

Faculty Welfare Committee Meeting

9/26/24

Present: John Dixon, Tim Jansky, Maria Bane, Jennifer Merrick, Annette DeLage, Julie Hensley

Agenda:

- Election of chair, co-chair, record keeper(?)

Co-chairs: Julie Hensley and Tim Jansky

- Report on University Benefits Advisory Committee (John Dixon?)

EKU is a self-insured institution. Coming out of the Pandemic we saw a sharp increase in medical costs, which in turn led to increased cost for employees and the University. That has leveled off, so that this year there is a 2% increase for employees (~\$1). ECU pays about 77% of all health care costs. No change in benefits this year, and there haven't been changes in quite a while. We are adding pet insurance this year at no cost to ECU (which is something many have asked for). Other points of discussion have been adding weight loss meds to the plan, but it is still currently too expensive. We are hopeful that as those medication costs come down and we will be able to offer them in the next few years, assuming that those medications remain "safe". Blumine health clinic (opportunity for ECU employees and their dependents to receive free health care, and helps keep ECU health care costs low) continues to increase in popularity, we are currently at 50% utilization, when we hit 60-65% utilization it will pay for itself. For basic dental, no rate increase. For high plan, slight increase because of increase in orthodontia benefit.

John Dixon plans to mention expansion of Blumine to Wayne Willis (perhaps to Corbin/Manchester regions given current distribution of locations). This based on recent submission to virtual suggestion box: *I would love to see a Blumine equivalency for our Regional Campus employees. Our faculty/staff have to drive over an hour to receive the complimentary services in Richmond. This would improve the quality of life for the Regional employees and their families.*

- Determine meeting schedule

Thursdays at 10:30 about once a month?

- Discussion of priorities and charges

The primary function of the Welfare Committee is to sit on the University Benefits Advisory Committee, raise appropriate questions, become knowledgeable about all benefit programs, and communicate (explain) that information to the Senate in a timely manner. **Note: After meeting schedule is set, be sure to communicate with the Director of Human Resources (or their designee) as they serve as a non-voting member on the committee.**

- Continue to monitor and inform the Faculty Senate on matters related to compensation including, but not limited to, salary compression, across-the-board salary increases, and merit pay. - Top priority
- Coordinate with the Budget Committee to determine the cost and future rate of the Health Benefits at EKU. Monitor
- Continue monitoring the external environment for higher education as well as faculty perceptions of benefits being provided by Eastern Kentucky University. Work directly with key decision-makers within and outside of Eastern Kentucky University to improve workplace conditions and compensation. Monitor virtual suggestion box, word of mouth
- Survey faculty and staff regarding perceptions of Jaggaer. Not needed
- Investigate the possibility of allowing faculty to teach more than one overload during each semester (including non-traditional terms, like being able to teach more than one winter term class). Some faculty are concerned with 2% raises being the norm, while the cost of living and inflation are high enough that some faculty are still in need of additional income. -Top priority in combination with compensation(?); high teaching loads, faculty feel they have to do more to make more
- Evaluate whether faculty PD needs are being met in terms of support for travel, certification and licensure fees, etc. - Top priority
- Coordinate with the Rules Committee to assess and update internal procedures.

Possible ideas for '24-'25

- *Focus on viable solutions*
- *Propose a joint meeting with the budget committee - possibly Oct 17th?*
 - *Tim will speak with Ray Lauk, chair of Budget Committee*
- *Consider collecting information about PD funds in other regional universities*
 - *Include specific examples of how faculty PD are spent... e.g., clinical certifications, continuing education, required memberships*