Benefits

Concerns:

1. The number of free tickets/benefits with regard to Reynolds Performance Center activities are decreasing.

> Result: Not true. The number of free tickets remains the same as the last several years. Even if you buy season tickets, the price of the free tickets is included (or rather, excluded).

2. New tax law and benefits issues – will we continue to have the option of the cafeteria plan? Will it go away with the new tax law?

> Result: Yes, we will still have the Cafeteria Plan.

3. Review our dental carrier and look into possibly returning to our previous carrier – for those that live out of state and those that have children, they are not carried as they were before.

> Result: The Fringe Benefits Committee meets every year to review benefits. They are asked to submit an annual report in the Fall to the Faculty Senate.

4. Incentive to Healthy UCA – great idea, but the quality of seminars could be improved.

> Result: The Faculty Senate has no power to dictate the seminars required in Healthy UCA. However, those who participate are encouraged to share their views with the Healthy UCA people.

5. We need an Arkansas health consortium to provide us with more negotiating power as we work for better health care packages.

> Result: When Graham Gillis interviewed for the position of Associate Vice President of Human Resources (and later got the position), he explained why this hasn't happened and why it isn't likely to happen. One point was that the U of A system is self-contained; they are their own insurer. As the largest in the state with 16,000 employees, the rest of us really can't do it without them and they have no incentive to join us. We are too small to use this system ourselves. For more details, please contact Mr. Gillis.

6. The HPER Center locker rental rates have increased. Where are these funds utilized? Which budget(s) do they go into? Is that information easy to find and/or communicated (transparency)?

Result: David Dennis, Director of Campus Recreation, reports that there is "one HPER account (index). All revenue generated goes into that account. Those funds are utilized for the operation and maintenance of the HPER facility."

7. A strong concern of several faculty members concerned the perceived 'double dipping' of the university in terms of health insurance payments and summer grant payments. Specifically, if health insurance premiums are paid for the entire 12 month period out of the 9 month contracts, and a professor obtains a grant with summer pay, health insurance is pulled out of that grant's fringe costs.

Result: The fringe benefits taken out of grants are not that paid by the faculty member; it's the money the university pays for that faculty member's fringe benefits. So, the faculty member is not paying twice.

8. Some post-employment health benefits have been cut. Specifically, there is the cut-off or inadequate funding of supplemental healthcare (outside of Medicare) during the interim time between the ages of 65 and 70.

Result: The Faculty Senate charge to the Fringe Benefits Advisory Committee: Determine the feasibility of restoring retiree health benefits that were abolished in January 2009 to UCA employees who have worked here full-time for 25 years or more. A change in the Chair of the committee during the Spring 2011 term has resulted in a delay. The committee will be reminded of the charge during the Fall 2011 term.

9. Is it possible to go back to, or provide and option for, a 12 month pay distribution?

Result: Mr. Graham Gillis, Associate Vice President of Human Resources, provides the following response. Unfortunately, the move to Banner has made this very problematic. At one time, UCA did offer this option prior to Banner. The same can be said for ASU and UALR, both Banner institutions. Because of the amount of programming that would be involved and the amount of re-programming that would be necessary every time Banner came out with an update, this would be very difficult. I have talked to my ASU and UALR counterparts and they both agree that this is just not going to be possible. However, all three institutions have communicated this concern to Banner and asked them to consider this option in their future updates.

In the meantime, UCA, like ASU and UALR, offers the option for 9-month employees to create interest earning accounts either through separate banking or credit union arrangements from their regular direct deposit account. This would allow 9-month employees the ability to set aside a percentage of their income in a direct deposit format from their 9-month pay check. The money would go directly from their pay check to an interest earning account and could be drawn upon during the summer months. A major advantage of this approach is that the account earns interest where it would not if UCA set aside the money. The downside is that it does require employee discipline since the money can be accessed at any time.

Some of our 9-month employees may have heard that UA-Fayetteville sets aside a percentage of salary for their 9-month employees if the 9-month faculty elects this option. That is true but they are not a Banner Institution nor is the account allowed to earn interest. They write all of their human resource system software in-house so they are able to have more flexibility in the manner in which they are able to program these type of things.