UNIVERSITY BENEFITS COMMITTEE

MINUTES: October 19, 2010

Members Present: Sonya Armstrong, Virginia Cassidy, Abby Chemers, Dennis Davito, Kay Forest, Ray Foster, Deborah Haliczer, Amy Levin, Pam Rosenberg, Sheri Spear, Simon Song

Deborah Haliczer called the meeting to order at 8:35 AM. The agenda was approved unanimously and the minutes were approved with one abstention.

Old Business:

A. Insurance and pension update
   Dennis provided highlights from the IAUBIA meeting.

   SURS will be pursuing a trailer bill for the new pension law that takes effect January 2011, as there are requirements that conflict with the current SURS language.

   Due to federal Income Tax regulations, about 1500 over-the-counter medications will not be allowed under MCAP as of January 1, 2011. Some over-the-counter medications will still be reimbursable, particularly if the medication has been prescribed by a physician, but employees should check online on the CMS website. Also, the state portion of insurance premiums paid for by the state on behalf of employees will become taxable in calendar year 2011.

   At this point, it is anticipated there may be no health insurance premium increases next fiscal year; however, CMS is looking at changing the brackets for dependent coverage so employees with dependent coverage may be impacted. It is also anticipated that benefits negotiated through the AFSCME negotiations with CMS regarding their members’ benefits are likely to be made available to all state employees and annuitants, as in past years.

   To date, Walgreens, CVS and Target have not signed up to participate in MEDCO. Employees and annuitants need to check online for the most current list of participating pharmacies.

B. Benefits/Insurance Survey Update
   The latest version of the survey was handed out for members to review. Discussion occurred on the possibility of employees feeling overloaded by various surveys that have been recently distributed and by ethics testing. It was agreed that this survey should be distributed to benefit earning employees due to its importance.

   Terry agreed to fix the formatting issues. It was agreed all edits will be sent to Terry by Friday. The goal is it will be loaded into Survey Monkey on Monday. Terry will share the loaded version with UBC members so we can test it before it is sent out to campus. The text for the cover letter will also be sent.

C. Talking Points status
   Kishwaukee Health System sent a letter on talking points to HRS requesting that it be distributed to employees. The UBC committee suggested that it would be better if the UBC Talking Point document be
distributed to employees as it also addressed pension benefits. However, we need to be sure our document is comprehensive and addresses the issues raised by the medical providers group.

D. Annuitants Update
The NIUAA is looking at ways to increase our membership. The three employee councils are encouraging employees to join the NIUAA. The NIUAA is very active in protecting employee and annuitant benefits. During legislative sessions, the NIUAA provides members with the best up-to-date information about pending legislation on pensions.

Dennis said that if the NIUAA develops a brochure, HRS can include it in the new employee orientation packet.

E. Other old business
There will be another opportunity for employees and annuitants to get flu shots on campus on October, 2010 as well as at the De Kalb Health Department.

New Business:

A. Vacation accrual proposal from Administrative Professional Advisory Council
Discussion occurred about the proposal that was distributed at the end of the last meeting which aims at parity among all NIU employee groups regarding the maximum vacation accrual that is allowed at retirement. After reviewing the pros and cons, the committee voted to endorse the proposal as presented—there were two abstentions and two yes proxy votes.

B. New Benefit Program Proposals
Deborah announced more information will be coming regarding additional insurance plans that will be made available to employees via payroll deduction. The group brainstormed about what types of insurance employees would be willing to pay a premium for. Ideas included: long-term care insurance, supplemental cancer care; and supplemental health insurance. This issue will be covered in the benefits survey to determine interest.

Meeting was adjourned at 10 AM.

Respectfully submitted by Abby Chemers, Secretary