

Faculty Benefits Meeting - Minutes

October 7, 2020

Zoom; 3:15pm

Members Present: Seth Adjei, Junko Agnew, Alyssa Appleman, Jay Avenido, Paige Byan Soliday, Charlisa Daniels, Mike DiCicco, Dhanuja Kasturiratna, Suk-Hee Kim, Jenifer Kinsley, JeeEun Lee, Boni Li, Zeel Maheshwari, Vincent Owoso, Debbie Patten, Jamey Strawn, Sharon Vance-Eliany, Kalif Vaughn, Lynn Warner, Darrin Wilson, Xiano Zhang

Guests Present: Bruce Smith (Director of Benefits), Lori Southwood (Chief HR Officer)

Call to Order

Agenda: The agenda was adopted by majority present.

The meeting was called to order at 3:15pm with the adoption of the agenda without any additions and deletions.

Minutes from the September 2, 2020 meeting were approved by majority.

Guest Presentation

Bruce (Director of Benefits) presented the philosophy behind NKU Benefits' processes for adoption of plans/benefits by the university as well as the process for adopting. The process is backed by the unit's goal of ensuring that the university takes on the "lion's share" of the benefits budget, while the remainder of the cost is shared amongst faculty and staff. Options are then presented to management which then makes a decision for the upcoming year based on the recommendations from NKU Benefits.

For the 2021 fiscal year, the recommendation to keep benefits exactly as they are from 2020 was adopted by management. There will be no increase in any plan design. All rates have been communicated to all staff and faculty. These are also available in the benefits brochure available on the NKU Benefits website.

The following are the additional points presented:

- Open enrollment period for 2021 will run from October 30 to Nov 13, 2020.
- Due to COVID, a video tutorial is being produced to help faculty and staff find answers to questions about benefits, enrollments, etc. for 2021. Additionally, NKU Benefits staff will be available to answer benefits-related questions. *Email announcement released on October 23rd.*
- Open Enrollment for 2021 will be passive. There will be no need to enroll if an individual does not need to make changes from the previous year. Enrollment will roll over from the previous year automatically. HSA, FSA are exceptions since IRS requires that these need to be provided by employees each year. Maximum contributions for HSA and FSA have changed and are reported in the benefits brochures.
- Coalition for prescription used last year. There is a change in the providers. "Know Your Rx" Benefits plan's 800 number is provided in the benefits bulletin. Representatives from this company are knowledgeable and available to answer Rx related questions.
- The following voluntary benefits are offered for 2021: accidental coverage, critical illness, and death insurance, pet insurance, dental, etc. Information about these are available in the benefits bulletin currently published on the NKU website. Legal coverage is also provided.

Bruce reported that our plans are among the best in the region among organizations of our size. Faculty and staff benefits/plans and co-pays are also very competitive. Lori summarized that the plans are not changing; however, the increase in expenses overall from last year is between 9 and 9.5%. Employees will bear the 4-4.5% while the employer takes the other half.

Regarding upcoming events, Bruce stated that arrangements for educating faculty and staff are being planned and will be announced to the community as soon as the arrangements are finalized. Retirement education sessions are planned for during Feb and March every year. Some of the information presented during these sessions include:

- TIAA – information provided for faculty to access
- Presentations about social security for faculty and staff.

New gene-therapy drugs for dealing with complicated diseases like complicated dystrophy, spinal infant dystrophy, etc. are very expensive and these might impact benefits budget if multiple employees and dependents need to take advantage of these. Further discussions are being planned to determine impact on benefits over time. More information will be provided in due course.

Lori presented background information about KERS-related pension issues presented by the president, stating that the current situation affects over 700 of NKU's current employees. Based on the announcement from the president, the board of regents must make a decision regarding which of the 5 KERS-plan options NKU is choosing by January 1, 2020. This decision has to be implemented by July 1, 2020. A member advocated for a morally correct decision to be made since the impact of the decision on staff members on tiers 1 and 2 could be major and adverse. A pensions-related website has been developed to assist employees through the processes.

The two guests then left the meeting after their presentations.

New Business: Charlisa presented updates on the faculty development workshop that was organized during the past month. For each of the two days, between 15 and 20 participants attended the workshop.

Additionally, Charlisa reported that the due dates for submissions for faculty awards has passed, and the submissions are being compiled and will be made available to the sub-committees as soon as they are ready. She further stated that as of 10/7/2020, the following is the rough estimate of the number of submissions per category and the available awards for this year. The following table summarizes the information presented:

Award Category	Available Awards	Current Submissions (count as of 10/7/2020)	Current Submissions (count as of 10/14/2020)
Summer Fellowships	16	21	20
Project Grants	11	9	10
Sabbaticals	23	17	19

A complete list of applications will be made available to members after Grace completes the compilation of the submissions.

The chair reviewed the award process timelines as follows:

Faculty Development Awards Timeline

October 6th at 4:30pm –Applications were due

October 13th -Chair and Dean forms are due

November 2nd- Subcommittee Chairs send group rubrics to full committee Chairperson

November 4th -Subcommittee reports due to Full Committee

November 4th -Benefits committee votes to finalize recommendations

(November 11th -Additional Benefits committee meeting to finalize recommendations if needed)

Future business: The chair presented the following future business to the committee which were adopted.

- Discussion about award/completion date of sabbaticals for repeat awards
- Discussion about part-time retaining full-time benefits (FDA access) with update from PCC
- Chair to present a report to the University Research Council regarding the committee's work
- A member requested that we provide information either on the website or elsewhere where we clarify the year for which an award applies.

Sub-committee meetings: Participants were thereafter placed into breakout rooms based on their subcommittee assignments and tasked to decide on dates to meet and make recommendations for awarding applicants. Charlisa reported that a Canvas group has been created for each sub-committee. Access to sample applications from last year have been made available to the sub-committees on Canvas for review and for training purposes. Each sub-committee will receive their assigned 2020-2021 applications by the 19th October 2020.

Future Meetings

Fall 2020 @ 3:15 via Zoom

- October 21* [at chair's discretion]
- November 4
- November 11*[at chair's discretion]
- December 2

Spring 2021 @ 3:15 Room TBA

- January 13
- February 3
- March 3
- April 7
- May 5

The meeting was adjourned after participants were placed in sub-committee breakout rooms at around 4:15pm.