UNIVERSITY BENEFITS COMMITTEE

MINUTES: December 8, 2011

Members Present: Virginia Cassidy, Dennis Davito, Samantha Fisher, Deborah Haliczer, Michael Kolb, Simon Song, Sherie Spear

Guests: Jim Lockard, Heesun Majcher, Jerry Meyer

The meeting was called to order at 10:05. The agenda was approved, with changes to the order of discussion items, and the minutes from the October 27 meeting were approved without changes.

Old Business:

- Davito reported that little 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.

- Heesun Majcher of the International Student and Faculty Office reported on visa issues, particularly for benefits issues affecting temporary research faculty on J-1 visas. They are required to have health insurance, but are not eligible for state-sponsored benefits. Majcher described procedures and rules followed by the office, while Davito talked about the assistance provided by the Insurance office. Further discussion will need to take place between International Programs, Sponsored Projects, Grants Fiscal and Human Resources to look at solutions, and develop more effective communication protocols.

- Davito and Haliczer reported that approximately 150 people attended the October Pre-Retirement Seminar. Two sets of visits by SURS retirement specialists are scheduled for the spring, in March and May.

- Davito reported that the Prudential Long-Term Disability Open Enrollment was successful, with approximately 90 applications, or a 10% increase in the current number of enrollees.

- Haliczer discussed the request by the Dean’s office in Liberal Arts and Sciences to look at the challenges for part-time faculty and staff. Some employees are not aware that they qualify for insurance benefits when they are hired at 50% FTE and above. They are also REQUIRED to take the insurance unless they take steps to opt out of the insurance. The Insurance office and Human Resources will be working with the Deans offices to take steps to assure that part-time faculty and staff at contracts that change to 50% or above are made aware of the need for timely action. (i.e. within ten calendar days of the start of their contract).

- The Benefits Committee, Dennis Davito, Annuities Association representative Sherie Spear, and Annuities Association President Jerry Meyer, and Board member Jim Lockard discussed the current status of pensions. The Benefits Committee thanked Lockard, Davito, Steve Cunningham, and Representative Bob Pritchard for their efforts on pension issues. Davito
reported that the Benefits Managers group, IAUBIA, had all complimented NIU on the excellent information posted on the NIU Budget and Pensions web page, saying that they use this resource at their universities. The group concluded that we need to keep the employee and annuitant members informed of developments in the pension area. The spring legislative session will be an important period for changes in the pension system and proposed “reforms”.

- New Business item IV A was combined with other pension discussions. The committee talked about the employee proposal that NIU take the lead on pension issues. The committee felt that NIU is already a statewide leader based on the actions and leadership of President Peters, Steve Cunningham and the Annuitants Association.

New Business:
- A request to discuss Delta Dental was deferred until the next meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:35.
Next meeting was scheduled for February 16, 2012

Respectfully submitted,

Deborah Haliczer, Chair