Once again, health insurance benefits occupied a great deal of the Committee’s attention. Among the matters discussed were the following.

**Blue Cross Blue Shield Implementation:** As of January 1, 2009, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Oklahoma became the University’s health insurance provider, Delta Dental took over the dental insurance, and PayFlex the administration of flexible spending accounts. Changing providers always entails some difficulties. The EBC received regular reports from Human Resources (HR) on preparations for the changeover, then on transition issues as they arose. As is typical, the transition went well enough for most employees, but some individual problems arose that appear to have been addressed successfully. Later in the spring, the EBC forwarded a number of complaints about documentation requirements for flexible spending account expenditures to HR, which is working with PayFlex on these issues.

**Tulsa HMO:** It was known at the time that Blue Cross Blue Shield was selected that they would be unable to bring two major Tulsa hospitals, St. John’s and St. Francis, into their HMO network. A separate RFP was conducted and Community Care selected to provide HMO services at these two hospitals. This covers around 300 to 400 OU employees.

**Wellness initiative:** The EBC has been one of a number of voices on campus encouraging more University initiatives for employee wellness. In its RFP for the health insurance contract, the University emphasized the importance of this, and Blue Cross Blue Shield responded with a major component of $500,000 dedicated to these efforts. During the past year, HR reported on various initiatives including Health Screenings during staff week that drew significant participation, and the hiring of a full-time Wellness Coordinator. The EBC continues to emphasize wellness as a means not only to meet the financial challenges of rising health care costs, but also to improve employee quality of life.

**Retiree health care benefits:** The Contribution Strategy and Health Insurance Options Committee continued its review of University policies, now focusing on retiree health benefits. It released a preliminary report on November 19, 2008, which was discussed at the November 20 meeting of the
EBC. At subsequent meetings, the EBC brought up a number of matters. The EBC recognized the need to develop a plan to maintain the long-term viability of the benefit, but also relayed employee concerns about the relative impact of the proposal on the different “Groups” laid out in the proposal. Based on feedback from numerous campus governing bodies, committees, and individual employees, the Contribution Strategy and Health Insurance Options Committee has been developing its final recommendations, which are expected very early in the fall semester.

**Other matters:** Other matters receiving attention during the past year included the following:

1. **Retirement Plans Administrative Consolidation:** At most of the EBC meetings, The Director of Human Resources reported on the 401(a), 403(b) and 457 plans used by many OU employees. Currently these are administered by a number of individual financial services companies. New government regulations call for more oversight by the University. As part of its compliance effort, HR formed a committee to develop a strategy to consolidate and uniformize the administration of these plans. The committee has issued an RFP to contract a single administrator, but has not settled on a course of action. This is a complex matter, with many details and policy matters to be decided, and the EBC expects to give it considerable attention during the coming year.

2. **Website:** The EBC web page is now operational, with the membership list, minutes, and annual reports available. We hope to soon add capability to log comments and ideas contributed by OU employees.

3. **Some sad news:** Longtime EBC member Dick Bennett passed away this summer. Dick ably represented the OU Retirees Association for a number of years, and served on the Health Insurance RFP Task Force in 2008. His wit and wisdom will be missed by all of us.

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