

Faculty Council on Benefits and Retirement (FCBR)

January 31, 2008 Meeting Minutes

The Faculty Council on Benefits and Retirement met in Gerberding Hall, room 36, on Thursday, January 31, 2008. Robert Bowen, Chair for the Committee, called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

Synopsis:

- Approval of minutes of the December 3, 2007 meeting
- News on the status of auto-enrollment and tuition waiver legislation
- Update by Mindy Kornberg
- Update by Katy Dwyer
 - Legislative
 - Benefits and Work/Life draft communication plan for 2008
- How can FCBR support the Benefits and Work/Life communication plan?
- Continued discussion of UWRP with special attention to the Supplemental Benefit Plan

1. Bowen wanted to clarify what CTC meant in the minutes - Community and Technical Colleges. Also, that this statement, "it offsets the annuity benefit offset and the WAPERS benefit" was not a typo. Dwyer confirmed that it was not. Bowen wanted to know why UWRP participants tend to be more likely to benefit from the Supplemental Benefit Plan (SBP) when they retire because of a disability. It is because they do not have to meet the age requirement. Likewise, why someone in Professional Staff who kept their funds in the PERS program. Because this is a frozen benefit. Someone who joined UW late in their career but still had at least 10 years of service would be more likely to benefit because they will reach their age and years of service with the highest wages.

Motion to pass the December 3, 2007 meeting minutes were unanimously approved.

2. Kornberg said there was no update from the Provost on the Tuition Exemption. It was included in the proposed budget by the faculty senate. It will be in competition with other requests. Faculty will have to decide which is more important – this or salary increases. This is a Planning and Budgeting issue. The message that this can be done with tuition waivers, and not direct out of pocket funds, needs to be presented to Dan Luchtel, Gary Quarfoth, and Phyllis Wise.

The Work/Life balance program hasn't been approved as yet. It was in the supplemental budget.

3. Kornberg had no updates at this time.
4. Dwyer stated that the Benefits and Work/Life (BWL) office now has access to the Data Warehouse. Numbers can now be pulled for the UWRP data. See Dwyer's handout. It would cost the University \$3.63 million annually if all UWRP eligible employees in their optional period took advantage of the benefit. It would cost \$1.24 million for the over 50 employees at 7.5%.

Data also showed that some employees take the 10% deduction and then later reduce it back to 7.5%.

Benefits office has started mailing letters to the group that are age 50 or better but not using the of 10% optional benefit.

Committee would like to survey the employees that are not taking advantage of the benefit to better understand why and then be able to educate. Is there a certain type of employee that does not take advantage? Is it lower salaried employees?

Legislative update – will be a short session. Of interest is authorizing the HEC board to offer a higher ed retirement plan.

Benefits Metrics – see Dwyer's handout.

Call volumes continues to be high and is the preferred method of contact. They have done 505 presentations and their office reviews thousands of payroll transactions, enrollment/change forms.

To replace old systems here at the UW the cost would be in the millions. We have so many shadow systems. It would take years to get a new system up and running.

Communication Plan

- 2008 BWL public calendar – scheduled events-to-date
- Internal Benefits working calendar notices, updates, emails.
- Event Management Database – tracking for scheduled events and locations.

Overall Communications approach

- Core offerings scheduled routinely at all locations throughout the year
 - New Employee orientations, retirement process, Weight Watchers @ Work
- Cyclic Events
 - Semi-annual UWRP “ready to retire”, Benefits Fairs, etc.
- Targeted Groups
 - Topical items (investing for retirement during a down market, departmental special requests, groups with special needs (ESL, night shift, hospital workers, etc.)
- Targeted goals
 - Increase 2008 Flex Spending enrollment, reduce UWRP optional period numbers, UWRP 10% participation

Flexible Spending Account (FSA) – will work with Health Care Authority (HCA) try to increase the maximum. The HCA needs a few more years of data to show this program dose not cost the state money. Current maximum is \$2400/year. New vendor in 2007, BWL will do another push this summer – people have too many choices in the fall. Would like to have vendor to come out and do presentations. Comes with debit card and funds will be lost if not claimed.

Committee would like to see a place on the website that would help calculate out how much they should claim.

UW pays ASI a “per person” fee to administer this program.

BWL would like to notify people of their benefits available when a life event happens. With access to the Data Warehouse, letters can now be generated to employees at these times.

Bowen will work off-line with Chamberlin and Brandt to come up with questions that will be on a survey of those age 50 not using the 10% rate. Need to get real data on why people aren't signing up for the UWRP full benefit.

Committee discussed whether survey should be mailed or emailed. Bowen would like to use both methods.

It would be good to get data for statistical analysis – age, gender, dept, dependents.

Bowen asked for input on his draft email from the FCBR to support UW Benefits 2008 Communication Plan. Bowen felt that faculty might listen to other colleagues more than the Benefits office.

Kornberg had concerns that this may be a breach of confidentiality.

Bowen wants the committee to be able to do more.
Dwyer is concerned that this may not fall under the charge of the committee which is advisory – it requires more discussion with the senate leadership.

Ways to get benefits messages out were discussed –

- UWeek

- Retirement Seminars

- Post something on the Council's website

- Create tool on the web that would calculate savings

- Create visuals

- An alert on the ESS site ESS site is controlled by someone else and needs to be overhauled – USER project created it.

Comments from committee members indicated that the employer-paid long term disability was so minimal it should be eliminated. The group felt that people may think they are covered, when in actuality they are not. Dwyer commented that her staff emphasizes this benefit at orientations, to ensure that full information is available.

Employee Benefits Summary to be sent this fall - might highlight what's missing for each employee.

Attendees:

Voting Faculty: Robert (Bob) Bowen (Business, Chair), Patricia Brandt (Nursing), Robert (Bob) Breidenthal (Aeronautics and Astronautics), Jon Brock (Public Affairs), Steven Demorest (Music), Betty Gallucci (Biobehavioral Nursing and Health Systems), Alan Hess (Finance and Business Economics)

Voting Representatives: J. Ray Bowen (Retired Faculty), Charles Chamberlin (Association of UW Librarians)

Regular Distinguished Guest: Katy Dwyer (Director of Benefits and WorkLife)

Representatives: Pat Dougherty (UW Retirement Association), Andrew Everett (ASUW)

Notetaker: Liz Mason – Assistant to Mindy Kornberg