MINUTES
EMPLOYMENT BENEFITS COMMITTEE
November 17, 2011

Members Present
Don Clothier        Sue-Anna Miller
Debbie Copp         Mark Morvant
Brenda Freese - Chair   Jannie Porter
Suzanne Gilmore     Al Schwarzkopf
Chad Johnson        Will Wayne

Members Absent
Alisa Dougless       Frances Wen
Donald Harrison      Jerome Weber

Ex Officio Members
Barbara Abercrombie
Angela Hawpe
Julius Hilburn
Nick Kelly

The meeting was called to order at 1:35 by Brenda Freese.

I. Approval of Minutes

- The October minutes were approved with a revision to the minutes regarding other business. Debbie stated the policy being reviewed by an ad hoc committee of the Norman Staff Senate relates to family members not covered by FMLA guidelines.

II. Fidelity Update

- The transition to Fidelity was very successful.
- 4000 attended meetings; 166 departments scheduled meetings.
- Fidelity reported they received more than 4000 calls, and the website was visited approximately 5000 times.
- Fidelity representatives stated this was the most successful transition they have been involved with, including public and private customers.
- Brenda Freese, Chair, commented Fidelity’s personal service was impressive.

III. Annual Enrollment

- HMO plan in 2012 is more expensive than PPO, but very few employees changed plans despite the change in premiums.
- No significant problems arose during the open enrollment period.
- Employees have adapted well to the online enrollment format.
- Human Resources will continue to incorporate suggestions and comments from employees into the enrollment website.
• One member discussed difficulties with viewing optional life insurance costs. Human Resources personnel will work to be sure this is improved prior to the next enrollment period, and will continue to fine-tune the system for future enrollments.
• There was discussion about some faculty members being upset that they were not able to opt out of life insurance, since some would rather have used Sooner Credits for alternative options.

IV. Domestic Partner
• An ad hoc Norman Staff Senate committee has been formed to review job protection benefits that may be appropriate for family members not covered by FMLA. This review was initiated in response to an employee inquiry.
• The ad hoc committee will look at competitive practices, University needs and issues, and policies that may be considered. EBC committee members will be asked to review and discuss the report.
• Institutions are increasingly adopting some level of coverage.

V. Tobacco Policy Review - Norman Campus
• Chair of this Tobacco Policy Advisory Committee is Dr. Gary Raskob, Dean of Public Health.
• The Tobacco Policy Advisory Committee has met four times, and is working toward implementing the policy on July 1 as stated by President Boren.
• The Tobacco Policy Advisory Committee has not yet submitted a final report to the President, but expect to submit their recommendations to President Boren in time to consider prior to the January Regents meeting.
• The recommendation will likely call for a July 2012 effective date, which would allow some time to provide campus education and additional smoking cessation resources in advance of implementation.
• There has been some concerns expressed about a total ban on any campus smoking, and some have advocated providing some on-campus smoking zones or locations.
• It was reported by one member that the University receives some criticism for not being tobacco free, as many other colleges and universities in the state have been tobacco-free.
• Some interest has been expressed in either increasing medical premiums for smokers or providing a discount for nonsmokers.
• The Tobacco Policy Advisory Committee is scheduled to meet again on Friday, November 18.

VI. Retiree Medical Update
• A revised Retiree Medical plan proposal is being developed and will be reviewed with the EBC at the December 15 meeting.
• Human Resources is finalizing the plan which will include revised provisions that incorporate feedback from the EBC, employees and retirees to earlier proposals.
• Suzanne Gilmore reported an ad hoc Retiree Association committee has been formed and they are drafting a response to Julius regarding potential changes to retiree medical benefits he discussed with them earlier this year.
Julius indicated the goal is to submit a proposal to the Regents in March or May so the financial impact of any proposed changes in future retiree medical benefits will be reflected in the annual financial statements prepared at the end of the fiscal year.

VII. Review of EBC Annual Report
- Annual report was approved with correction to minor errors.

VIII. Updates from CHRO
- Julius addressed the memo sent by President Boren regarding the uncertain economic times and budget difficulties that may be faced by the University.
- Departments have been asked to plan for a tight budget year.
- The political environment may not be as supportive of higher education budgets as in the past.
- Also included in the memo was a reference to the EBC, who will be asked to scrutinize benefits-related spending.
- In January or February, information will be brought to the EBC membership regarding where money is spent and how it compares to peer institutions. If the most negative scenarios occur, it is critical to know what must be protected and where flexibilities lie.
- There was some discussion regarding the erosion of benefits at the University.
- Pressures OU officials are responding to are not unique.

IX. Other Business
- There was some discussion regarding a current practice OSU has implemented to allow faculty to temporarily reduce teaching load. Human Resources has conducted some research and will share this with the committee of which Al Schwartzkopf is a member.

The next regularly scheduled meeting will be December 15, 2011. There being no other business, the meeting adjourned at 2:56.