

Faculty Benefits Meeting  
December 7<sup>th</sup>, 2016  
SU 108, 3:15pm

**Members in attendance:** Matthew Zacate, Sue Griebing, Tonya Krouse, Gabe Sanders, Justin Yates, Emily Shifley, Debbie Patten, Jamey Strawn, Hans Schellhas, Charlisa Daniels, Lois Hamill, Kajsia Larson, **\*\*list is incomplete**

**Call to order** – Adoption of the agenda, seconded, unanimous

**Approval of the November 9<sup>th</sup>, 2016 minutes** –seconded, unanimous

**Call for nominations/volunteers for Benefits committee chair** -Debbie Patten was nominated by Justin Yates: we move to send her name as a recommendation to the Faculty Senate Executive Committee for the Chair position in the 2017-2018 Academic year, seconded, unanimous

#### **Discussion on Project Grant funds availability**

-The Provost wrote a memo to the Faculty Benefits Chair and the Deans approving the proposal Matthew Zacate wrote regarding changing when Project Grant funds are available.

-The Benefits Committee examined the proposed resolution to send to the Faculty Senate to edit the handbook

The committee likes the proposed wording of the revision; the new dates are clearly written and will help recipients understand exactly when they will receive their funds.

-Motion to introduce this as a formal proposal, seconded, unanimous.

-The committee members will take this proposal to their departments and be prepared to vote on it at our next meeting.

#### **Discussion on Tuition waiver program**

-The Benefits committee might consider asking to revise or expand the tuition waiver program.

-How many people who are using the benefit are taking additional courses where they would need additional hours?

-Our benefit is similar to other KY schools, but UC lets spouses/dependents have full tuition and we are also competing with them

-Anecdotally it seems like most of the use of this benefit is from staff

- Possible revisions we might consider

-Changes the procedure so that “paying” students get priority before individuals using the tuition waiver to register for courses

-Raising the age for dependents

-Allowing the benefit to be used for graduate classes

-Increasing the benefit for part-time employees from 3 credit hours

-What would the effects be on enrollment?

-Could check with the Budget Committee to ask about whether there would be an effect on other programs i.e. is there a pot of money set aside for this program and others?

-There were convoluted answers about this in the past, but it would be worthwhile asking again now that there is a new budget model

-There is a limit to the amount of money, but we don't know what it is

-We would like to know what this costs NKU each year

-We will send a few people from Benefits committee to work with a few from the Budget committee and HR to look into this: Gabe Sanders, Melissa Moon, and Debbie Patten are nominated/volunteered

### **Discussion on Benefits received by retired faculty**

-A group of retired faculty 'Emeritus Faculty Society' is being organized

-As far as we know there are no written policies about the benefits retired faculty receive or whether some benefits are restricted to emeritus versus all retired faculty?

-Benefits they might have include:

Free parking

Free membership to campus recreation, along with their spouses (spousal coverage was revoked/reinstated)

NKU Email

Use of the library

Ability to reserving a room on campus (this is an idea if not already a benefit)

-As there is nothing official, should we take this up and formalize it?

-Yes: Benefits committee should be trying to attract the best individuals so it would be good for marketing and attracting quality faculty

-No: In an attempt to codify them, would it cause them to be noticed and taken away?

-Where would a policy go? With HR as part of your exit package? If so, it would *not* be binding vs. if it was in the Faculty Handbook? But would the handbook even apply to retired faculty?

-It could be as simple as gathering a list of existing benefits and making it visible to all NKU faculty, which would be useful for those who are considering retirement

-As a first step, let's informally ask what the benefits for retired faculty are by asking recently retired faculty

### **Discussion on Concerns regarding how decisions are made by Human Resources as regards to changes in Health Care benefits**

-There was an elimination of an investment option for High Deductible Health Savings account

-A small number of faculty members were impacted, they contacted HR and the Benefits Chair upset at this change, and it appears that an agreement/compromise was made

-However, affected individuals were still concerned that when changes are made, some employee costs go up more than others and this might be an unfair system

- Does our committee even play a role in these decisions? No, middle administration makes this decision without us
- What could we do? We could make a suggestion to them about how they go about making decisions
- Should we do a survey? Should we talk with individual departments?
- After some discussion, our response is that HR probably did their best to impact the least number of faculty in their decision-making, and although these individuals were disproportionately affected, it seems that they were initially benefiting more than others

### **Discussion on making a recommendation for increased funding for Faculty Benefit Awards**

- The Provost continues to 'overfund' *and* had indicated to departments that she would consider a request for more Project Grant funds, for instance
- We might request for more funds for the areas she has traditionally been increasing
- We could paint this as something to help morale in light of the lack of raises
- It also might be good to show how project grants help bring about bigger grants, do we keep track of this?
- We will come up with some concrete examples to present to the general faculty as options for a benefits expansion, perhaps in a survey (more grants, bigger grants, travel funds?)
  - Let's come up with ideas of specific questions we could ask the faculty to discuss at a future meeting

**Motion to adjourn, seconded, unanimous**