwyer, McKenzie, Henley, Olswang, Constantine

Synopsis:

1. Announcements
2. Update on Long Term Care letter to Health Care Authority
3. Benchmarking Benefits: Subcommittee's priorities & timeline
4. Tuition Waiver Expansion: Proposal

Announcements

Faculty Senate Chair Doug Wadden, and Vice-Chair Ross Heath have seen the Long Term Care letter and are very impressed with it. They would like it presented at a Faculty Senate meeting.

Randy Hodgins has replaced Dick Thompson as the new Director of the Office of State Relations.

Patti Carson, the new Vice President for Human Resources, would like to visit FCRIB to get acquainted and talk about her vision for Human Resources. Her time is limited, but she could come in March or April. Katy Dwyer will check on this.

Tuition Waiver Expansion: Proposal

Steve Demorest presented the subcommittee's proposal that the Tuition Waiver benefit be expanded to include children and spouses. After conversations with Harlan Patterson and Steve Olswang, it appears that there is no need to go to the legislature for approval of this benefit. The UW has broad authority over tuition waivers, so the urgency to meet the legislative calendar is eased.

Demorest said this is an all or nothing proposition – either it is extended to the entire UW community, or to none. Demorest would like to see a choice added to the present benefit (6 credits per quarter at no charge for faculty and staff, on a space available basis), so that faculty and staff could transfer their benefit to a spouse, same-sex domestic partner, or child, at **50% tuition waiver** up to full-time status at the UW.

All 50% waiver recipients would have full student status (**not** space available) and would have to qualify for admittance through standard guidelines. Their enrollment would count against enrollment cap, and there would be no special admission status for these students. The transfer benefit would vest only after the faculty or staff member has been employed for six years, unless the person hired was a full professor at full tenure. The benefit could only be used for one person at a time, and the subcommittee feels the benefit should be limited to the undergraduate degree.

The next step in the process will be to take the proposal before the Board of Deans and the UW Human Resources Committee. The Faculty Senate Chair and Vice-Chair will need to see it first.

After general discussion, the subcommittee agreed to synthesize the following additions, revisions, and concerns into the next draft of the proposal:

1. Clarify that this is something the University is doing for its own faculty and staff under its broad tuition waiver authority.
2. Clarify whether domestic partner means same-sex relationship.
3. Define that the beneficiary must be a dependent.
4. Define the four-year maximum benefit per dependent at the undergraduate rate. Clarify that one dependent may use the benefit at a time.
5. Clarify that the maximum allowable benefit is 50% per dependent – the staff/faculty person can either use the six credits or transfer it to their dependent, can't be used at the same time.
6. Resolve how this will be tracked, since there are startup costs. This should be tracked through the tuition billing statement.
7. Provide a good rationale statement about the importance of tuition waivers, so Patti can present this to the Senate Executive Committee and other gatekeepers. Emphasize retention and recruitment. Be clear that this is a tuition benefit, and has nothing to do with admissions policy.
8. Stress that this does not affect the current benefit of faculty and staff, which is available on a space available basis and is not taxed. This should be an add-on benefit, not an "or" benefit.
9. Clarify whether the space available and the dependent benefit can or cannot be used at the same time.
10. Clarify whether this applies to retirees.

The Council will revisit the draft when the revisions are made.

Benchmarking Subcommittee

David Dugdale distributed a document that described issues and objectives for this subcommittee:

Overall goal is to contribute to faculty understanding of benefit and retirement plans and issues:

- Increase awareness of benefits
- Contribute to the existing educational plan regarding benefits
- Document the current trends in benefits
- Provide data related to UWRP and VIP, some of which may be available from the Fund Review Committee

Some benefits are controlled by the Health Care Authority, some by the UW, and some are set by the legislature. The Benefits Office is a source of information, and does not act in an advocacy capacity. FCRIB can advocate for benefits. Data about the dollar value of benefits are housed in the Benefits Office, but compensation data are in the Budget Office. Long term projections are said to be subject to large inaccuracies.

The subcommittee did some brainstorming on a definition of benefits and innovative ways to present them. Personal stories, and the creation of a hypothetical person's choices, may be more illustrative than charts and graphs.

Olswang asked whether the subcommittee is still planning to contact other institutions. Dugdale said they are, but that will be a longer timeline. The hypothetical person data might be completed

this year. Dugdale will have more on this by the February meeting, and will also try to develop a timeline for completion of the project, also for the next meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at noon. *Minutes by Linda Fullerton, Recorder.*