

Memorandum

Date: February 28, 2007

TO: Kimberly Wilson, AVP, Human Resources

FROM: Work-Life Advisory Council

RE: Response to Work-Life Committees Reports and Recommendations

The Council reviewed the five Work-Life Committee reports. To prepare a response, the Council took into consideration discussions at the campus forums and comments submitted through the work-life website, as well as discussions in the Advisory Council meetings. We wish to commend the committees for their thoughtful, thorough work on these important issues.

As the Council approached review of the reports, there was concern about how we should function as a group. We had discussions about how to prioritize recommendations within reports. We discussed whether or not we should make additional recommendations. In the end, we decided to vote whether or not to support the report and its recommendations. But also, we added some considerations for review. In some cases, the recommendations could not be fully realized without additional information or analysis. You will see that for each report there are several "Other Considerations" for review. These include some fairly specific recommendations, as well.

The Council recognizes that work-life issues are grounded in fairness, not only cost. Additionally, the Council acknowledges that these various recommendations would not necessarily affect or benefit all employees across the campus. Overall, the council recommends that the rolling-out of all Work-Life initiatives needs strong communication and public relations efforts to ensure a positive view and understanding of why these initiatives are good for the university.

Domestic Partner Benefit Work-Life Committee Report & Recommendations

Recommendation

- The Council voted to support this recommendation.

Other Considerations

- The Council suggests that it is important to acknowledge there are employees who support this recommendation and there are employees who do not support this recommendation.
- Care should be taken when announcing this program should it receive final approval. Sensitivity to the issues surrounding this benefit may help address individuals' concerns along the way.
- This benefit does not carry a significant financial obligation as compared to the other initiatives in Work-Life Committees.

Employee Education Program Work-Life Committee Report & Recommendations

Recommendation

- The Council voted to “conceptually” support this recommendation but had several suggestions for consideration to make the benefit more affordable to the University.

Other Considerations

- The Council recommends that other options and alternatives be considered due to the high cost of the current proposal. One alternative example is to phase in the benefit with fewer credit hours supported through university funds in the early stages. However, the goal should remain fully meeting the committee’s recommendation after a set period of time.
- The report states that a review of utilization and costs will take place after the first semester. If utilization is determined as being too high to sustain, it is recommended that the number of hours to be transferred be reduced. Council members disagree with this approach. It seems critical that projected utilization is established. It does not seem to be a best practice to offer the benefit and then scale it back or change it based on utilization. The Council recommends development of a business plan to determine utilization and cost.
- The Council members were concerned that the committee’s report needs to clarify the benefit for a full-time student. In other words, when fully implemented, a student receives a benefit equal to the cost of six credit hours, graduate or undergraduate, depending on the student’s level (e.g., the benefit for an undergraduate student is \$287/credit hour X 6 hours = \$1,722 for one semester).
- The statement, “The expansion of the EEP must not occur at the expense of the pool for salary increases” should not be part of the recommendation. The Council is in agreement that this statement cannot stand. It is not possible to add new benefits without impacting expenditures in other areas with salary pools being one of those areas.
- The report did not highlight additional funds students would bring to campus with full time enrollment (i.e., other scholarship funds, books, food, dorms, etc.). These additional funds would benefit the University.
- If this benefit is geared toward faculty and staff retention, should the eligibility for the benefit be started after only one year of service? Is it better to extend this to three years to help with retention?
- The report did not allow students to apply this benefit to the professional schools. The Council recommends that dependents enrolled in professional programs should be eligible. Students in these programs would be afforded the same benefit, i.e., funds equivalent to six graduate credits. The amount of benefit would be determined after reviewing tuition policies in those programs.
- When the benefit is approved and communicated, Public Relations and/or Human Resources should explain why the University is offering this program.

Issues such as building a pipeline of employees, and retention will be positively impacted by this benefit.

