UNIVERSITY BENEFITS COMMITTEE

MINUTES: February 16, 2012

Members Present: Terry Borg, Virginia Cassidy, Dennis Davito, Samantha Fisher, Deborah Haliczer, Michael Kolb, Pamela Rosenberg, Simon Song

The meeting was called to order at 10:10. The agenda was approved as amended, with an addition under Old Business, and the minutes from the December 8, 2011, meeting were approved without changes.

Old Business:

- Davito reported that no current information is available about the upcoming benefits period, and since the benefits contracts will be up for bid, and union contracts will be up for negotiation, it could result in more than one benefits choice period. The contracts for HMOs and the carrier for the Quality Care Plan will be up for review. Information will be forthcoming from the benefits office when it becomes clear.

- All members were encouraged to read President Peters’ email link to the Fiscal Sustainability and Retirement Security Report. A discussion ensued about concerns over the implications of retirement being an emotional and quick decision. A motion was brought forth and passed for the Benefits Committee to endorse the concept of offering current and future lifestyle workshops for potential retirees. The Committee will meet with representatives from the NIU Annuitants Association to discuss a possible collaboration to prepare pre-retirement lifestyle workshops that would help ease adjustment to retirement. Deborah Haliczer will be in contact with the Annuitants Association leadership to discuss this proposal. These workshops have been offered in the past and have been popular with employees.

- SURS counselors will be visiting NIU on March 27, 28, and 29, as well as a future time in May. Email announcements went out about the March visits, and hard copy announcements will be sent for the May sessions.

- Conversations have been had with Deans and Directors concerning part-time hires and counseling has occurred to make them and their staff understand that if an employees’ contract goes over 50% FTE, employees are then required to pay for insurance.

- The Committee discussed the pending legislation that is considering eliminating the dependent tuition waiver. A motion was passed to have the Benefits Committee write a letter in support of President Peters efforts to preserve the dependent child tuition waiver, as well as the interinstitutional waiver. Haliczer and Borg will collaborate on this letter. It was also suggested that we discuss how private institutions handle tuition waivers for their dependents, in order to get an understanding of where NIU falls, as this can be a recruitment tool.
New Business:

- The Committee discussed how there are three tiers of dental coverage within the Delta Dental program and how this affects the upfront costs for employees. Some dentists are requiring that patients pay up front, as they don’t want to wait for payment from the state, which can take up to 9 months or more.

Samantha Fisher, Supportive Professional Staff Representative, will be leaving NIU, and, therefore, is leaving the University Benefits Committee. The Committee thanked her for her service.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:25.
Next meeting was scheduled for Thursday, March 29, 10:00-11:30, Altgeld 212.

Respectfully submitted,

Pamela Rosenberg, Secretary