

Minutes for Fringe Benefits Committee

Meeting: Fringe Benefits Committee (FBC) 2018-2019
Date: April 11, 2019
Location: Higgins Labs 102

Attendees: Joseph Sarkis (Chair), Eric Chojnowski, George Kaminski, Ruth McKeogh, Julia Quinn-Szcesuil, Wendy Walsh, Sarah Wodin-Schwartz, Sharon Wulf

Not Present: Jaime Dillon, Bethel Eddy, Dimitri Koutmos, Nima Rahbar, Kevin Wheeler,

Guest: None

Meeting called to order at 1:06 pm

- **Approval of Agenda** – Approved
- **Approval of Minutes from 3/28/19** – Approved with request for changes
- Joe Sarkis reported back from FAP presentation about tuition benefits proposal. FAP thanked the committee members for bringing the information together. Additional numbers from WPI and from benchmarking with other schools will be needed to help determine how many employees are impacted and what the financial implications are. FAP will now take over looking at this issue.
- Request to add addendum – ATTACHEMENT 1
- Potential agenda items for next year were discussed:
 - Possibly consider a multiyear FAP assignment for the chair role for continuity
 - Transition between chairs needs to be more formalized
 - Retirement and insurance gap
 - There is an insurance gap from the age when employees can retire until they are eligible for Medicare. Currently, necessary to cover that insurance by themselves through the state connector or through COBRA. Does WPI have the inclination to cover the costs of health insurance until 65?
 - Potential need to review the dental and vision insurance plans
 - Potential to introduce a sabbatical benefit for all employees
 - Potential change to healthcare plans to consider?
 - Follow up
 - for summer hours proposed changes presented in FY 18-19
 - tuition benefits change

Meeting adjourned at 1:52 pm

Submitted by Julia Quinn-Szcesuil

ATTACHMENT 1

To: The Financial and Administration Policy (FAP) Committee

From: The Fringe Benefits Committee (FBC)

Date: March 29, 2019

Re: Talking points and motions for consideration related to Tuition Benefits for Employees

FBC considered the question of making the tuitions benefits program more attractive to WPI employees. In the 2017-18 academic year FBC held a number of meetings refining their recommendation to make the tuition program more attractive. The specific motions did not seem to be forwarded to FAP for discussion and further recommendations.

At this time, the FBC has discussed the results of the discussion from the last academic year and is recommending to FAP the following changes to the WPI Employee Benefits and Policies Manual ("The Manual") (<https://www.wpi.edu/sites/default/files/EmployeeHandbook.pdf>):

- (1) For full-time employees (who have completed at least 1450 hours in a year): FBC recommends the wait time for tuition benefits for a Bachelor's or Master's Degree to be 1 year for both on and off campus. FBC recommends that off-campus tuition reimbursement be covered at 100% and up to \$2000.**

This recommendation requests changes to the current policy (page 54 of The Manual). The request is to reduce the waiting period from 3 years to 1 year for employee eligibility to take advantage of this benefit. It also requests that the current reimbursement (page 54 of The Manual) changes from "75% of tuition and mandatory fees, up to a maximum of \$2,000 per fiscal year", to "100% of tuition and mandatory fees, up to a maximum of \$2,000 per fiscal year."

- (2) For Spouse/Domestic Partner of full-time employees (who have completed 1450 hours in a year): FBC recommends changing the wait time for the tuition benefit for a Bachelor's or Master's Degree to 1 year for on-campus only.**

This recommendation requests changes to the current policy (page 56 of The Manual) to reduce the waiting period from the current 3 years for spouses/domestic partners to just 1 year for them to take advantage of the on-campus (WPI) benefit.

FBC requests that FAP consider these changes and make recommendations to administration.

The final motion passed by FBC for FAP consideration is:

- (3) The FBC committee recommends that our current tuition benefits policy should consider flexibility for all students to complete the undergraduate degree. This altered policy should consider those with various accommodation needs, financial or any other personal situation, to complete the equivalent of a 16-term undergraduate degree as a full-time or part-time student, within some reasonable time limit.**

This recommendation is general and asks administration to consider changing the Undergraduate Study at WPI (page 55 of The Manual) to allow for more flexibility in how the 16-term calculation is completed. As an example, if a student takes only 1 course in any term it is counted for a full term accrued against

the 16-term limit. FBC asks FAP to forward this request to administration for them to consider more flexibility in this policy. The specific wording and requirements will need to be developed.