

Benefits Committee Meeting Minutes

December 17, 2015

10:00 – 11:00 a.m.

- **Call to Order – Tami Watson, Chair**

The meeting was called to order at 10:10 a.m.

- **Parental Leave Update**

Under FMLA, employees are eligible for up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave for the birth or adoption of a child. If both parents are employees of Virginia Tech, they do not each get 12 weeks of leave. Instead, they must split the 12 week period. Yohna Chambers and others are working with the Provost's office to try to get paid parental leave for Virginia Tech employees. Currently, they are working on obtaining this leave for teaching and research faculty. However, it is the hope that administrative and professional faculty, research faculty, and staff members will eventually be included.

When a faculty employee adopts a child, all they are given is 10 days of leave per the faculty handbook. When a faculty member gives birth, they are able to use sick leave. Departments around campus handle parental leave differently and it is currently very inconsistent. Some individuals are allowed to use leave and some are required to come back after the 10 days. It is being proposed that the 1,040 hour faculty sick leave plan be used for this. For staff members, the idea of using the leave sharing plan to cover parental leave is being explored. A meeting will be held in January with Dwight Shelton regarding the estimated financial cost to the university to allow employees to use sick leave for their parental leave.

Question from the Committee: Why would they use sick leave? What is the difference between sick leave and other types of leave?

Answer: Academic year faculty do not get annual or other types of leave.

Comment from the Committee: It does not seem fair that if both employees work for Virginia Tech that they have to split the 12 weeks.

Comment from Yohna Chambers: That policy is outlined under FMLA and is the law. People have a year from the date of the event to use their FMLA time. It doesn't have to be used all at once. Ex: one parent takes first 8 weeks, other parent takes 4 weeks six months from adoption date.

• **Holiday Leave Update**

There is not much of an update surrounding holiday leave. All of the other universities repurpose their holidays to use during winter break. It is something Virginia Tech is exploring.

Question from the Committee: Has this been presented to anyone?

Answer: Yes, it has been presented to Kim O'Rourke and Angela Kates. It has also been given to Lisa Wilkes for review.

Question from the Committee: Who would push this through?

Answer: Sherwood Wilson would likely present it to the president.

AP Faculty are given 8 days off per year. Which doesn't seem accurate based on the research completed. No other university provides their faculty with fewer than 12 holidays.

• **Hokie Wellness**

Hokie Wellness will join the Benefits Committee at the February 17th meeting. They have been asked to discuss childcare, work-life balance, and alternative work schedules. Any other topics that committee members would like to have Hokie Wellness discuss should be sent to Ashley Mauchley.

Comment from the Committee: I'd like to hear about their new structure and what has been gained from the student side of wellness that can now be offered to employees.

Comment from the Committee: I read an article that Universities are trying to do more regarding the prevention of substance abuse. Can they please discuss substance abuse and what programs they have to assist students and employees?

Comment from the Committee: They do have a substance abuse program as well as the "party positive" program on the student side. They are also working on a new program on substance abuse that they are wanting to start soon.

Ashley Mauchley will forward these comments to Hokie Wellness.

- **Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned at 10:35 a.m.