

Minutes for Fringe Benefits Committee

Meeting: Fringe Benefits Committee (FBC) 2019-2020
Date: November 6, 2019
Location: Salisbury Labs 225

Attendees: Joseph Fehribach (chair), Dirk Albrecht, Eric Chojnowski, Jaime Dillon, Daniel DiMassa, Ruth McKeogh, Julia Quinn-Szcesuil, Mark Santiago, Wendy Walsh, Sarah Wodin-Schwartz

Not Present: Nima Rahbar, Sharon Wulf

Guest: Will Darling, Talent & Inclusion

Proposed Agenda:

1. Call to Order (Fehribach)
2. Minutes (Quinn-Szcesuil)
3. Discussion of a Concern about the lack of chiropractic soft tissue care under Tufts HC (Chojnowski); Other Health Care Coverage Concerns
4. 28 Hour Requirement (Chojnowski)
5. Family Leave Tax/Payroll Discussion (Chojnowski)
6. Other Topics the Committee Wishes to Discuss
7. Adjournment

Meeting

Meeting called to order at 2:32 pm

- Minutes (Quinn-Szcesuil)
 - Minutes from 10-8-19 meeting were approved by email approvals and in-person approvals at the meeting
- Discussion of a Concern about the lack of chiropractic soft tissue care under Tufts HC (Chojnowski); Other Health Care Coverage Concerns
 - Eric reported that soft tissue care is coded differently from other procedures and not the same as it was covered under previous HPHC coverage when HPHC was the WPI provider. As HPHC and Tufts move forward with their proposed merger, this could change. Joseph suggested to the FBC to urge the administration that the new policy be the same as the old policy. Eric confirmed that WPI prefers the HPHC version that covers this soft tissue care. There was discussion about the limited provider network and Eric believes if the two merge, the network could become larger. Eric confirmed that 2020 will be a year of transition for the new organization.
- 28-Hour Requirement
 - A faculty member brought a question of a new benefits change to the attention of the FBC regarding the time worked requirement for healthcare coverage eligibility. An employee who worked 24 hours was notified that the new threshold for receiving healthcare benefits would be 28 hours (with a grandfathered period of two years to meet the increased required hours). Eric told the committee that WPI's policy was more generous than a peer institution average of 32 hours.

There was discussion among the committee that the new policy would best be for employees going forward and not apply to those already working under the old policy (eight total employees). Eric and William discussed the new policy allows the institution to review the employees in two years rather than grant this policy in perpetuity, and that no employees lost benefits. A point of discussion was the impact of increasing hours for the employees, the impact on hiring qualified PT applicants, and the impact on morale as well. As a whole, the FBC wants to send a clear message that this new policy not have an adverse impact on employees. Sarah made a motion to suggest the 8 employees be grandfathered in in perpetuity if that could be a feasible new policy. Ruth seconded the motion. Eric and Joseph will report the FBC suggestion to FAP.

- Family Leave Tax/Payroll Discussion (Chojnowski)
 - Eric reported that WPI is still exploring options to the Massachusetts Family Leave Tax changes that became law on 10/1/19. WPI did submit an application to be approved for a private plan. If approved the university can move forward with this option. There will be more information to come as this moves forward. These benefits will start in 2021 with a year to establish funding pool. Ruth asked if this could impact employees' sick time, and Eric replied that it could have an impact on waiting times for short-term disability. It is doubtful that any options will result in savings for the university as a whole.
- Other Topics the Committee Wishes to Discuss
 - There was discussion about Tufts now possibly covering acupuncture
- Committee members reintroduced themselves
- Adjournment
 - Meeting adjourned at 3:18 pm

Submitted by Julia Quinn-Szcesuil 12/2/19