- The Council recommends that the report should note the benefit of graduate tuition is currently taxable. Undergraduate tuition is currently not taxable up to \$5,250 per year.
- It is recommended that the program eligibility criteria for employees as well as for others (i.e., dependents, spouses) are reviewed and updated. For example, implications of this benefit for probationary students and/or students who withdraw from classes should be considered and clearly described for employees and dependents.

Child Care Work-Life Committee Report

Recommendation

- No recommendations were provided in the child care committee report. However, the Council supports the efforts of the child care committee and recommends that the work continue.

Other Considerations

- Council members raised questions about two specific issues, and asked that these issues be given to the committee. The issues include:
 - Hours of operation, including evenings and weekends
 - Sick care and emergency back-up care
- The Council recognizes that the child care committee is not focusing on older care/after-school care/summer programs because these initiatives are not part of the committee's charge. However, the Council asks the UK Work-Life Office to give attention to these critical needs.

Career Advancement and Professional Development Work-Life Committee Report

Recommendation

- The committee provided a progress report and preliminary recommendations. The Council supports the efforts of this committee and developed several suggestions. In general, the Council is concerned there are too many initiatives, and recommends prioritization of initiatives to ensure implementation and the best solutions.

Other Considerations

- As with the other initiatives, the Committee should recommend a strong communication plan and public relations effort about the benefits of these initiatives.
- Is the GED incentive reward program fair? What about incentive reward programs for Bachelors, Masters, and Ph.D degrees? Various concerns were raised such as:
 - It is important to reward all education especially the minimum level of a GED – this is important not only for UK, but also the Commonwealth of Kentucky.

- The Council agrees this should be a one-time reward and NOT an increase in base pay.
- The committee may want to consider a smaller amount for the incentive to ensure UK can cover the amount each year. This money should come from a central funding pool and not be tied to department accounts.
- Faculty Development is not addressed in the recommendation. Even if this was not part of the committee's charge, the committee should recommend the same efforts are put forward for faculty. The Council recommends that the Associate Provost for Faculty Affairs organize a group to examine faculty development.
- With regard to the Computer Loan Program, the budget seems extremely high. Perhaps costs could be lowered by using recycled computers from Colleges or the Libraries. Most receive new computers every three years.
- Council encourages continued progress on the area of workforce development and planning.
- Council members had several questions about the Alternative Degree Program idea, such as:
 - Did the committee consider the SACS rules regarding independent study or other aspects of the proposed program?
 - Did the committee consider the business accreditation rules for independent studies?
 - The payment per course for instructors seems very low.
 - If the committee has not done so, the committee should meet with business faculty to ensure the college supports this program.
- The Council believes that one Career Counselor will not be sufficient to serve all the employees. It is recommended that career development be included in supervisory training to ensure the information is given to all employees. This would put the accountability on the Supervisor as well. It is also suggested that academic advisors could be utilized to help employees better understand any and all educational commitments needed for certain careers.
- The report includes a table that summarizes the cost for each initiative. It is not clear of the number of people needed (e.g., staff, consultants). More detail is needed.

Employee Assistance Program Work-Life Committee Report

Recommendation

- The committee provided a progress report and preliminary recommendations. The Council supports the efforts of this committee and looks forward to receiving the committee's recommendations after consultation with an expert of EAP in higher education.

Other Considerations

- The Council suggests that consideration is given to preventive and proactive programming. Currently all of our resources are patient-centric; therefore the

employee needs to know they have a problem before accessing resources for appropriate care. We need something similar to HealthTrac (from Health & Wellness) to have a more institutional approach to help supervisors and employees understand there is a problem and where to go for assistance.

- Specific and focused training would be useful for Supervisors to recognize when problems are present.

Conclusion

Again, the Council commends the Work-Life Committees for their diligence and thoughtful contributions. In addition to forwarding this response and the Committee reports and recommendations to the Division of Human Resources, the Council will incorporate the work-life committees' initiatives into a long-term strategy for building a work-life culture.