UNIVERSITY BENEFITS COMMITTEE
MINUTES: February 17, 2011

Members Present: Sonya Armstrong, Virginia Cassidy, Abby Chemers, Dennis Davito, Ray Foster, Deborah Haliczer, Amy Levin, Pam Rosenberg, Sherie Spear

Deborah Haliczer called the meeting to order at 10:05 AM. The agenda was approved unanimously and the minutes were approved.

Old Business:

A. Insurance and pension update
   - Dennis reported that the Benefits Office is noticing a slight increase in the number of employees who are planning to retire. Over 50% of current employees are eligible for retirement right now.
   - Employees and annuitants have a lot of misinformation and many are agitated over the potential changes in benefits and the state budget situation. Furthermore, there is a lot of pending legislation that is of concern. The following web page has been created to provide accurate and up-to-date information to employees: www.niu.edu/statebudget/
   - Employees and annuitants received a letter from Quality Care noting that the benefit coverage from a non-PPO will be limited to 70% even when you live 25 miles or more from a PPO. They claim it is not a change in benefits but a change in administering the rules. Basically, all services to out-of-network providers will result in more out-of-pocket costs and total deductibles. This change in rules does not constitute a qualifying event for changing insurance plans. This letter has generated a lot of questions from faculty.
   - Faculty have been asking what is going on at the state level. There is a larger concern that there is a movement on the Federal level to allow states to go bankrupt.

B. Benefits/Insurance Survey Update
   - A hard copy of the NIU Benefits Survey was distributed. Changes should be submitted to Deborah within the next week. Keisha Thomas, College of Education, is waiting for Deborah’s okay before emailing the survey to employees and annuitants.
   - Depending upon the survey results, it is possible that the UBC will be asked to host informational events, including educational campus events and panel discussions on benefits. The UBC needs to be proactive.

C. Web Site and Talking Points status
   - A draft template of the new UBC Web Site was distributed. Discussion occurred about what information should be on the website (i.e., links to insurance administrators websites and the retirement system). Deborah asked members to review the template and provide suggestions to her.
   - A hard copy of the updated Talking Points document was distributed. They are persuasive and informative. Changes need to be brought to Deborah’s attention within the next week. The Talking Points will be posted on the new UBC web site.
   - Deborah noted that there will be an article in The Northern Today on (1) joining the NIU Annuitants Association, (2) announcing the University Benefits Committee web site, and (3) the importance of completing the NIU Benefits Survey.

D. Annuitants Update


Two regional meetings are scheduled on April 12, 2011 at Rock Valley Community College and April 15, 2011 at Moraine Valley Community College. They are looking to increase membership so that they have a broader base. This is important when conveying messages to legislators. The Annuitants Association will be distributing a Fact Sheet on how to approach legislators with the goal of having a greater voice in Springfield. These regional meetings are being planned with other regional Annuitants Associations.

E. Vacation Accrual Proposal status report
   The administration has not yet responded to the recommendation. Operating Staff Council will continue to follow up on the status.

F. New Benefits Proposals
   A brief discussion occurred. This task is on hold until we have the benefits survey results.

G. Domestic Partner Benefits
   An updated presentation will be made at the Board of Trustees March 24th meeting. A summary report will be provided to the UBC at our next meeting. Deborah, Virginia and Abby will be at the March 24th BOT meeting.

New Business
A. The UBC thanks Annuitants Association Representative Kay Forest for her excellent service to the UBC. Sherie Spear will continue to represent the Annuitants Association on the UBC.

Meeting was adjourned at 11:20 AM.
Respectfully submitted by Abby Chemers, Secretary

Next meeting: March 31, 2011 10 AM – 11:30 AM
LaTourette Building Room 300