

2010-11 Faculty Senate Benefits Committee: YEAREND SUMMARY

Chair:

Anne Smith, Department of Management

Members:

Michael Clark

Gene Fitzhugh

Martin Griffin

Jun Lin

Brent Mallinckrodt

Lane Morris

Micky Sims

Adam Taylor (incoming Chair 2011-12)

Jeanine Williamson

Statement from Chair Anne Smith:

Last August, Joan Heminway asked me to be the chair of this committee. Even though I had rolled off the Faculty Senate, I was delighted to step in and help out this year. The committee members were excellent. I was always amazed at their insights and suggestions. As well, I think this committee was helpful to university faculty members primarily related to the new insurance plans and renewed attention to the issue of domestic partnerships and benefits. Finally, because we have had many guests from throughout the university (e.g., Sarah Gardial, Linda Hendricks, Chris Cimino, Rob Chance, Sherry Sims, Ron Tredway, Mark Paganelli, Jamie Wilson), I have learned a tremendous amount about our benefits and the university. Below, I summarize some of our initiatives and actions over the past academic year. As well, I identify remaining action items that should be followed up on or activities continued during the next year under Adam Taylor's leadership of this committee.

Committee Activities:

The 2010-2011 Faculty Benefits committee focused primarily on two areas – the new insurance plans and the issue of benefits for domestic partnerships – but covered a variety of topics in addition to these topics.

First, the new insurance plan: Rob Chance and Jamie Wilson visited our committee two times over the past year. In the first meeting, we had many questions about the new insurance programs and sign up. With their help, the committee issued a FAQ on the new insurance programs to help faculty members with their decision making about the health insurance choices. Our discussion can be found in the committee minutes: http://web.utk.edu/~senate/docs/2010-11/Minutes_from_Faculty_Benefits_9_23_2010_FINAL.pdf

At our March meeting, Rob Chance and Jamie Wilson (as well as Mark Paganelli) related to how the new insurance has been rolled out (see March minutes). The committee will continue to monitor the health insurance with these administrators. One important action item is how do faculty provide feedback on the plans. In our action items, we suggest a clear link on Human

Resources website, with possible analysis of concerns by Anne Smith (who coded informal request for feedback comments obtained via Joan Heminway this spring).

Another initiative we undertook in the committee was to create a comparative document of UTK's health costs and partnership options as compared to other public institutions. This document was provided in last April, 2011 to Linda Hendricks, Director of Human Resources, and Ron Tredway, UTK HR. Linda visited our committee in February and has offered to visit as needed.

Second, benefits for domestic partners at UTK is an issue that our committee visited two times during the past year – with the last meeting of the year (April minutes) devoted to this issue. Sarah Gardial visited our committee in the fall to bring us up to date on how UT is significantly different than other Top 25 and public universities on this issue (http://web.utk.edu/~senate/docs/2010-11/Minutes_from_Faculty_Benefit2.pdf).

We devoted the April meeting to the issue of domestic partnerships and benefits, after beginning the discussion of this at our March committee. At this meeting, the former Chair of the Faculty Benefits committee (02-07) Nancy Howell brought the committee up to speed on previous efforts on this issue. Joan Heminway and LGBT representatives Allison Anders and Jessica Hay were also in attendance and offered very helpful ways to move forward and continue momentum on this issue (see April minutes). Several specific actions items developed from this meeting.

Finally, other important issues discussed in this committee include: compensation issues (specifically the lack of a raise in 4 years and need for merit instead of across the board raises, January 2011 minutes in conjunction with Chris Cimino's visit to the committee), coordination of KAT transit with faculty needs, availability of employee assistance program (details discussed), "Making the Most" profiles, confidentiality of online evaluation of department heads and deans, and UT benefits in general.

Action Items and Recommendations for next year's Faculty Senate Benefits Committee:

<u>Who to follow up with:</u>	<u>Action to Follow up:</u>
Sarah Gardial	Obtain Best Colleges survey demographic information about the faculty (marital status and sexual orientation) from Sarah Gardial (May or June 2011; Sarah Gardial has been emailed, April 25, 2011)
Joan Heminway	TUFS comparison of benefits and domestic partnerships.
Anne Smith	Set up Benefits website to keep issues of domestic partnerships and benefits front and center and aid continuity/history. (Anne Smith to investigate setting up, April 2011)

Jessica Hay Allison Anders	Continue connections with LGBT committee members on benefits.
Adam Taylor	Set up committee of Benefits members, lawyers others to keep pushing on soft benefits. (see April minutes)
Jamie Wilson, Rob Chance	Need for a real-time, online, web-based mechanism to obtain health insurance feedback (praises, complaints). Anne Smith has offered to code complaints and praises received from the web similar to her efforts with February/March comments obtained by Joan Heminway.
Rob Chance Mark Paganelli Ron Tredway	Committee suggested a need to develop an electronic sign-up/drop for TRECS to avoid faculty time walking over to complete forms.
Rob Chance Jamie Wilson	Continued feedback and communication about Partnership insurance – how members “released” from this program, etc. A lot of details were not available during the Fall, 2010 sign-up; the committee can help in dissemination of details especially about how decisions made if an employee stays on Partnership, coaching, etc.
Linda Hendricks Ron Tredway	There is to be a salary market comparison survey to update a similar report in 2008. If not found on humanresources.tennessee.edu , then the committee should request from Linda Hendricks’ office. (see January 2011 minutes). Linda has generously offered her time to meet with Benefits committee again. Ron Tredway also visited our committee in 2011 and may be a contact for HR questions, such as this survey.
Adam Taylor	Consider updating the health plan comparisons with other public universities.