

## Benefits and Professional Development Committee

March 25, 2022 – Meeting Minutes

Present: Anne Ho, Stephanie Madison, Elena Shpak

Absent: Brad Case, Jeremy Chandler, Tony Estep, Andrew Griffith, Laurie Knox, Liz Teston, Forbes Walker

Updates on our annual goals

- Follow up on family leave policy implementation, especially as it applies to teaching faculty. How are units actually implementing it?
  - One department head received a “Faculty Affairs Updates” email on Feb. 17<sup>th</sup>, but they do not think it was sent to the normal deans and department heads email list.
  - We emailed the Faculty Senate leadership team asking if Faculty Senate or the Caucus Chairs could send the link for the updated Faculty and Family Care Policy to all faculty. We are waiting on a response.
- Meet with HR about what benefits are available to all categories of faculty and staff.
  - We emailed HR the following questions and received the following responses.
    - Could the 2021 Summary of Benefits table located under the “New Employees” tab also be linked under the “Current Employees” tab?
      - HR will update the table for 2022 and discuss adding it to the “Current Employees” tab.
    - On the Summary of Benefits table, how are differences between 9-month and 12-month faculty noted in the “Who’s Eligible” column?
      - HR said the only differences are for annual leave and sick leave, and these differences are noted in the “What It Means To You” column.
      - We further suggested adding “excluding 9-month faculty” to the “What It Means To You” column for Sick Leave.
    - Could a link for the Faculty and Family Care Policy be added to the “Family Medical Leave” page on UTK HR’s website?
      - HR will discuss adding the link to the page.
    - Since there is at least a one-month delay in the start of health insurance benefits, what happens if someone needs insurance during the first month of employment (pregnancy, accident, chronic condition, etc...)? Since US employees could use COBRA, what about international post-docs or faculty members? Is there an option for them to obtain temporary insurance?
      - The state recognizes this issue, but all state and higher education employees follow these rules, so the delay cannot be changed.
      - HR recommended asking the Center for Global Engagement about options for international faculty and post-docs.
  - Follow-up questions
    - Stephanie will ask HR if offer letters are required to include the statement that health insurance benefits do not begin for at least one month after their start date. She will also ask if international post-docs and faculty are required to have health insurance on day one of employment based on their visa status.

- Elena will collect more information about how a similar situation was handled in her department.
- Anne will contact the Center for Global Engagement about options for temporary insurance coverage. She will also ask around her department to see if anyone has had this issue.
  
- Educate ourselves on and then document kinks and problems that people are facing in actually taking advantage of benefits, maybe create a faculty-wiki on how to navigate issues.
  - We know faculty have been asked to take a lot of surveys over the past few years that included questions related to benefits. We emailed the Faculty Senate leadership team asking how we could access some of the survey data. We are waiting on a response.
  
- Explore how professional development policies apply to all categories of faculty and staff.
  - We will revisit this later.