

**Minutes from Faculty Benefits & Professional Development Committee Meeting:
Friday, October 15, 2010
8:30-9:30 a.m. SMC 402**

Subjects:

The issue/status of partnerships at UT

Online faculty evaluation of Department Heads and Deans: Questions

Invited Guest: Dr. Sarah Gardial, Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs

Members Present:

Anne Smith, Chair

G. Michael Clark

Martin Griffin

Jun Lin

Brent Mallinckrodt

Lane Morris

Jeanine Williamson

Emailed before Meeting that Unavailable:

Micky Sims

Other Members not present:

Adam Taylor

Deborah Wooten

Attached Handouts from Meeting:

1. Table of insurance by Top 25 public universities (partnering) (Brent Mallinckrodt)
2. Examples of Research Universities in the U.S. Offering Domestic Partner Benefits (Sarah Gardial)

Meeting Objective: The intent of this meeting was to learn more about how the issue of partnerships has been and is dealt with on the UTK campus. As well, questions about the confidentiality of online faculty evaluations of department heads and deans were addressed.

Action items from this meeting:

Short term:

Insurance comparison of insurance benefits among Top 25 and UTK – Are there any other universities offering something similar to Partnership option, our rates, etc? [Anne is having her MBA GA pull health insurance information from Brent Mallinckrodt. Hopefully there will be a report for review at the November meeting.]

This Year:

Work with Provost's office on a survey of faculty needs for insurance coverage. This survey should be confidential, anonymous, and contain broad questions about other adults in household

without health insurance (e.g., parents who are living with faculty, unemployed adult children living in the faculty home, unmarried heterosexual couples, same sex partnerships).
Meet with LGBT benefits sub-committee [Sarah Gardial will act as liaison between our committee and the LGBT benefits sub-committee – possible joint meeting in March with LGBT benefits sub-committee.]

Meeting Summary:

Meeting began at 8:30 a.m.

ISSUE OF PARTNERSHIPS ON UTK CAMPUS

Sarah Gardial is a member of the LGBT commission and is working with the benefits subcommittee of the LGBT organization. She has been actively involved in partnership status issues on campus. There is a concern about the ability to attract and retain outstanding faculty if UTK maintains barriers to inclusion. Vice Provost Gardial expressed that UTK wants to be a destination of choice for faculty around the country.

Partnership is a key issue for the Office of the Provost. For instance, on the provost's website, the words of spouse and partner are used together. Partnership applies to both same sex partnerships and heterosexual partnerships; faculty hires with partners will continue to arrive at UTK. However, the State of Tennessee has constitutionally defined marriage as a legal union between a man and a woman. (Marriages of same sex couples are null and void in Tennessee.) Benefits to UTK employees flow through this definition. Vice Provost Gardial discussed the visit of John D'Emilio, University of Chicago historian and expert on gay rights in the United States. He stated that in many European countries, benefits, such as social security, flow through to the *individual* not through the institution of marriage.

UTK is out of step with national public/private universities. The handout from Vice Provost Gardial showed that over 31 public research institutions and 36 private research institutions offer domestic partner benefits (Attachment #2). Private universities like Vanderbilt are not subject to the state restrictions. As well, 18 of the top 25 public universities have domestic partnership provisions in their health insurance (see Attachment #1). In some states, public universities have been able to work around constitutional definitions of marriage. For instance, University of Wyoming officials made a business case for faculty recruiting and will be offering vouchers so that partners can buy health insurance. This change is still working its way through the system and will be watched for its implementation and potential backlash.

There is a need for UT to be competitive with the top 25 institutions. The State Attorney General could fight this definition of marriage or that benefits flow through marriage, but in the short to medium term, UT needs to get creative and/or copy what other public universities have tried. UT needs to build on the recent success of one initiative: the TRECS policy of “faculty member + one.” This policy allows faculty to sign up one other person – family, friend, partner – for access to TRECS facilities. We also discussed that “grey area” issues such as parking, library, and other benefits (other than health insurance) should consider creative means like the TRECS solution.

Until health benefits are unhooked from marriage, Vice Provost Gardial advocated the use of creative alternatives. The idea of partner voucher might be discussed in the LGBT benefits committee. [This group may be considering fundraising for a partner voucher. This could perhaps be a named voucher for a philanthropist who is an activist of this issue.]

UTK has no idea how large the problem is of family member needs that are not served by current health insurance policies. Our committee discussed a variety of needs – from grandparents from another country who stay 6 months to help in a faculty member with childcare needs, to unmarried faculty partners, to adult children who are unemployed and living at home. Our committee felt there is a need for a survey. This survey would include broad questions about someone in a faculty member's home who is currently ineligible for benefits. The Faculty Senate committee members agreed to help in any way with the development and transmission of this survey.

We discussed how Oak Ridge – a leading national research center – deals with this issue and Sarah Gardial or a committee member said s/he would look into a report back to the committee by the December meeting. (Sarah indicated that she would follow up on this.)

