

Employee Benefits Committee Meeting Minutes

November 20, 2014

10:30 – 11:30 a.m.

Present: Sue Teel, Yohna Chambers, Pat Rodgers, Sara Leftwich, Godmar Back, Brad Klein, Tami Watson.

Call to Order – Patricia Rodgers, Chair

Patricia Rodgers called the meeting to order at 10:35 am. Attendees were asked to introduce themselves.

Communications

A significant amount of different communications regarding benefits are being done. For a variety of reasons, employees are not reading the messages sent to them. It was suggested by the Benefits Committee that communications should be improved and ways to improve communication were discussed. Currently, communications are sent out via the VT News, blue sheets, HR website home page, HR Partners, listservs, and mailers. Social media is also used for relevant information.

It appears that the biggest problem with communicating information is that people are not reading their email or mail. The reason behind this appears to be that individuals receive a significant amount of email and mail and some do not know that the VT News is the primary source of information for benefits and other Human Resources related information. In order to ensure that employees know that VT News is the best place to get information, HR Partners will be asked at their next meeting to notify all employees in their individual areas. Ashley Mauchley will reach out to Lesa Young regarding adding this agenda item to the next partners meeting.

It was also brought up that employees rarely visit the HR website. There has been a study done on the Human Resources website to determine how user friendly the site is. Surveys and analytics have been completed on the site to assist in making improvements to the website. It was suggested that individuals who use the website often, as well as the general university population, be surveyed to ask how they feel about these changes.

Many different ways to communicate with employees have been discussed in Human Resources. Human Resources has considered creating a mobile application for employees so that information can be accessed more easily. In addition, Banner is

currently improving a self-service website. This should be available in 2016. Currently, Human Resources is rolling out the N.E.D or New Employee Dashboard in mid-December. This dashboard will allow employees to log in and view their current benefits, deadlines, job descriptions, and personal data. It will also show whether a task, such as enrolling in health insurance, has been completed. A version of this dashboard will also be available to supervisors so that they can assist employees in ensuring their paperwork and other items are completed. It is intended that N.E.D will be used during Open Enrollment as well. Once testing is complete, a demo of N.E.D will be presented at the Benefits Committee meeting.

It was mentioned that Human Resources should consider sending targeted emails to employees regarding the benefits that they are eligible for but not taking advantage of. It was suggested that these emails contain recommendations as to what an employee should do based on their personal situation. Employees do not always know what does or does not apply to them specifically. Queries could be run for certain situations and targeted emails could be created for the information that Virginia Tech has. However, some employee information is not housed in Virginia Tech's systems. DHRM in Richmond has control of much of the information. This would make targeted emails very difficult.

Employees are able to access health insurance and flexible spending account information through the Anthem or Aetna websites. In addition, employees can access their personalized information through Employee Direct. During Open Enrollment, DHRM sends personalized benefits summaries to each employees along with information regarding various plans and other benefits an employee is eligible for. TIAA CREF and Fidelity also send personalized statements to employees.

Creating an employee dashboard in HokieSPA where employees can access their information was discussed. Members of the Benefits Committee felt that this would be a useful tool. The most important thing about the system is that it must be linked to something that people will look at, such as paystubs. It was discussed that creating a new system is very time consuming. In addition, situations regarding security or compliance issues would take precedence over new development. It could take a significant amount of time for this system to be created. The Enterprise Systems Human Resources Information Systems team, or E HRIS, would be the team in charge of creating a system like this. A request would be sent to Kevin Buhrdorf for the new system and he, and his team, would be the ones working on it. Determining where the information is housed (Banner or in Richmond), would also take a significant amount of time. Kevin's supervisor is Deborah Fulton.

Pat Rodgers will ask both Deborah Fulton and Kevin Buhrdorf to speak to the Benefits Committee regarding software and recommendations for this type of system at the next meeting.

Tuition Waivers and Tuition Reimbursement

Departments appear to not be aware that employees can attend classes with supervisor and departmental approval. It was asked whether a representative from the Employee Benefits Committee should send a representative to Faculty Senate and Staff Senate to discuss this issue. Yohna Chambers mentioned that Angela King and Ashley Mauchley are currently working on a project to determine which employees are taking advantage of this benefit and recommended that before a representative is sent to these meetings to wait until this project is complete. Recommendations will be brought to the committee after the project has been completed.

Pat Rodgers will reach out to Travis Hunley to discuss funding for employee tuition waivers and reimbursements.

Other

It was asked that a reminder email and agenda be sent to committee members a couple of days before each meeting. Reminder information will be sent in a separate email and from the calendar invitations previously being used as some committee members were receiving calendar invitations that appeared blank. Information regarding the meeting, including time and location, will be included in the body of the email. Ashley Mauchley will make this change going forward.

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 11:40 am.