

Adopted by the Faculty Senate 5/10/01

Domestic Partner Benefits

A PROPOSAL

to the

UNIVERSITY OF CINCINNATI

by the

UC DOMESTIC PARTNER BENEFITS TASK FORCE

May 10, 2001

I. Mission of the UC Domestic Partner Benefits Task Force

The mission of the UC Domestic Partner Benefits Task Force (UCDPBTF) is to extend full benefits to University of Cincinnati employees with domestic partners in order to create a more equitable work place at the University of Cincinnati.

II. Definition of “domestic partner”

DOMESTIC PARTNER shall mean a person who is neither married nor related by blood or marriage to the employee; is the employee’s sole spousal equivalent; lives together with the employee in the same residence and intends to do so indefinitely; is responsible with the employee for each other’s welfare. A domestic partner relationship may be demonstrated by any three of the following types of documentation: a) a joint mortgage or lease; b) designation of the domestic partner as beneficiary for life insurance; c) designation of the domestic partner as primary beneficiary in the employee’s will; d) domestic partnership agreement; e) powers of attorney for property and/or health care; and f) joint ownership of either a motor vehicle, checking account or credit account.

III. Proposal

It is proposed that all portions of employee contracts dealing with benefits provided to an employee and his or her spouse be amended to include the domestic partner of the employee.

This proposal recognizes both same-sex and opposite-sex domestic partners. It further recognizes children of domestic partners as dependents of the employee.

Benefits would include all “soft” benefits (e.g., bereavement leave, family leave, parental leave, access to University recreational facilities, tuition remission, inclusion in employee discount plans) and all “hard” benefits (e.g., medical and dental insurance, life insurance beneficiary status, long-term care, flexible spending accounts).

Our proposal is consistent with the resolution passed by the OFC (Ohio Faculty Council) and the recommendation of the Ohio Domestic Partner Benefits Task Force (see appendix).

IV. Rationale

The composition of the typical American family has changed dramatically during the last 40 years. In 1960, approximately three-fourths of households were comprised of married couples with children. Today, only half of all households are comprised of married couples with children. Many of the remaining half of American families now consist of unmarried same-sex or opposite-sex couples and many of these couples have shared responsibility for raising children. This shift in the make-up of the typical American family along with an increasing emphasis on providing benefits to all employees equally is causing universities and companies all over the country to modify their employee benefit plans to consider domestic partners equally with traditional married spouses.

The University of Cincinnati has a strong tradition of non-discrimination. The official policy of the University prohibits discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. Yet denial of benefits to domestic partners of same-sex couples represents a de facto form of discrimination. Denial of benefits to domestic partners of opposite-sex couples represents a form of economic discrimination that does not recognize non-traditional families. Failure to provide benefits to domestic partners of University employees poses a significant financial burden upon these employees and goes against the principle of equal pay for equal work.

There is no law or regulation of the State of Ohio that prevents the University of Cincinnati from offering domestic partnership benefits.

An increasing number of public and private organizations and state and local governments are offering domestic partnership benefits. More than 120 public and private universities and colleges in the United States offer such benefits. Forty-nine of the top 100 companies in the Fortune 500 currently offer domestic partnership benefits. Many national and international companies with a substantial presence in Cincinnati provide domestic partnership benefits. All recognize the economic and public relations benefits of treating all employees equally in recruiting and retaining the most talented and qualified employees. This issue is important in recruiting faculty, staff and students to the University of Cincinnati.