The goal is to chisel away at opening benefits for partners – perhaps 1 per semester. Our committee congratulated Vice Provost Gardial on her active involvement with this issue on the UTK campus. Our committee offered any help that she might need with the survey or connecting with other committees on campus.

ONLINE FACULTY EVALUATION OF DEANS AND DEPARTMENT HEADS

Several faculty members approached committee members with concerns about the online faculty evaluation of Deans and Department Heads. The background: The deans of each college conducted annual reviews of Department Heads, but it was a haphazard process with few standards and no faculty feedback. The Provost office wanted to standardize the process, make visible the process, response rate, and other factors of comparison, and provide feedback to Deans and Department Heads (for areas of improvement) and to faculty.

Last year (2009), the Provost's office with the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment (OIRA) handled the Dean evaluations. This year (Fall 2010), the Provost's office with OIRA are handling the evaluation of Department Heads. (They realize that the survey went out to department members to evaluate with current department head; those departments that had a change should have been evaluating the previous department head – whoever was department head in 09-10. The Provost Office realizes this error and has corrected for next year.)

OIRA administers the online evaluation; no IRB approval is needed for this instrument. All efforts have been made to protect the anonymity of department member responses. First, there are breakouts of respondents by department status (tenure track, non-tenure track and staff) only if there are five or more respondents for each category. There are no breakouts by gender or specific rank (e.g., Assistant, Associate). Second, individual responses by a respondent are never broken out; only overall scores on the 40-item survey. Third, OIRA destroys the file that connects a department member's IP address and survey responses.

The response rate by department members will be tracked. Last year, there was an average of a 50% response rate for the Dean evaluations by department members. If there is a low response rate for a Dean or Department Head, then the feedback may not be representative of the overall department but, perhaps, disgruntled members only. So, getting the response rate up is a key goal of the Provost's Office related to these evaluations.

The Provost has tried to find the middle ground between open records access and individual feelings of the person being evaluated. Who would want to be Department Head or Dean if all 40-item responses were reported out each year to faculty members? The Provost identifies and discusses with the Department Head or Dean areas of improvement and gives the Department Head or Dean a chance to improve. An annual summary report from the Provost's office to department members is provided if requested.

The meeting ended at 9:30 with an agreement to continue conversation with Sarah Gardial around the issue of partnerships at UTK.

Next Meeting: November 30th from 2-3 in Haslam Building 316
[Topic – raise equity and health insurance comparison]

Minutes of this meeting were compiled by Anne Smith and reviewed by Vice Provost Gardial and Committee Members. These minutes will be voted on at the November meeting.

ATTACHMENT #1 – Insurance Table

<p>1. Examine the attached Powerpoint presentation and prepare a Word document listing in alphabetical order the top 25 schools in the comparisons.</p>	<p>2. For each university, please do some detailed detective work by visiting that school's faculty/staff benefits site. Next to the name of each institution on your list from #1, paste the web address for the top level page of its' faculty/staff benefits web page.</p>	<p>3. Next, please drill deeper into that university's faculty and staff benefits information. Find out if only married spouses can be covered, or whether there is a provision for domestic partners (or other non-spouse adults) to be covered. When you find a web page that answers this question, paste that web page in the third column of your list.</p>	<p>4. Finally, in the fourth column of the table you are preparing, please summarize the university's policy in a sentence or two.</p>
<p>1. Auburn</p>	<p>Auburn Benefits</p>	<p>(No link available)</p>	<p>No links providing information on domestic partner eligibility were available on the Auburn University website. An email request for information went unanswered. A google search provided this blog from last year concerning UAB making the decision to offer benefits to same-sex domestic partners. In this blog the writer states that Auburn University does not offer benefits to domestic partners.</p>
<p>2. Berkeley</p>	<p>Berkeley Benefits</p>	<p>Berkeley (PDF)</p>	<p>UC Berkeley offers health and welfare benefits to domestic partners as well as the children and grandchildren of those partners. Faculty and staff will have eight healthcare plans to choose from in 2011.</p>
<p>3. Clemson</p>	<p>Clemson Benefits</p>	<p>Clemson (PDF)</p>	<p>Clemson benefits only reach as far as legal married spouses, divorced spouses and children.</p>
<p>4. Florida</p>	<p>Florida Benefits</p>	<p>Florida</p>	<p>Florida states that it offers health plan eligibility to both same- and opposite-sex domestic partners and the children of either the employee or the partner.</p>
<p>5. Georgia</p>	<p>Georgia Benefits</p>	<p>Georgia Services for Domestic Partners</p>	<p>Georgia does not offer insurance eligibility to domestic partners, but it does provide a large number of smaller benefits</p>

