

Resolution for Tuition Assistance Benefit Equity
Presented to the University of Tennessee Faculty Senate
by the Benefits & Professional Development Committee
April 7, 2014

WHEREAS, The University of Tennessee, Knoxville's Non-Discrimination Policy includes sexual orientation, sex, and marital status; and

WHEREAS, tuition assistance for family members is promoted on the Provost's website as a Faculty-Friendly benefit; and

WHEREAS, tuition assistance for spouses and children is a an important financial benefit valued at tens of thousands of dollars that is currently withheld from employees who have same or opposite gender domestic partners¹ or same gender spouses not currently recognized by the State; and

WHEREAS, part of the University of Tennessee's mission is "to move forward the frontiers of human knowledge and enrich and elevate the citizens of the state of Tennessee, the nation, and the world"; and

WHEREAS, many top 25 public universities such as University of Pittsburgh², The Ohio State University³, and Indiana University⁴ include domestic partners and children of domestic partners in their tuition assistance benefits; and

WHEREAS, many universities not in the top 25 such as Texas Christian University⁵, University of Alabama Birmingham⁶, University of Cincinnati⁷, University of Utah⁸, University of Arizona⁹, and Wichita State University¹⁰ include domestic partners and children of domestic partners in their tuition assistance benefits; then

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Faculty Senate strongly urges that tuition assistance should be granted to domestic partners of employees regardless of gender and to children of domestic partners; and

THEREFORE, BE IT FUTHER RESOLVED, the Faculty Senate requests that the Office of the Provost, Assistant Vice Chancellor for Human Resources, Vice President for Human Resources, Vice Chancellor for Diversity, and the Benefits Advisory Group meet with the Benefits & Professional Development Committee of the Faculty Senate to evaluate this benefit inequity and respond to the Senate by September 2014.

¹For purposes of this policy, the term "domestic partners" shall be defined as two individuals (regardless of gender) who are at least 18 years old, who live together in the same residence in a long-term relationship of indefinite duration with an exclusive mutual commitment, who are not related to the other by blood or marriage, and who are responsible for each other's welfare and share financial obligations, as evidenced by three of the following types of documentation which should be provided upon request: (a) joint mortgage or lease; (b) designation of domestic partner as beneficiary for life insurance; (c) designation in will of domestic partner as primary beneficiary upon death; (d) domestic partnership agreement; (e) powers of attorney for property or health care; and (f) joint ownership of a motor vehicle, joint checking account, or joint credit account.

²<http://www.hr.pitt.edu/benefits/education-benefits/full-time-staff-spousepartner>

³<https://hr.osu.edu/public/documents/hrpubs/ben/overviewbook.pdf#tuition>

⁴http://www.indiana.edu/~uhrs/benefits/tuition_plan.html

⁵<http://www.hr.tcu.edu/Policy6.005.pdf>

⁶<http://sppublic.ad.uab.edu/policies/pages/LibraryDetail.aspx?plD=211>.

⁷https://www.uc.edu/hr/benefits/tuition_remission.html

⁸<https://www.hr.utah.edu/forms/lib/TuitionReduction-DP.pdf>

⁹http://www.hr.arizona.edu/domestic_partner_tuition_program_overview

¹⁰http://webs.wichita.edu/inaudit/ch3_43.htm