			such as transportation and library privileges.
6. Illinois	Illinois Benefits	Illinois	Illinois provides same-sex domestic partners of University employees with health, dental and vision coverage.
7. Indiana	Indiana Benefits	Indiana	Medical and dental coverage is offered to domestic partners and their children at Indiana.
8. Iowa State	Iowa State Benefits	Iowa State (PDF)	In addition to medical and dental, Iowa State also provides domestic partners with life insurance.
9. Michigan	Michigan Benefits	Michigan	Michigan provides medical, dental, vision, legal, life and long-term care coverages to dependents listed as “Other Qualified Adult”. Children of that dependent are also eligible for coverage.
10. Michigan State	Michigan State Benefits	Michigan State	Health, dental, supplemental life insurance and accidental death and dismemberment coverage is provided to dependents listed as “Other Eligible Individual”. Children of that dependent are also eligible for coverage.
11. Minnesota	Minnesota Benefits	Minnesota	Minnesota offers health, dental, life and long-term care to same-sex domestic partners.
12. NC State	NC State Benefits	NC State (PDF)	NC State does not have a provision for domestic partners.
13. Ohio State	Ohio State Benefits	Ohio State	Ohio State offers all of the same benefits to same-sex domestic partners as married spouses.
14. Penn State	Penn State Benefits	Penn State	Penn State offers healthcare benefits to same-sex domestic partners.
15. Pitt	Pitt Benefits	Pitt	With an approved affidavit of domestic partnership, an employee’s domestic partner is eligible for medical, dental, vision, dependent life insurance, and long-term care coverage.
16. Purdue	Purdue Benefits	Purdue	Same-sex domestic partner benefits have been available at Purdue since January 1st, 2003.
17. Rutgers	Rutgers Benefits	Rutgers (PDF)	Same-sex domestic partners are eligible for benefits through Rutgers.
18. Texas A&M	Texas A&M Benefits	Texas A&M (PDF)	Domestic partners are not eligible for benefits at Texas A&M.
19. UC Davis	UC Davis Benefits	UC Davis (PDF)	UC Davis offers medical, dental, vision, legal, accidental death and dismemberment and dependent life benefits to same-sex

			domestic partners. All of these benefits are also extended to the children and grandchildren of an employee's domestic partner.
20. UCLA	UCLA Benefits	UCLA (PDF)	(Domestic Partner Benefits same as listed for UC Davis above)
21. UC Santa Barbara	UC Santa Barbara Benefits	UC Santa Barbara (PDF)	(Domestic Partner Benefits same as listed for UC Davis above)
22. UMD College Park	UMD Benefits	UMD College Park (look under "health insurance for regular employees")	UMD does list an available provision for health insurance coverage for a domestic partner.
23. UT Austin	UT Austin Benefits	UT Austin (PDF)	UT Austin states in no uncertain terms that same-sex domestic partners are not eligible for coverage. Basic insurance benefits for employees include medical, life and accidental death and dismemberment.
24. Virginia	UVA Benefits	Virginia	UVA currently covers only legally married spouses in its health insurance benefits.
25. Washington	Washington Benefits	Washington	The University of Washington extends insurance benefits to QDP, or Qualified Domestic Partners, registered in the state of Washington. A qualifying domestic partnership may be same- or opposite-sex.
26. Wisconsin	Wisconsin Benefits	Wisconsin	As of January 1st, 2010 Wisconsin offers to domestic partners the same benefits as spouses.

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Examples of Research Universities in the US Offering Domestic Partner Benefits

Public Research Institutions

- Indiana University* -
- Iowa State University* -
- Michigan State University* -
- New Mexico State University -
- Ohio State University -
- Oregon State University -
- Pennsylvania State University -
- Purdue University* -
- San Diego State University -
- Southern Illinois University -
- State University of New York (system) -
- University of Alaska (system) -
- University of Arizona (system)* ** -
- University of California (system)* ** -
- University of Colorado (system)* ** -
- University of Connecticut -
- University of Florida (system)* -
- University of Hawaii (statewide)* -
- University of Illinois (system)** -
- University of Iowa** -
- University of Maine -
- University of Michigan* -
- University of Minnesota -
- University of Montana (system) -
- University of New Hampshire -
- University of New Mexico -
- University of Oregon* -
- University of Pittsburgh -
- University of Utah -
- University of Vermont -
- University of Washington -

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Private Research Institutions

- Brown University -
- Caltech -
- Carnegie Mellon University -
- Case Western Reserve University -
- Colgate University -
- Columbia University -
- Cornell University* -
- Dartmouth College -
- Drexel University -
- Duke University -
- Emory University -
- George Washington University -
- Harvard University -
- Johns Hopkins University -
- Lehigh University -
- Massachusetts Institute of Technology -
- Middlebury College -
- New York University -
- Northwestern University* -
- Princeton University** -
- Rice University -
- Rockefeller University -
- Southern Methodist University -
- Stanford University* -
- Syracuse University -
- Temple University -
- Tufts University** -
- Tulane University -
- University of Chicago -
- University of Denver -
- University of Pennsylvania* -
- University of Rochester -
- University of Southern California* -
- ~~Vanderbilt University~~ -
- Worcester Polytechnic Institute -
- Yale University* -

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*Asterisk indicates terminal degree institutions of UW faculty members hired during the 2008 recruiting season.
** Double asterisk indicates terminal degree institutions of UW deans and central academic administrators.

U. Wyoming